



Snapshot showing burning houses in KwaShange during the “Seven Days War” 27 March 1990. Courtesy of the Natal Museum, photographer unknown.



**A History of Political Violence in KwaShange,
Vulindlela district and of its effects on the
memories of survivors (1987-2008)**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (History) at
the University of KwaZulu-Natal**

08 February 2013

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted to any other university. It is my entirely own work. I have given due acknowledgement of all sources

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PhD Candidate

.....

.....

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.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my wife Nkosingiphile Bongiwe Nxumalo and my sons,
Tehillah Kuhle and Kuphelele Barak Mchunu

ABSTRACT

The political violence and vigilante activities that characterised Natal and Zululand between 1985 and 1996 had numerous causes. The formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983 contributed to the rise of vigilantism and political violence. The formation of the Congress of the South African Trade Union (COSATU) in 1985 compounded this situation. Both these movements were known to be sympathetic to the African National Congress (ANC), which was still banned at the time of their formation; hence they had similar objectives to the ANC. During this time, Inkatha was the only strong Black political movement in the country, and particularly in Natal and Zululand. The Inkatha movement and its leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi regarded the formation of the UDF and COSATU in 1985 as a challenge to the hegemony of Inkatha in the region, following his fall-out with the ANC leadership in exile. Local leadership of political movements, namely, UDF and COSATU on one hand and Inkatha on the other, mobilised their support-base and took arms against each other. The lifting of the State of Emergency in 1986 intensified political violence and vigilante activities in the region. The Natal Midlands' violence saw a high number of deaths and casualties. Local communities as well such as Vulindlela suffered a great deal.

Clan faction fights were characteristic of KwaShange in the period 1940s-1970s, but from the late 1980s onwards (especially 1987) political unrest and struggle against the Nationalist apartheid regime changed into conflict between Inkatha and the UDF, which gradually worsened into civil war. In the course of my previous studies in KwaShange I discovered that the violence had impacted upon families and inter-generational relationships. According to some senior residents' thinking, a number of youths were ill-disciplined. Issues of disciplining of youths had obscured the political struggle and violence, making it hard to disentangle them. When researching memories of the violence, I found that persons spoke of different incidents within this struggle period and described their violent nature and how it had impacted on families' survival, both psychologically and physically. The interviewees kept saying that it was hard to forget the memories engendered by their horrific experiences.

The South African Government was accused of secretly provoking acts of violence in Natal and Zululand and was furthermore accused of having sent IFP troops to the Caprivi in Namibia for training in guerrilla combat. The Government later acknowledged this, explaining that the Natal Legislature needed specially trained forces for its officials. The unbanning of political parties and the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 saw KwaZulu-Natal entering a new phase of random vigilante activities and violence. The security forces (the South African Police and the South African Defence Force) were accused of supporting IFP vigilantes. All this led to the “Seven Days War” in 1990 in the Midlands, particularly in KwaVulindlela. In KwaShange this violence, from 1986 until 1996, created divisions in families and the community. Many people lost their lives. All efforts to put an end to the violence and vigilantism failed. The announcement that the first democratic election in South Africa was to be held in 1994 triggered more violence in Vulindlela. Exhaustion in the area, and a national climate which promoted peace were elements which eventually brought the conflict to an end.

Socially and economically, the area is still experiencing problems. Survivors and generations born during and after the turmoil talk about endless psychological and emotional suffering born during this turmoil.

My contention is that trauma experienced as a result of this violence and its consequences influenced the lives of all persons affected by it, and that this was transmitted across generations, through whole families and communities. It must be realized that these people and their families were affected for a long time, and many are still traumatised. The social structure of the community has been affected by it and by implication that of successive generations will also be affected.

This study describes and analyses political violence in KwaShange and investigates how it is remembered by the survivors. It also attempts to answer the question of how communities, families and individuals survived these traumatic experiences, how they coped (or failed to cope) with their experiences, both then and fifteen years after the end of violence.

By focusing on KwaShange as a case study of political violence in KwaZulu-Natal, I hope to determine what was in play in the province, and find a common pattern underlying the dynamics of the conflicts. Pre-civil war divisions have not, up to the

present, been confronted, and these fuelled the political affiliations that were a response to the struggle against the apartheid regime.

Keywords: KwaShange, Vulindlela, Natal, Zululand, South Africa, political violence, memory, remembering, trauma, Inkatha, United Democratic Front, Cosatu, ANC.

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There are people without whom this thesis *could* not have been written, and those without whom I suspect it *would* not have been written. My interest in the subject stems from my experiences as a child observer of political violence in the Natal Midlands, KwaShange from the age of eight. Many people of my age, born in this region, had similar experiences. Undoubtedly my desire to understand the impact and trauma caused by this violence and how people recover from it is at heart a personal one. This thesis would not have been written without KwaShange survivors of the violence, perpetrators and/or victims – to whose memory it is dedicated.

My mother, Jabulile Beauty Mchunu, is the foundation of my life. There is no substitute for the unshakeable faith and love she has always given me. My father, brothers and sisters have also been supportive. I am grateful to them.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will give a brief background to the study area and explain why this topic was chosen. It will also outline the research questions, broader theoretical framework, and literature survey. In the literature review special attention will be given to writing on political violence in Natal and Zululand, including primary and secondary sources. I will also consider what the relevant theoretical issues are. Topical areas, such as use of oral history, memory, especially painful memories, as well as the accounts of persons involved or present as spectators, will be looked into briefly. Lastly, this chapter will give an account of the methodology employed to investigate the topic as well as the types of literature used.

1.2 Background to the study

1.2.1 Scenery of KwaShange

KwaShange is a rural area 30 kilometres from Pietermaritzburg. The population there is largely traditionalist, and the settlement was established in the nineteenth century as the Natal Zwartkop Location under the colonial administrator Sir Theophilus Shepstone's Location Policy. Around 1975, under the Nationalist Government's homeland policy, it was renamed KwaVulindlela, and made part of greater KwaZulu.¹ After the first democratic elections in 1994 the area was absorbed into the province of KwaZulu-Natal. KwaShange is at present an economically depressed area, probably because of the racial policies applied in both the colonial and nationalist eras.

¹Edgar Harry Brookes and Nathan Hurwitz, *The Native Reserves of Natal* The Natal Regional Survey, vol. 7 (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1957), 195.

In the late 1940s to mid-1960s the informants whose testimonies form an important part of my research moved from farms where they were tenants, into KwaShange.² They chose to make this move because of the proximity of the area to the city, where work was obtainable. Since they were from traditionalist Zulu backgrounds, their lifestyles reflected all that this implies in terms of beliefs and value-systems. KwaShange was typified by faction fights in the period 1940s-1970s but during the late 1980s to 1990s these intensified into political factionalism and resistance against the Nationalist apartheid regime.³ This conflict expressed itself locally as civil war between the Inkatha Movement and the United Democratic Front (UDF).

The history of the leaders in the struggles of the apartheid era has already been told. Media, the TRC and academia have dealt with these histories extensively. I have realized however, during my research that the history of this period has hardly touched on the experiences of members of the affected communities after the violence. How are the survivors of the turmoil coping or failing to cope? How have the affected communities reconstructed themselves? I realized that while I was researching the community of KwaShange, and assessing it as a local Zulu culture more than usually prone to violent conflict, I was discovering an alternative history.

In the course of my previous study (2005) in KwaShange I discovered that the violence had impacted upon inter-generational relationships. Senior members of the community felt that the youth was ill-disciplined. It appeared that issues of disciplining the youth had obscured the other effects of political struggle and violence, making it hard to disentangle them. This violence spread to neighbouring areas in Vulindlela.⁴

²Interview with Manciza Zondi and MaZamisa Shange, KwaShange, 14 March 2009. See also interviews with Moses Ndlovu, Nunu Mchunu and Chris Hlengwa in Chapter Five of this thesis.

³Interview with Manciza Zondi and MaZamisa Shange, KwaShange, 14 March 2009. See also interviews with Moses Ndlovu, Nunu Mchunu and Chris Hlengwa in Chapter Five of this thesis.

⁴See Mxolisi Mchunu, "Cultural Change, Zulu Masculinity and Intergenerational Conflict in the Context of Civil War in Pietermaritzburg (1987-1991)", in T. Shefer, K. Ratele, A. Strebel, N. Shabalala and R. Buikema eds., *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2007), 226-227.

1.2.2 Scenario of the Unrest

It is difficult, however, to identify the exact date of the beginning of violence in Vulindlela, but a number of incidents occurred in 1985 that could be regarded as contributory factors. In February 1985 there were a series of incidents that resulted in deaths; injuries and destruction of property (see Chapter Four). Tension became perceptible in 1983 after the formation of the UDF as some community members began to organise and align themselves with the UDF (see Chapter Four). Records of this period were not kept as effectively, as in the period from 1990. From 1985 violence monitors and media in the Natal Midlands focused primarily on the Edendale complex, including Edendale itself, Imbali, Ashdown Sobantu, Slangspruit and Mpumalanga. While the focus was on townships, violence in rural areas of Vulindlela was escalating.⁵ When eventually attention was turned to Vulindlela, a lot had happened but it was not recorded. As a result the genesis of the violence in Vulindlela was not explored and the ‘whys’ were left unexplored. One report that deserves special mention was written by John Battersby of the *New York Times*.⁶ He noticed that Vulindlela’s violence was atrocious, went to KwaShange and recorded his observations and findings. I shall quote Battersby at some length on the subject. His report sets the scene for the period of KwaShange with which this thesis is concerned.

In the dim light, the young man's face radiated a youthful zest for life as he spoke of death, revenge and warfare. “We want to fight them until it is the end of them or the end of us,” Rodney said to the approval of his ‘comrades’, as the young militant opponents of the Zulu tribal authorities here are known.

About 20 ‘comrades,’ some as young as 12 and 13, huddled in the iron-and-mortar dwelling and brandished homemade weapons as they discussed military tactics and chanted freedom slogans in hushed tones. Outside, other teenagers kept a night watch for the police and conservative Zulu vigilantes. [...]

... Rodney left home three weeks ago and is afraid to return. “I know that if I do, I will die,” he said. The conflict among Zulus has already claimed more

⁵See for example, John Aitchison, “The Civil War in Natal”, in G. Moss and I. Obery eds., *South African Review* 5 (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1989), 457-473. See also Black Sash Records, Black Sash Papers, Killie Campbell Africana Library Box 18: File-Miscellaneous, Affidavits 1988, 1989, 1990.

Details of what happened in Vulindlela from 1986 can be viewed in John Aitchison’s presentation to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearing in Pietermaritzburg: http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/hrvpmb/pmb7_2.htm. Accessed on 11 March 2011.

⁶John Battersby, “Special to the *New York Times*”, Edendale Journal; In Apartheid’s Shadow, Zulu Wages War on Zulu (9 November, 1987).

than 170 lives this year. At least 80 people have died in the last seven weeks. [...] Last month, in the KwaShange district, where many of the killings have occurred, 13 young members of Inkatha were killed when opposition militants set fire to the house where they were meeting. Those who tried to escape were beaten to death. In another incident, vigilantes, enraged that they could not find a man they were hunting, decapitated his 10-year-old son instead.

A Pietermaritzburg court this week issued a preliminary injunction restraining two of the Inkatha leaders [Chief Shayabantu and David Ntombela] from further attacks on their opponents after two girls, 11 and 12 years old, described in affidavits how they watched their 11-year-old sister shot in cold blood.

[...] Both sides say they resort to violence only in self-defence, although some Inkatha leaders have endorsed revenge killings. Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, the paramount Zulu leader, said this week he could not be held responsible for the conduct of every member in an organization with more than a million adherents. He accused the African National Congress, an outlawed anti-apartheid organization, of fomenting violence to make South Africa “ungovernable.”

Chief Shayabantu Zondi, an Inkatha leader in KwaShange, an area that overlaps with part of Edendale, said the civil strife could be resolved by making Zulus responsible for their own law and order. “We no longer trust the South African police,” he said. “Some of them try to kill us. If we can get a police force of our own in this area which would not take sides – as we have in others – we could quickly solve the problem.” But Chief Zondi made clear that he would not tolerate members of the three million-strong United Democratic Front, another anti-apartheid umbrella organization, or the trade unions operating in his area. Civil rights workers say most of those killed and wounded have belonged to youth organizations affiliated with the United Democratic Front. Recently, however, there has been evidence of its members striking back, they say.⁷

This quotation paints a picture of the violence that engulfed KwaShange. 1987 is the year that will probably be remembered by most people in Natal and Zululand, and more so in KwaShange, because of the ‘KwaShange Massacre’ in September 1987.⁸ This event marked the beginning of the end to ‘normal’⁹ life in KwaShange,

⁷John Battersby, “In Apartheid’s Shadow, Zulu Wages War on Zulu” (*The New York Times*, November 9, 1987).

⁸See Chapter Five. Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository (PAR) State v. Hlengwa and others, transcript of judgment by Mr. Justice N.S. Page, Natal Provincial Division of the Supreme Court, Pietermaritzburg, 11 April 1988, 775, 777. Personal communication with the ‘first accused’ Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 2005. See also Anthea Jeffery, *The Natal Story: Sixteen Years of Conflict in Natal* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1997).

⁹I say ‘normal’ life had turned to ‘abnormality,’ knowing that there was never anything normal about that lifestyle. As Beinart (1992) suggests, violence was a normalised feature of life in apartheid South Africa. Historically South African society has been structured around violence. Structural violence,

Vulindlela and the province in general. From 1986 in Natal and Zululand people's lives were marked by drastic and traumatic change.¹⁰ There were visible divisions in the families and communities. Friends and neighbours had turned against each other and became enemies because of their political affiliations or non-alignment to any party. This state of affairs was the result of the area being ravaged by political violence – which up to this point has not been fully documented.

I have noticed, however, that the strength of the people of KwaShange is in their memory. Even though a lot of this turmoil has not been recorded, it is alive in their memories. Two senior members of the KwaShange community shared their memories with me about the area of KwaShange before the violence erupted. These memories are significant in this thesis because they set the tone of the memories of my interviewees about the history of the area and how they remember KwaShange before and after it was turned into “a place of pain”¹¹ during the times of political violence. MaZamisa Shange said:

[Ironically] This place is indeed a place of peace; yes, we had violence that left many people devastated. We were all devastated. Many people lost their lives and others lost their loved ones but still there is no place like this area – this is still a place of peace. When my folks left Richmond because of faction fights, they chose this area because of the peace I am talking about [...] violence that took place was everywhere and it was just caused by the devil. It is something that was meant to be for that particular period and it really never shocked me that much because it is something written in the Word of God. It had to happen [...] it happened really to serve a purpose. Only those that do not read and understand the Word of God, who thought that the violence was forever and they moved from KwaShange permanently. Look at us now, we are living peacefully. Our children go to schools, we go to church, and people go to work. We are just leading normal lives. Those that left...in fact maybe God wanted them to leave us, so He allowed the devil to cause people to fight for no reason. Those who were violent and caused unhappiness in this village

suppression and compulsion were the central characteristics of the apartheid state. See William Beinart, “Political and Collective Violence in Southern African Historiography”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 1992. 18:3 (1992), 455-486. See also Antony Albeker, *A Country at War with Itself: South Africa's Crisis of Crime* (Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2007), 33.

¹⁰Debby Bonnin, “Space, Place and Identity: Political Violence in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu-Natal,” PhD Thesis (Wits University, 2007), 1.

¹¹MaZakwe Khambule whose four children and husband were killed in two separate incidents in KwaShange. She refers to KwaShange as a place of pain. She now resides in Edendale and has never gone back to KwaShange since her husband was killed in 1990, because she “does not want to remember what happened to her family.” I interviewed her on 17 January 2008 at Edendale.

were displaced forever and others died – I suspect that the whole violence was meant to ‘clean up dirt’ [evil-doers] in the area.¹²

MaMkhonza Ntusi’s memories of KwaShange are different. She says:

We arrived in KwaShange from a farm near Vryheid in the early 1960s, I cannot remember the exact year but it was early in the 60s. This area has never been what we thought it would be. When we arrived here, there were lots of tensions between people of different clans. The faction fight that comes to mind is that of the Zondi clan fighting with the Dlamini clan. When we came here, the fight had already started and that animosity continued until the 1990s. There was another one between Zondi and Ndawonde clans in the 1970s, even though it did not last long, but its consequences were devastating. Mchunu and Ndaba clans also fought. All these fights happened one after the other – sometimes they happen concurrently. The political violence of the 1980s-1990s came to an [already] violent community. Had the KwaShange community been peaceful, the results of the violence would not have been as atrocious as it turned to be. If the community members were united, they would easily avoid killings and solve differences in a disciplined manner. The results of the violence are still felt today and there is no peace yet – one small disagreement can lead to violence because people have not yet forgotten what happened to them and they have not forgiven the perpetrators of evil [violence].¹³

These contrasting narratives about the area of KwaShange signify belonging and familiarity as well as dispossession and desperation. They present the history as well as contradicting memories of the violence in KwaShange, depending upon relative perspectives. Both history and memories of the turmoil are the themes that this thesis is concerned about.

Like many other rural residents in South Africa, KwaShange residents came from vastly different backgrounds as well as different generations. The area evokes different feelings and senses, and provides a spatial focus for people to locate memories of the violence of the 1980s-90s and situate them in the identities of the place. Throughout, I found that persons spoke of incidents within this struggle period of the 1980s-1990s and described their violent nature and how they had impacted on families’ survival, both psychologically and physically. The interviewees kept saying

¹²Interview with MaZamisa Shange, KwaShange, 14 March 2008.

¹³Interview with MaMkhonza Ntusi, KwaShange, 14 March 2008.

that it was hard to forget the reverberating memories engendered by their horrific experiences.

1.3 Why this topic of study?

This study aims to close the existing gap in the literature on political violence in the Natal Midlands. The aim of the study is to describe and analyse the history of political violence in KwaShange, centring the account it offers on the testimony of survivors, and its effects on the community members in the ensuing years. Earlier studies did not obtain details of what happened in local communities. I shall look into the events that took place in a relatively small community, and how the violence generated there subsequently spread to surrounding areas of Vulindlela. I shall also outline key events prior 1987 – such as the breach between supporters of Inkatha and those of UDF in the early 1980s. My work is unique in the sense that it is taking place 15 years after the end of violence in the province. Central to my work is the urge to know how the violence is remembered by its survivors 15 years later. This work also aims to touch on a subject that has never been adequately dealt with in the studies of violence in the Natal-Midlands, namely the effects of that violence on the generations that were not involved because of their age (those who were very young at the time) and the ‘born free’ generation (those born after violence and the first democratic elections in 1994). I shall argue that the impact of war is felt beyond immediate survivors and can become part of a people’s identity.

By focusing on KwaShange as a case study of political violence in KwaZulu-Natal (then Natal), I hope to determine what ‘was at play’ in the province, and find a pattern underlying the dynamics of the conflict. Pre-civil war divisions have not, up to the present, been thoroughly confronted, and these fuelled the political affiliations that were a response to the struggle against the apartheid regime.

1.4 Research hypothesis and questions

I postulate that trauma experienced as a result of this violence and its consequences influenced the lives of all persons affected by it, and that this was transmitted across generations and sexes, through whole families and communities. The social structure of the community was affected by it and by implication successive generations were

also affected. The consequences of the experiences affected family life and schooling and caused the displacement of families. This dissertation will try to answer the following questions: how did communities, families and individuals survive these traumatic experiences? How did they cope (or fail to cope) with their experiences, both then and 15 years after the end of violence?

Similar studies in Natal and Zululand proved that political conflict brought about destruction of individuals, families and the social and political structures of a society. Debby Bonnin's research into violence in Mpumalanga attested that everyday life for many people was marked by the need to survive within a situation of intense and traumatic change.¹⁴ Violence was a normal feature of life in apartheid South Africa,¹⁵ embedded itself into every aspect of the society and shaped the nature of state power.¹⁶ This thesis also tries to establish the historical and cultural connections to the KwaShange violence.¹⁷ It reveals continuities in the form of the history of conflict in the region. I shall take note of William Beinart's warning that adopting a contextual approach to understanding violence is not sufficient to explain the forms of violence within African communities. While it is necessary to locate violence in its colonial historical context and so avoid the colonial and racist discourse that sees African societies as intrinsically violent (e.g. Black on Black analysis), it is also imperative to 'avoid the ahistorical assumption that African violence was born in the colonial era'.¹⁸ My thesis tries to probe these historical continuities. KwaShange has become the *place* of memory to many political survivors – it is used to recall the history of violence. I shall argue, moreover, that the impact of war is felt beyond immediate survivors and can and does become a part of a people's identity, and that this has happened in the case of KwaShange.

¹⁴Debby Bonnin, "Space, Place and Identity: Political Violence in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu-Natal", PhD Thesis (Wits University, 2007), 1.

¹⁵William Beinart, "Political and Collective Violence in Southern African Historiography", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18:3 (1992), 455-486.

¹⁶See Jacklyn Cock, *Colonels and Cadres: War and Gender in South Africa*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1991); Shula Marks and Neil Andersson, "The Epidemiology and Culture of Violence", in N. Manganyi and A. Du Toit eds., *Political Struggle and the Struggle in South Africa* (Halfway House: Southern Book Publishers, 1990), 29-69. See also Catherine Campbell, "Learning to Kill? Masculinity, the Family and Violence in Natal", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18:3 (1992), 614-628.

¹⁷Bill Fraud, "The Violence in Natal 1985-1990", in R. Morrell ed., *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives* (Durban: Indicator Press, 1996), 186.

¹⁸William Beinart, "Introduction: Political and Collective Violence in Southern African Historiography", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18:3 (1992), 469.

1.5 Literature review

The political violence in South Africa during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s attracted the attention of the international community. All citizens were either directly or indirectly affected by the violence; a fairly large body of literature was published on this violence.¹⁹ Due to the fact that the violence was particularly severe and evidenced its own regional specifics, a number of local and international media houses and researchers focused on it. These records present divergent explanations and interpretations of the violence – how it started and why people sought to resolve their disputes through arms, arson, killing and other atrocities of civil war. Some of these documents claim that there was no single cause but ‘clearly multiple causes of the violence: socio-economic deprivation, urban-rural tensions, conflict between traditional and modern forms of governance [and generational tensions], as well as political rivalry between the IFP and the ANC. A crucial factor was state backing, both overt and covert, for the IFP before 1994.’²⁰

¹⁹ “For a broader view on the violence in South Africa during the 1980s and 1990s, see, for example, E. Bornman, R. van Eeden & M. Wentzel: *Violence in South Africa - A Variety of Perspectives* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1998); The explicit political violence, more prominent in urban areas, got its major momentum in 1985. According to D. Oakes (ed.; in: *Illustrated History of South Africa – The real Story*; Cape Town: The Readers’ Digest, 1994: 482): ‘On the evening of Saturday, 20 July 1985, P.W. Botha [Prime Minister from 1979 until 1989] announced that a state of emergency would be imposed on 36 magisterial districts from midnight – the first time since the Sharpeville crisis of 1960 that such a measure had had to be resorted to.’ A. Krog (in: *Country of my Skull*, Cape Town: A. Samuel, 1998: 43) writes about this period: ‘The funeral of the Cradock Four on 20 July 1985 changed the political landscape of this country forever. It was like a raging fire. ANC and SACP flags were defiantly displayed – buses full of people turned up, but were turned away – a state of emergency was declared. But in a sense it was the real beginning of the end of Apartheid.’ In order to deal with the ongoing violence, on 12 June 1986, a few days before the 10th anniversary of the start of the Soweto uprising, the Government announced a nationwide state of emergency” (Marinus Jacob de Haan, ‘Deadly population dynamics in Richmond: An analysis of stories collected around a local mission station’, paper presented at the conference at the Msunduzi Museum, 25-26 March 2010), see also Bernard Magubane, Philip Bonner, Jabulani Sithole, Peter Delius, Janet Cherry, Pat Gibbs and Thokozani April, Chapter Two “The turn to armed struggle”, in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 1, 1960-1970* (Pretoria: UNISA, 2004), pp. 53-145.

Some of the literature has been criticised as being propagandistic. Adam and Moodley criticised the following works as propaganda: Brian McKendrick and Wilma Hoffman, eds., *People and Violence in South Africa* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1990), and N. Chabani Manganyi and André du Toit, eds., *Political Violence and the Struggle in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Southern Books, 1990). The Natal conflict is perceptively analysed by Heribert Vilakazi, “Isolating Inkatha—A Strategic Error” *Work in Progress* 75, June 1991, pp. 21–23, and by Mike Morris and Doug Hindson, “South Africa: Political Violence, Reform and Reconstruction,” *Review of African Political Economy* no. 53, 1992, (Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

²⁰ WRITENET, *KwaZulu-Natal - Continued Violence and Displacement*, 1 July 1996, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6a6bc4.html> [accessed 16 November 2012].

Most of the documents, however, that present specifically the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands violence are non-academic; such as newspaper articles or research reports that were not published in peer-reviewed journals or books (see examples below). It is my aim to fill this lacuna in academic research and publications on the Natal Midlands political violence, in particular on my home area of KwaShange, Inadi, in Vulindela. The very limited unpublished documentation was written with a political rather than an academic underlying principle.²¹ Debby Bonnin states that the documentation and descriptions were to alert the public to the horror of what was happening and to shame the state into an impartial intervention to end the violence.²² These documents are significant for this study. A few of these works deal specifically with the Midlands and these will be considered far below. Some of these works contain material that was recorded concurrently with the violence, while others were written at some distance in time. I intend here to focus on works that cover the Natal Midlands and touch base on the works that cover other parts of KwaZulu-Natal.

Before getting to the non-scholarly works mentioned, let me consider the academic works that have dealt specifically with the Midlands violence of the time, works which this thesis aims to complement. These studies serve as models for my research. Debby Bonnin's thesis, for example, proved to be invaluable. Her thesis investigates political violence between the UDF and Inkatha in Mpumalanga Township in the early 1980s and early 1990s. She asks and answers necessary questions: why and how did the conflict between political organisations in Natal become violent? What forms did the violence take? Why, as a result of the violence, did ordinary people with little prior history of political activity come to identify with either UDF or Inkatha? How were these political identities produced?²³ This work deserves a special mention here because it serves as a model for my study of KwaShange, supplying suggestions on how to carry out an in-depth study in a relatively small region.

Another work that deserves special mention because of its relevance is that of Philippe Denis, Radikobo Ntsimane and Thomas Cannell, on the political violence in

²¹Aitchison states that he was a political activist in the 1980s-1990s. Personal Communication with John Aitchison, University of KwaZulu-Natal, February 2009.

²²Debby Bonnin, "Space, Place and Identity: Political Violence in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu-Natal", PhD thesis (University of Witwatersrand, 2007), 21.

²³Debby Bonnin, "Space, Place and Identity: Political Violence in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu-Natal", PhD thesis (University of Witwatersrand, 2007).

Nxamalala. Their work gives detailed and intriguing historical background to violence in Vulindlela and their oral history methodology and critical analysis of recorded interviews of the violence survivors is important because it took place almost ten years after the violence. It is also pertinent to my study, not only because its method of investigating the topic is similar to my own, but because of the proximity of Nxamalala to KwaShange. Some of the events covered in their book were mentioned by KwaShange informants.²⁴ Lou Levine's book records stories of survivors of the Vulindlela violence. His book reflects, firstly, the degree to which people's faith was able to assist them to deal with the turmoil of the war. Secondly, it reflects the fact that some people's faith was thrown into turmoil by the trauma of the situation they were faced with and the issues it raised.²⁵

1.5.1 Overview of the literature on political violence in Natal

Here I provide a synopsis of the literature on political violence in Natal and Zululand in the 1980s and 1990s. Some authors have published works that focused on specific areas in the province. Matthew Kentridge concentrated on the violence in Pietermaritzburg and surrounding areas,²⁶ Nkosinathi Gwala published on Edendale violence,²⁷ Douglas Booth and Mlandu Biyela on conflicts in Durban²⁸ and Paulus Zulu on political violence in KwaMashu and Umlazi hostels.²⁹ Stavrou and Crouch recorded the Molweni turmoil.³⁰ Bruntville mayhem was documented by Anthony Minnaar.³¹ Debby Bonnin described the violence in Mpumalanga.³² Lou Levine

²⁴ Philippe Denis, Radikobo Ntsimane and Thomas Cannell, eds., *Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of Political Violence in Nxamalala (1987-1993)* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publishers, 2011).

²⁵ Lou Levine, *Faith in turmoil: The Seven Days War* (PACSA, 1999).

²⁶ Matthew Kentridge, *An unofficial war: Inside the conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

²⁷ Nkosinathi Gwala, "Political Violence and the Struggle for Control in Pietermaritzburg", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 15/3 (April 1989), 506-524; see also, S. Stavrou, "Underdevelopment: Natal's Formula for Conflict", *Indicator SA* 7/3 (Autumn 1990), 52-56.

²⁸ Douglas Booth and Mlandu Biyela, "Exploring the spatial dimension of black resistance and political violence in South Africa: the case of Durban", *Urban Geography* 9/6 (1988), 629-53; see also, Doug Hindson, Mark Byreley and Mike Morris, "From violence to reconstruction: the making, disintegration and remaking of an apartheid city", *Antipode* 26/4 (1994), 323-50.

²⁹ Paulus Zulu, Durban hostels and political violence: case studies in KwaMashu and Umlazi," *Transformation* 21 (1993), 1-23.

³⁰ S. Stavrou and A. Crouch, "Molweni: Violence on the Periphery", *Indicator SA* 6/3 (Winter 1989), 46-50.

³¹ Anthony Minnaar, "Locked in a Cycle of Violence: the Anatomy of Conflict in Bruntville 1990-1992", in *Patterns of Violence: An Overview of Conflict in Natal during the 1980s and 1990s*, ed. A. Minnaar (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1992), 95-106.

³² Debby Bonnin, "Claiming Spaces, Changing Places: Political Violence and Women's Protests in KwaZulu-Natal", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26/2 (June 2002), 301-316; see also, "Legacies

captured the testimonies of the victims of the “Seven Days War” in Vulindlela.³³ Philippe Denis *et al.* studied political violence in KwaNxamalala.³⁴ Most of these studies provide an analysis of the causes of violence.³⁵ Many of the authors reason that the violence started in the mid-1980s, mainly due to political rivalry. Political conflict between Inkatha, on the one hand, and the UDF and ANC, on the other, is an essential dimension of the phenomenon of violence.³⁶

1.5.2 Non scholarly literature

Some of the KwaShange events were covered by the Unrest Monitoring Project. Of the authors who focused on the political violence in Vulindlela and the Natal Midlands in general, some provided ‘raw information’, or information that is not yet analysed. What makes this project appropriate to my study is that it provides information that was collected by the monitoring groups concurrently with the violence. These project reports were an invaluable source of information. They paint a clear picture of what was happening in Vulindlela and the Natal Midlands, in general. These sources, however, do not provide much analysis, since the objective of these publications was to provide factual information, rather than commentary.³⁷

John Aitchison, of the Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, headed the Unrest Monitoring Project. Aitchison, Wendy Leeb and Vaughn John produced a number of unpublished articles based on this project,³⁸ e.g.

of political violence: an examination of political conflict in Mpumalanga Township”, *Transformation* 62 (2006), 59-83.

³³ Lou Levine, *Faith in turmoil: The Seven Days War* (PACSA, 1999).

³⁴ Philippe Denis, Radikobo Ntsimane and Thomas Cannell, eds., *Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of Political Violence in Nxamalala (1987-1993)* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publishers, 2011).

³⁵ For an overview of the interpretations of political violence in Natal, see Andrian Guelke, “Interpretations of political violence during the South Africa’s transition”, *Politikon* 27/2 (2000), 239-54; William Beinart, “Political and Collective Violence in Southern African Historiography”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18/3 (September 1992), 455-485; Johnston, “Politics and Violence in KwaZulu-Natal”, 82-90, quoted in Philippe Denis, Radikobo Ntsimane and Thomas Cannell, eds., *Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of Political Violence in Nxamalala (1987-1993)* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publishers, 2011).

³⁶ Philippe Denis, Radikobo Ntsimane and Thomas Cannell, eds., *Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of Political Violence in Nxamalala (1987-1993)* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publishers, 2011), p. 7.

³⁷ Debby Bonnin, “Space, Place and Identity: Political Violence in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu-Natal, 1987-1993”, PhD Thesis (University of Witwatersrand, 2007).

³⁸ John Aitchison, “Numbering the Dead”, unpublished mimeograph, 1988; John Aitchison, “The Pietermaritzburg Conflict - Experience and Analysis”, unpublished paper, (Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1989); John Aitchison, “A Story of What Happened”, unpublished mimeograph, 1990; John Aitchison, “Interpreting Violence: The Struggle to Understand the Natal Conflict”, unpublished mimeograph, 1990; John Aitchison, “The Seven Days War: The

“Numbering the Dead”³⁹, “Misplaced, displaced and abandoned”⁴⁰ and “...and the killing goes on”.⁴¹ The documents present statistics on political violence and unrest in the Natal Midlands. Members of the project even went into cemeteries and recorded names of the dead people from tombstones. This information, however, is incomplete. There are a number of fatalities that were not recorded.⁴²

Of these works by members of the Unrest Monitoring Project, some are more relevant to my study in KwaShange. Leeb’s articles deal with the destruction of families and communities caused the violence: “families have been decimated, destroyed, separated, rendered parentless, childless, homeless and hopeless”.⁴³ Leeb discusses the psychological effect the violence had on the generations that were involved in the infighting and on generations to come: “[...] this damage manifests in life-long psychological disturbances, amongst which are the inability to form long-term relationships, problems with parenting, alcoholism and/or drug abuse, criminality, neurotic behaviour, lack of motivation and lack of self-esteem.”⁴⁴

Other projects that performed similar tasks in the province and in the whole country were the Natal Monitor, the Institute for a Democratic Alternative(s) for South Africa (IDASA), the Indicator Project, the Black Sash, the Peace in Natal led by Radley Keys, linked to the Democratic Party and the Christian Ministries. They all monitored violence and provided data on the trends of violence, indicators and conflict chronologies. All ‘hot-spots’ in the province were monitored. Indicator provided an overview of political conflict in South Africa: data trends, 1984-1988, claimed that at least 4 012 people were killed in political violence in South Africa (including 1 113 by the police and army), from September 1984 until the end of December 1988. There was evidence of the decrease of death tolls from 1987-1988. However, there was an

Victims Narrative”, unpublished paper (Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1991).

³⁹ John Aitchison, “The Civil War in Natal”, in G Moss and I Obery, eds., *South African Review 5* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1989), 457- 473.

⁴⁰ Wendy Leeb, “Misplaced, displaced and abandoned” in Aitchison, J, Leeb, W and John V, *Political violence in the Natal Midlands* (Pietermaritzburg, Centre for Adult Education, 2010).

⁴¹ Wendy Leeb, “...and the killing goes on” in Aitchison, J, Leeb, W and John V, *Political violence in the Natal Midlands* (Pietermaritzburg, Centre for Adult Education, 2010).

⁴² Interview with Wendy Leeb, Pietermaritzburg, March 2012.

⁴³ Wendy Leeb, “Daily life, daily death in Pietermaritzburg” in Aitchison, J, Leeb, W and John, V, *Political violence in the Natal Midlands* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, 2010), p. 69.

⁴⁴ Wendy Leeb, “Daily life, daily death in Pietermaritzburg” in Aitchison, J, Leeb, W and John, V, *Political violence in the Natal Midlands* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, 2010), p. 72.

increase in fatalities in the Midlands between 1987 and 1988.⁴⁵ The Christian Ministries recorded the data trends in South Coast areas, including Port Shepstone, Ezingolweni and KwaShobashobane. The Black Sash provided some invaluable data on human rights violations.⁴⁶ Much information is published in a periodical bulletin of events.⁴⁷ The works of these violence monitors are predominately statistics of deaths and injuries, they locate the incidents in a context and sometimes describe at least in rough terms the incidents; they are, however, invaluable raw information for any researcher studying this topic. The Human Rights Commission, later in the 1990s, took over the work initially carried out by these violence monitors. The Natal Monitor, however, continued its work, including the publication of reports.⁴⁸

The work of the monitoring groups, however, was criticized by Anthea Jeffery. She commented on the work that was done by the above-mentioned violence monitoring groups, including the 1992 Amnesty International Commission of Jurists and the South African-based Human Rights Commission, as engaging in disinformation about violence in South Africa.⁴⁹ Jeffery states that these reports were biased; they overlook the violence committed by UDF or ANC allies such as COSATU supporters, and instead focused only on the collusion between Inkatha and the South African security forces in perpetrating violence.⁵⁰ '[...] the ANC's strategy of fostering "ungovernability," which has led to widespread intimidation, and notes that the refusal to disband Umkhonto or ANC "self-defence units" is often ignored in reports about township anarchy.'

⁴⁵ Bennett and Quin, An Overview of "Political Conflict in South Africa: data trends 1984-1988", quoted in Aitchison, J, Leeb, W and John, V, *Political violence in the Natal Midlands* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, 2010), p. 89.

⁴⁶ *Black Sash Records*, Black Sash Papers, Killie Campbell Africana Library Box 18: File-Miscellaneous, Affidavits 1988, 1989, 1990. File, Democratic Party, Information Sheets, 1990-1991. File, Democratic Party, Information Sheets, 1989-1990 and Durban Network Funerals, 1989-1990. Box 19: File, All Bulletin's Office Copy.

⁴⁷ S. Bakker, ed., *Capturing the Event-Conflict Trends in the Natal Region 1986-1992*. (Durban: Indicator SA Issue Focus, 1992); see also M. Bennet, and D. Quinn, eds., *Political Conflict in South Africa. Data Trends 1984-1988* (Durban: Indicator Project, 1988).

⁴⁸ Personal Communication with John Aitchison, University of KwaZulu-Natal, February 2009.

⁴⁹ Anthea Jeffery, *Spotlight* [South African Institute of Race Relations], October 1992 quoted in Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

⁵⁰ Anthea Jeffery, *Spotlight* [South African Institute of Race Relations], October 1992, quoted in Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

These human rights organizations not only distort the causes of violence, but also set the stage for increased confrontation and undermine attempts to generate lasting solutions to the conflict. In the politicized atmosphere of South Africa, however, it can hardly be expected that the members of the South African Human Rights Commission, who are also ANC members, would criticize their own party. Even the reporting and monitoring of the political violence is inevitably politicized.⁵¹

1.5.3 Studies emphasising the political factors: the origins of violence

The following authors focused on providing background and explanations of why violence started in the Natal Midlands, broadly; and in some focus on Vulindlela, specifically:

A detailed account of the Vulindlela violence is provided by Matthew Kentridge. His study of the conflict of the late 1980s and 1990s was invaluable to my thesis. Kentridge gives a clear picture of the cycle of turmoil in the region. He states that the Midlands war pitted *people* against people of the same region, along party political lines. Kentridge believes that the war emanated from the different political movements existing in Natal and Zululand. He attributes the genesis of enmity in the Natal-Midlands to the alliance between COSATU and the UDF, which posed a serious threat to the power of Inkatha in the region. According to Kentridge, it was out of this challenge that the unofficial war between the Inkatha and the alliance started.⁵² Debby Bonnin cautioned, however, that Kentridge's book had its limitations, sociologically.⁵³ Nevertheless, it is more than a description of events, as it tries to analyse the violence in Vulindlela, which makes it more pertinent to my study.

John Aitchison's work provides a detailed background to the Midlands violence. He documented not only what was happening in the townships, but also what was happening in rural Vulindlela albeit not in great detail. Aitchison points out that the

⁵¹ Anthea Jeffery, *Spotlight* [South African Institute of Race Relations], October 1992, quoted in Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

⁵² Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

⁵³ Debby Bonnin, "Space, Place and Identity: Political Violence in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu-Natal, 1987-1993", PhD thesis (University of Witwatersrand, 2007).

UDF, which was formed in October 1983, opposed the Nationalist government proposals for a tricameral parliament, which would constitutionally enshrine the exclusion of Africans from the government of South Africa. “At the opening rally of the UDF in Edendale, a wounded student from the University of Zululand reported to the UDF leadership that he had been assaulted at the University residence and many other students who were alleged to be from UDF aligned communities were assaulted and others were killed.” According to Aitchison, this event was one of the precipitating causes for violence in the Natal Midlands and Durban.⁵⁴

Another cause of the violence in the Natal Midlands, according to Aitchison was bad conditions in townships around Pietermaritzburg. These conditions included the high cost of housing and the shortage of houses; transport costs had risen; residents in Imbali and Ashdown townships were discontented about the excision of their townships from the Pietermaritzburg municipality, so that they came under direct KwaZulu Government control; the role of Inkatha-supporting town councillors in black local authorities; the rise of vigilante groups associated with Inkatha; conflict between Inkatha and the trade union movements; and the lack of tolerance of any opposition by the KwaZulu/Inkatha authorities.⁵⁵

I comprehend Aitchison’s reasons for the origins and rapid escalation of violence in Pietermaritzburg townships, but I find it disconcerting that his reasons seem to suggest that Inkatha was the only cause of this pandemonium. UDF supporters also played their part in the violence. Khaba Mkhize, a seasoned journalist who resided in Edendale, observed and reported widely that ‘crime and troublesome activities’⁵⁶ angered local leaders and senior men who were mostly aligned to the Inkatha Cultural Movement. Richard Carver agrees with Mkhize.

⁵⁴ John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War” in Greenstein, R, ed. *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratisation* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), p. 53; see also Philippe Denis and Graham Duncan, *The Native School that Caused all the Trouble: A history of the Federal Theology Seminary of Southern Africa* (Dorpspruit: Cluster Publishers, 2011), p.175.

⁵⁵ John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War” in Greenstein, R, ed. *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratisation* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), p. 52. See also, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/chapter-2-nature-and-character-vigilantes-kwazulu-natal>.

⁵⁶ Telephonic interview with Khaba Mkhize, Pietermaritzburg, February 2009. See also Khaba Mkhize, quoted in Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

He states that ‘there have undoubtedly been criminal elements, *comtsotsis*, who have exploited the political struggle on the UDF/ANC side.’⁵⁷

Adams and Moodley believe that others joined the vigilantes due to ‘mob psychology with the belief that it was nice being part of the vigilantes’. Others participated in vigilantism activities because they had no choice, in the sense that their families and next-of-kin’s lives were in danger if they refused to be part of them.⁵⁸ Father Tim Smith stated that the bias displayed by the police was the cause of the violence; he narrated his personal experiences of violence in Vulindlela as a priest in the Roman Catholic Church in Elandskop. He frequently “called in the riot police to stop an attack in Elandskop. However, when the police arrived, it was alleged that they continued assisting the attackers to hunt down UDF supporters, either to arrest them or make them disappear from society.”⁵⁹

According to Keesing’s records of World Events, containing ANC-IFP conflict, the violence in the Pietermaritzburg region was exacerbated by what was happening in the neighbouring areas. For example, in September 1992 there was a big Inkatha rally in KwaMakhutha, near Amanzimtoti. This rally was not peaceful in KwaMakhutha. As a result, even in Pietermaritzburg the violence flared up anew. A large group of Inkatha supporters attacked the ANC-controlled townships outside Pietermaritzburg, particularly the Ashdown area, damaging property and assaulting residents.⁶⁰ The conflict in Pietermaritzburg was a bitter one, because the issues at stake were bigger than simply the control of several townships. The main issue that led to the attack was the deep-rooted hatred that existed amongst Inkatha members for members of the UDF.⁶¹ During October 1992, conflict in the Pietermaritzburg region seemed to escalate. Violence became an almost everyday occurrence. Regular skirmishes between IFP gunmen and ANC supporters took place. It was believed that Chief

⁵⁷ Richard Carver, *South Africa after the Elections*. WRITENET for UNHCR/CDR, June 1994 (UNHCR/CDR REF WORLD Databases).

⁵⁸ in Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

⁵⁹ Tim Smith, “Experiencing the Violence”, paper presented at the Centre for Adult Education Seminar on Violence, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1988). See also Richard Carver, quoted from UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) “KwaZulu-Natal – Continued Violence and Displacement” (South Africa: Writenet, 1996).

⁶⁰ Keesing’s Records of World Events, Containing ANC-IFP Conflict, 12 October 1992; Keesing’s Records of World Events, Containing the ANC, 10 September 1992.

⁶¹ Keesing’s Records of World Events, Containing ANC-IFP Conflict, 12 October 1992; Keesing’s Records of World Events, Containing the ANC, 10 September 1992.

Gatsha Buthelezi knew about the violence that was taking place in KwaZulu-Natal. It was believed that he was the cause of the violence, when he refused to take part in the upcoming 1994 elections, at least until international observers were allowed in KwaZulu-Natal.⁶²

K von Holdt gives more details concerning the sequence of spiralling violence in Pietermaritzburg and surrounding areas. He states that in August and September 1986 things turned violent when IFP supporters embarked on forced recruitment campaigns in a number of townships around Pietermaritzburg. Violence had simmered in the area since 5- 6 August 1986, when township residents heeded the UDF/COSATU call for a stay-away, to protest against the all-white parliamentary elections in KwaZulu-Natal, which supported and favoured the IFP. A number of bus drivers, members of the COSATU-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), were allegedly attacked by IFP-supporting vigilantes.⁶³ It was followed by sporadic attacks on UDF and COSATU members throughout the rest of the year. In 1987 the conflict escalated into a full-scale struggle for control of the Pietermaritzburg townships. There were numerous allegations that the recruitment by the IFP was accompanied by force and demands for money. As vigilante violence increased and adversely affected the communities, they swung their support to the UDF and COSATU alliance. Defence committees were set up in many areas and the balance of power turned against the IFP supporters.⁶⁴

According to Anthony Minnaar, vigilantism was just one side of an often-violent struggle for power. Vigilantism had its own distinction, which, according to those who were engaged in it, was a way of defending themselves in the way they thought was best. The most important distinction can be identified through the different 'styles' of violence of the two sides. Since the fury of 1985-1986 abated, opposition violence usually involved small groups of lightly armed youths, striking at specific people in minority segments of the community. It was alleged that vigilantes had generally enjoyed loyal support from the KwaZulu Legislature and, in some cases, the

⁶² Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), 35-40. See also, Keesing's Records of World Events, Containing the ANC-IFP Conflict, 12 October 1992; Keesing's Records of World Events, Containing the ANC, 10 September 1992; Keesing's Records of World Events, Mass protest over increasing Natal Violence, 2 July 1990.

⁶³ <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/chapter-2-nature-and-character-vigilantes-kwazulu-natal>

⁶⁴ K. von Holdt, Vigilantes versus defense committees: The Maritzburg War: A Turning Point for IFP? *South African Labour Bulletin* 14 (2), 1988, pp. 16-17.

SAP and the SADF were alleged to have aided vigilantes, while also acting vigorously to restrain the opponents of the vigilantes.⁶⁵

Some authors attributed the intensity of the violence in the Natal Midlands to “Warlordism”⁶⁶. Aitchison agrees with Minnaar that the Midlands warlords perpetuated the violence. He defines warlords as “powerful local leaders who rely on the force of arms to maintain their power. They tend to gather a group of professional strong-arm men around them and they pay for their services by screwing [extorting] the local populace.”⁶⁷ UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, equated the warlords to the gang leaders, asserting that their activities were similar to those of gang leaders. The only difference was that they were ‘not motivated exclusively by the acquisition of personal wealth and power, but in addition they owe allegiance to a central power, namely Inkatha. Warlords were champions for a political cause.’⁶⁸ Whilst my research in KwaShange proved this assertion to be true, I nevertheless find it biased; UDF had its own warlords. For example, in the Midlands, David Ntombela, leader of Inkatha, was known to be a warlord. However, the actions of some of the leaders of the UDF and ANC were similar to those of Inkatha leaders. The ‘Lion of the Natal Midlands’, Harry Gwala, and Sifiso Nkabinde, the ANC leader who later joined the United Democratic Movement (UDM) were warlords. The warlords and their political movements did not own up to the violence committed by their supporters. Up to the present there is no warlord in the Midlands who has accepted the blame. Minnaar, however, believes that all those who were accused of being instigators of violence (warlords) and vigilante activities were involved in one way or another. Minnaar describes and discusses violence between hostel dwellers, UDF and Inkatha supporters in Bruntville township outside Mooi River when Inkatha undertook a vigorous recruitment drive.⁶⁹ The collusion was specifically pointed out by the *Daily*

⁶⁵ Anthony Minaar, *Patterns of Violence: Case Studies of contact in Natal*, pp. 3-4. See also, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/chapter-2-nature-and-character-vigilantes-kwazulu-natal>.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Anthony Minnaar, “Undisputed Kings: Warlordism in Natal” in Minnaar (ed.) *Patterns of Violence*, p. 61.; UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) “KwaZulu-Natal – Continued Violence and Displacement” (South Africa: Writenet, 1996).

⁶⁷ Aitchison quoted in Anthony Minaar, “Undisputed Kings: Warlordism in Natal” in Minaar (ed.) *Patterns of Violence*, p. 61.

⁶⁸ UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) “KwaZulu-Natal – Continued Violence and Displacement” (South Africa: Writenet, 1996).

⁶⁹ Anthony Minnaar, “Locked in a Cycle of Violence: The Anatomy of Conflict in Bruntville (1990-1992)”, in A. Minnaar ed., *Patterns of Violence. Case Studies of Conflict in Natal*. (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1992), 143-162. See also Anthony Minnaar, ‘Patterns of Violence’: An

News, which regarded it as evidence of another form of the strong ties between the IFP and the vigilantes.⁷⁰

Senzosenkosi Mkhize provides the social background to the political conflict at Richmond. He describes the formation of Self-Defence Units (SDUs) and Self-Protection Units (SPUs) as the reason why violence escalated in Richmond. It was established at the time that the police were perceived as part of the problem.⁷¹ Andrew Ragavaloo discusses, in detail, the violence in the western part of Richmond.⁷² Steinberg gives an analysis of the living conditions which contributed to the violence in rural areas in the Midlands, particularly near Richmond.⁷³ Riens de Haan provides an overview of the violence in eNkumane during the late 1980s and the 1990s.⁷⁴ De Haan also assesses the various narratives given by people of Richmond as the reasons for violence; stories about love triangles; stories about lost guns; stories about massive violent clashes; stories about assassinations; stories about random attacks. He gives examples of these five types of stories and comments on their historical background, concluding that the violence in Richmond around 1990 was not only about the power of political parties, but, especially in rural areas, about the power of tribal authorities in a period of accelerated urbanisation.⁷⁵

There are projects done by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation that sought to examine the nature and extent of violence during South Africa's transition from apartheid rule to democracy (Phase 1) and within the new democracy itself (Phase 2), in order to inform a violence prevention agenda. This series

Overview of Conflict in Natal During the 1980s and 1990s, in A. Minnaar ed., *Patterns of Violence. Case Studies of Conflict in Natal*. (Pretoria: HSRC, 1990), 1-26.

⁷⁰ Fatima Meer (ed.), *Resistance in Townships* (Durban: Madiba Publishers, 1989), p. 144.

⁷¹ Senzosenkosi Mkhize, "Spirals of Suffering: Political Violence in Richmond KwaZulu-Natal, 1980 to 1999-An Autobiographical narrative," paper presented at a conference at the Msunduzi Museum, 25-26 March 2010.

⁷² For an overview of the violence in the western part of the Richmond (KZN) District during the late 1990s see A. Ragavaloo: *Richmond - Living in the Shadow of Death* (Johannesburg: STE, 2008).

⁷³ For an analysis of the living conditions which contributed to the violence in a rural area neighbouring eNkumane see J. Steinberg: *Midlands* (Jeppestown, Jonathan Ball, 2002).

⁷⁴ Marinus Jacob de Haan: *Mission on the Margin* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal, PhD, 2010: 100-118).

⁷⁵ Marinus Jacob de Haan, "**Error! Main Document Only.** Deadly population dynamics in Richmond: An analysis of stories collected around a local mission station", paper presented at a conference at the Msunduzi Museum, 25-26 March 2010.

comprises a set of self-contained, but interrelated reports, which explore violence within key social loci and areas.⁷⁶

The Goldstone Commission believed that the nature and characteristics of vigilantes in KwaZulu-Natal were mainly due to the economic, social and political imbalances that had resulted from apartheid and a police force and army who were instruments of oppression and who were therefore perceived as unfair and biased. The Commission attributed the forming of vigilantes to a way of fighting a system that was not favourable to them. Surprisingly, the Commission said nothing about the vigilantes who operated together with the security forces in thwarting the efforts of democratic forces in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands.⁷⁷

Anne Truluck noted that competition for land between clans constituted another basis for vigilantism in KwaZulu-Natal. In this form of factional organisation, men who received land from a chief traditionally owed him military loyalty.⁷⁸ In rural KwaZulu-Natal, this obligation was the source of vigilante activities. It was another issue that the IFP exploited. In urban townships and informal settlements, particular leaders who were appointed by the chief himself controlled men. The best organised, but rarest form of vigilantism was the private army. To finance it, a levy was imposed on all the households of a shantytown. The Lindelani settlement on the northern fringes of Durban offers a useful case study.⁷⁹ It sprang up around 1985 and by 1986 had 120 000 inhabitants. From the start it fell under the control of an IFP warlord, Thomas Shabalala. Land was annexed in a violent way. In 1987, an attack was launched from Lindelani into neighbouring Ntuzuma, driving people from their

⁷⁶ Injobo Nebandla (2005), confronting the legacy of weapons in Richmond, KwaZulu-Natal, Braamfontein: The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

⁷⁷ Centre for the Study of violence and Reconciliation, The Goldstone Commission's Inquiry regarding the prevention of public violence and intimidation in KwaZulu-Natal, pp. 19-20.

⁷⁸ Anne Truluck, No Blood on Our Hands: Political Violence in the Natal Midlands 1987-Mid-1992 and the Role of the State, 'white' Political Parties and business (Pietermaritzburg: Natal Midlands Region of the Black Sash, 1992).

⁷⁹ Anne Truluck, No Blood on Our Hands: Political Violence in the Natal Midlands 1987-Mid-1992 and the Role of the State, 'white' Political Parties and business (Pietermaritzburg: Natal Midlands Region of the Black Sash, 1992).

homes and burning it down to acquire new land for settlement. Those who received the land in the neighbouring Ntuzuma owed military loyalty to Shabalala.⁸⁰

Fatima Meer records that the SAP were often accused of playing political games in deciding which areas of violence they had to attend to as quickly as possible. In IFP controlled territories, it was alleged that the SAP even brought expensive equipment from Pretoria to assist the IFP supporters, bearing in mind that some of the equipment needed special care and service. The political games that the police were playing in the name of combating political violence in KwaZulu-Natal was costly to the Government and thus also to society.⁸¹

Some attribute the violence to political movements' leaders, such as Chief Buthelezi. Fatima Meer claims that Buthelezi engineered the violence due to his ambitions to play a leading role in the new government. A reason that has been put forward by some authors is that of a "third force" of right-wing elements in the security establishment, bent on derailing the government's negotiation agenda. Another suggestion was that the Inkatha/ANC rivalry was engineered by an ambitious Buthelezi, who feared being sidelined rather than treated as an equal third party.⁸²

Fatima Meer states that Mangosuthu Buthelezi was alleged by many people to be giving orders for the attacks, since he was afraid of any breakaway in the area, within the ranks of Inkatha. For example during attacks in KwaMakhutha in January 1987 Inkatha vigilantes shot and killed 12 people, including children. This alleged action by Buthelezi left many speechless, especially since innocent children were killed in the process. '[This] seemed to confirm what many observers believed, namely that Buthelezi himself, together with his party, had a direct link with vigilantes.'⁸³

In 1987, Buthelezi made a miscalculated comment, that should any member of the IFP be attacked, then the IFP would have no option but to retaliate, since it would be assumed as the deeds of the ANC and the UDF. This further contributed to the hostile political situation in KwaZulu-Natal. After this

⁸⁰ Anne Truluck, *No Blood on Our Hands: Political Violence in the Natal Midlands 1987-Mid-1992 and the Role of the State, 'white' Political Parties and business* (Pietermaritzburg: Natal Midlands Region of the Black Sash, 1992), pp. 2-3.

⁸¹ Fatima Meer (ed.), *Resistance in Townships* (Durban: Madiba Publishers, 1989), pp. 10-11; A. J. Jeffrey, *Spotlight on the disinformation about violence in South Africa*, South African Institute of Race Relations, pp. 38-39.

⁸² Fatima Meer (ed.), *Resistance in Townships* (Durban: Madiba Publishers, 1989)

⁸³ Fatima Meer (ed.), *Resistance in Townships* (Durban: Madiba Publishers, 1989), p. 145.

comment, daggers were all out for both ANC and IFP supporters in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. The comment was regarded by many that Buthelezi was calling for vigilantism against the ANC and UDF, should any member of his party be attacked. It implicated that UDF and ANC supporters were the masterminds behind the killing of IFP supporters.⁸⁴

Meer also mentions Harry Gwala's speeches for inciting violence and the ANC's campaign of armed struggle, ungovernability, and revolutionary intolerance; ingrained tribalism, unleashed by the lessening of white repression that resulted in "black-on-black" violence.⁸⁵

David Everatt examines the nature and causes of the pre-election period violence. He felt that, on the basis of a close analysis of monitoring data, that the commonly held view that the violence was multi-causal, involving elements of poverty, ethnicity and political contestation, is wrong and that, though the violence indeed drew on a range of socio-economic and political factors, it was deliberately fomented; and that the security forces played a key role, beyond that of favouring Inkatha in trying to affect the negotiation process and protect their own futures.⁸⁶

Jackie Dugard looks at the mechanisms instituted by the Nationalist Party government in response to public (and international) demands that it take action against the violence. She examines the role of the 1991 National Peace Accord and the Commission of Inquiry regarding the Prevention of Public Violence and Intimidation (the Goldstone Commission) which, despite their massive resources and a high media profile, never managed to lower the levels of political violence or to publicly reveal those responsible for it. She concludes that, in many respects, these bodies were effective only as diversionary tactics that allowed the negotiations to continue against the backdrop of continued violence. They played the transition game from the outset.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Fatima Meer (ed.), *Resistance in Townships* (Durban: Madiba Publishers, 1989), p. 139.

⁸⁵ Fatima Meer (ed.), *Resistance in Townships* (Durban: Madiba Publishers, 1989), pp. 180-181.

⁸⁶ David Everatt, "Analysing political violence in Reef, 1990 to 1994" in Greenstein, R, *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratisation* (Johannesburg: Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 2003).

⁸⁷ Jackie Dugard, "The 'government's dustbin'?" in Greenstein, R, *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratisation* (Johannesburg: Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 2003).

Heine Marais revisits some of the issues concerning the interpretation of the violence and shows that the violence was a not easily separable part of the broader influence on the way we are now. Understanding contemporary South African society and what is to be done is illuminated by the political violence of 1987 to 1994 and its role in ensuring that the democratic movement was assimilated into the South African state, rather than taking it over. Marais points out that the Low Intensive Conflict strategy coincided with several socio-economic changes that played an equally important role in countering the values systems once advanced by the main resistance movements. The state-sponsored violence of the late 1980s and early 1990s at most exacerbated emerging fault-lines and encouraged existing conflicts that arose as much from structural (political, economic, social and ideological) trends in society as they did from the acts and omissions of individuals, organisations and state institutions.⁸⁸

Piers Pigou evaluates the extent to which the TRC findings throw sufficient light on this period of violence and provide adequate closure. Analysing its findings on the roles of the parties to the conflict and the security forces in particular, Pigou finds the TRCs attempts to expose the truth of the past both admirable and flawed. As the product of political settlement, it is probable that it was never intended to secure full disclosure and quite probable that it has revealed more than some of its sponsors would like it to have done.⁸⁹

Rupert Taylor point fingers at the system of apartheid as the cause of the [...] conflict: “Apartheid has succeeded in engineering group divisions among the oppressed.”⁹⁰ Adams and Moodley concur with Taylor, that the conflict “is not of some essential ethnic forces,” they argue, however, that to blame it solely on the manipulations of apartheid is an oversimplification.⁹¹ They reason:

Ethnic antagonisms exist in societies that do not have apartheid. Above all, in demystifying ethnicity, the analyst needs to show why the manipulators are so

⁸⁸ Hein Marais, “The shattered settlement”, in Greenstein, R, *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratisation* (Johannesburg: Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 2003).

⁸⁹ Piers Pigou, “The state and violence”, in Greenstein, R, *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratisation* (Johannesburg: Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 2003).

⁹⁰ Taylor, Rupert. 1991. “The Myth of Ethnic Division: Township Conflict on the Reef,” *Race and Class* 33, no. 2, 1–14 quoted from Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

⁹¹ Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

successful in constructing and exploiting ethnic cleavages. Apartheid did not invent all ethnic divisions; it skilfully utilised collective memories and distinct histories. Analysts who deny this historical reality invoke magic formulas to wish away deep-rooted perceptions that can be mobilised for progressive as well as retrogressive ends.⁹²

To attribute all violence to a state-directed “third force” does not explain the attacks against Inkatha officeholders and the police. Among the fatalities in KwaShange are equal numbers of ANC and Inkatha members or sympathizers.⁹³ At the level of the province, however, Aitchison contends that there were more UDF/ANC victims than Inkatha ones.⁹⁴ There is also evidence that both movements had their own “third forces” that were not under the direct control of the national leadership. When MK units “take out” specific Inkatha targets in Natal and local Inkatha warlords organise attacks against ANC leaders and sympathisers, it is difficult to ascertain which side has started the violence and which wreaks revenge. Generally it can be said that the MK violence is carried out more professionally and with the use of sophisticated firearms. In contrast, the more primitive (“cultural”) weaponry of Inkatha members lends itself more to random violence by excited mobs against anyone who is not part of the crowd.⁹⁵

John Argyle has opined that much of the Natal conflict was motivated principally by the desire for revenge and therefore resembles centuries-old blood feuds. In the past, such feuds originated not only over land but also over insults to honour or violations of women. Both sides cite provocation as a defence.⁹⁶ As Kentridge notes, “In a war there are no aggressors; ostensibly no side ever initiates an attack...if an attack is made, it is always retaliatory.” Yet, while it is wise “to believe neither side” until independent conclusive evidence is available, as Argyle cautions, one cannot simply blame the conflict on long-standing cultural traditions of habitual feuding. The

⁹² Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

⁹³ Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

⁹⁴ John Aitchison, “Numbering the Dead: The Course and Pattern of Political Violence in the Natal Midlands 1987-1989”, MA thesis (University of Natal, 1993).

⁹⁵ Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

⁹⁶ John Argyle quoted from Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

waxing and waning of the feuds can be traced to the changing conditions that precipitate or repress intergroup and interpersonal violence.⁹⁷

Few authors have referred to certain incidents of violence in KwaShange.⁹⁸ These authors, political analysts and the media focus on two incidents of violence in KwaShange and attribute these incidents to the political violence between Inkatha and the UDF in the area. While doing research in my home area of KwaShange for my Masters degree in History, I provided a detailed historical background of the area.⁹⁹ In my study I offer a critique of the view by these two authors (Matthew Kentridge and Anthea Jeffery), who claimed that the violent incidents of 1987 and 1990 in KwaShange were wholly politically motivated. My interviews with residents at the time showed that clashes between generations were equally to be blamed for the Midland's violence. Older men were absent at migrant-jobs, communities had moved in from elsewhere and the youth were perceived as ill-disciplined. The two factions then aligned themselves politically on opposing sides, often with fathers against sons and *vice-versa*. Social change was surely also to blame. To critique such a strong view one needs to provide a detailed understanding of the KwaShange milieu pre-dating the start of the violence in the 1980s.¹⁰⁰

Matthew Kentridge and Anthea Jeffery discuss the 'KwaShange Massacre' of 25 September 1987. This is the first KwaShange incident of violence to be documented in literature, despite there having been many other incidents that had taken place before it.

Twelve people, including three black policemen, were arrested in connection with the KwaShange massacre killings [...] The evidence showed that at about

⁹⁷ John Argyle quoted from Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

⁹⁸ Mxolisi Mchunu, "Cultural Change, Zulu Masculinity and Intergenerational Conflict in the Context of Civil War in Pietermaritzburg (1987-1991)", in T. Shefer, K. Ratele, A. Strebel, N. Shabalala and R. Buikema, eds., *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2007); Anthea Jeffrey, *The Natal Story: 16 Years of Conflict* (South African Institute of Race Relations: Johannesburg, 1997), pp. 244-245; see also Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

⁹⁹ Mxolisi Mchunu, "Discipline, Respect and Ethnicity: a study of the changing patterns of fatherhood of three generations of Zulu fathers and sons in the Inadi, Vulindlela, area of Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, from the 1930s to the 1990s." (unpublished MA thesis, 2006).

¹⁰⁰ For these details see Mxolisi Mchunu, "Discipline, Respect and Ethnicity: a study of the changing patterns of fatherhood of three generations of Zulu fathers and sons in the Inadi, Vulindlela, area of Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, from the 1930s to the 1990s." (unpublished MA thesis, 2006).

11 pm on 25 September 1987 a group led by Mr Nkosingithi Hlengwa, a policeman, attacked the house in which the youngsters were gathered. The house was encircled by Hlengwa's men and stones were thrown, breaking windows. Shots were fired and a door smashed in. When the youth tried to barricade the doorway fire was started. More shots were fired into the house. Those who sought to escape from the blazing house were struck down one by one. The screams of those that remained in the house ceased only when a gas bottle exploded, 'producing the final holocaust'.

Jeffery also discussed the 'KwaShange Ambush' of 10 February 1991:

Two buses returning from the Inkatha and ANC peace talks were ambushed in KwaShange (near Pietermaritzburg). Some 18 Inkatha supporters were killed and 11 injured [...] they were spread out within a one kilometre radius spot, suggesting desperate attempts to escape. Automatic weapons had been used to rake the vehicles and to dispatch those who, frantic to escape the bullets, jumped from the buses only to be cornered and slaughtered by an ANC ambush party. Many of the bodies were stabbed repeatedly and some had their heads crushed or beaten in so they were almost unrecognizable.

Jeffrey and Kentridge relied heavily on media reports to discuss these two major incidents in KwaShange. They reasoned that these incidents were exclusively political violence, motivated by nothing else but abhorrence of Inkatha by UDF supporters in KwaShange. As a member of the community residing in KwaShange when these incidents occurred, I find it difficult to commit to this sentiment. I question this view by showing that generational differences were at the bottom of both incidents. Owing to the State of Emergency in operation at this time, media reports were not free to explore either the political ramifications or the links between these two incidents. Nevertheless, Judge Page, in the court summation of the first incident, warned of the dire consequences for generational interactions that would surely result from the first incident. Local IFP member, Velaphi Ndlovu (commenting at the time of the second incident in 1991), recorded that the two incidents had taken place at the exact same location. At the time the media failed to make the link, which points to a generational skirmish. This was possibly because of the confusing and complex nature of the two incidents. The older men who were responsible for the first incident were, in fact,

UDF aligned. This is in contrast to the conventional media view of political allegiances and age, which regarded the UDF as an organisation with a popular youth base. Thus it was assumed that the youth belonged to this movement and Inkatha was assumed to have the support of the older men.

In reality, however, things were more complex because the political allegiances of younger and older men appeared to shift from the one incident to the other. The explanation for this is most likely found in the political opportunism of both factions, which used the politics of the time as a front to resolve other issues.¹⁰¹ Most notably, this would be generational tensions, caused by socio-economic factors of change, but climaxed in the concerns of the older generation about young people's lack of discipline. Importantly, this is the common understanding of the community itself, which still bears the scars of these traumatic events.¹⁰² There are three factors that give substance to the assertion that the incidents were cases of generational struggle, rather than solely of political conflict:

- (a) The community understanding with regard to the indiscipline of the younger age group, such as robbery and theft, stemming from their not receiving proper fathering, for whatever reason.
- (b) The need, and the acts, of the older generation men to wrest back control by implementing 'disciplinary courts', and
- (c) The political opportunism on the part of the younger men and older generations involved in the incidents.

I would be inclined to say that this assumption of mine needs to be rethought, in the light of further information deriving from my doctoral research. Rather, what was happening was so complex that some people in KwaShange were not opportunists to the point of aligning themselves with political movements; they were conscious, fully aware and genuine.

¹⁰¹ I admit here, however, that subsequent doctoral research has indicated yet another dimension or layer of complex origins of these political alignments; namely the UDF and the unions versus the chiefs and Inkatha were other possible causes of the violence.

¹⁰² Mxolisi Mchunu, "Cultural Change, Zulu Masculinity and Intergenerational Conflict in the Context of Civil War in Pietermaritzburg (1987-1991)", in T. Shefer, K. Ratele, A. Strebel, N. Shabalala and R. Buikema, eds., *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2007).

Two British Social Scientists, Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley,¹⁰³ reasoned that Matthew Ketrledge's work on political violence in Vulindlela, 'like most other journalistic efforts, describes the impact of the war on people's lives but does not analyse the forces that have caused and sustained the conflict. Most of these are "verbal snapshots."' ¹⁰⁴ Both Ketrledge and Jeffrey's works on KwaShange violence are 'mostly of the propagandistic kind'.¹⁰⁵ Ketrledge implicitly blames Inkatha warlords, backed by the South African state, as if their one-sided aggression was self-evident, whereas Jeffrey blames the violence on the UDF supporters as if Inkatha were innocent victims.¹⁰⁶

I postulate that respect and discipline are key features in constructions of traditional Zulu masculinity. In response, younger men insisted on being treated as men, asserting their claims of manhood against the older generation men, who they believed were trying to extend their generational subordination.

1.5.4 Studies emphasising gender and generation

Few authors recorded that this political violence had had gender and generational tension dimensions;¹⁰⁷ it was not simply Inkatha and UDF supporters fighting one another. Campbell explains that '[the] analysis of South African violence has failed to take explicit account of the fact that the conflict has almost always taken the form of

¹⁰³ Heribert Adam is professor emeritus of political sociology at Simon Fraser University, specializing in human rights, comparative racisms, peace studies, Southern Africa, and ethnic conflict. He is married to Kogila Moodley, Professor of Anthropology and Sociology of Education at the University of Columbia, who is co-author of his book *Seeking Mandela: Peacemaking Between Israeli and Palestinians* and other works.

¹⁰⁴ Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁵ Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁶ Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁷ For a broader view on the generational conflict and Zulu masculinity see, for instance, Ari Sitas, "The Making of the 'Comrades' Movement in Natal, 1985-1991." *Journal of Southern African Studies*. Vol 18, No 1 (March 1991), pp. 629-641. Kumi Naidoo, "The Politics of Youth Resistance in the 1980s: The Dilemmas of a Differentiated Durban". *Journal of Southern African Studies*. Vol 18, No 1 (March 1991), pp. 143-165. Gerry Mare and Thembisa Waetjen, "Men among Men": Masculinity and Zulu nationalism in the 1980s, in R. Morrell (ed.) *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001). Thokozani Xaba, "Masculinity and its malcontents: The confrontation between 'struggle masculinity' and 'post struggle masculinity' (1900-1997), in R. Morrell (ed.), *Changing men in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001). Catherine Campbell, "Learning to Kill? Masculinity, the family and Violence in Natal," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18 (3), 1992.

men fighting men'.¹⁰⁸ Looking at the statistics provided by John Aitchison's "Numbering the Dead", Debby Bonnin rather believes that the violence stemmed from the usurpation of the political sphere by young men.¹⁰⁹ She explains that the numbers 'of those killed and injured in the violence indicates that the majority were young males. In effect the political violence concealed a generational rapture.'¹¹⁰

[...] politics became the domain of youth organisation and politics the sphere of young men. Older people, men in particular, were marginalised from local politics. When the young men brought their political stances into the domain of the household it unsettled the practise of [ukuhlonipha] and consequently patriarchal relations.¹¹¹

The lack of discipline and *ukuhlonipha* resulted in older generational men deciding to forcibly discipline the youth in what could be termed 'kangaroo courts'. Khabo Mkhize, a seasoned journalist, reported on the violence in Vulindlela, I quote his assertion from Matthew Kentridge: 'The comrades do not confine their disciplinary activities to their own ranks, however, residents are also punished if they infringe some newly imposed standard of decency and good behaviour.'¹¹²

Adam and Moodley attribute the violence of 'mob psychology to the youths who became part of vigilante activities [which] was a serious cause for concern.' They blame parents in Natal and Zululand for failure to provide proper guidance to their

¹⁰⁸ Campbell, C, "Learning to kill? Masculinity, the family and violence in Natal", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18; Gerry Mare and Thembisa Waetjen, "Men amongst Men: Masculinity and Zulu nationalism in the 1980s, in Morrell, R (ed.) *Changing men in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001); see also Thokozani Xaba, "Masculinity and its malcontents: The confrontation between 'struggle masculinity and post-struggle masculinity(1900-1997), in Morrell, R (ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001). Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990); David Hemson, "For Sure You are Going to Die!: Political Participation and the Comrade Movement in Inanda, KwaZulu-Natal", *Social Dynamics*, 22:2 (1996), 74-104. Ari Sitas, The Making of the 'Comrades' Movement in Natal, 1985-1991, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18:3 (1992), 629-641.

¹⁰⁹ Debby Bonnin, "Space, Place and Identity: Political Violence in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu-Natal", PhD Thesis (University of Witwatersrand, 2007), p 3.

¹¹⁰ Debby Bonnin, "Space, Place and Identity: Political Violence in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu-Natal", PhD Thesis (University of Witwatersrand, 2007), p 3.

¹¹¹ Debby Bonnin, "Space, Place and Identity: Political Violence in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu-Natal", PhD Thesis (University of Witwatersrand, 2007), p. 3.

¹¹² Khaba Mkhize quoted in Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), p. 29.

children. They claim that this factor played a role in the massive increase of political violence in the region.¹¹³

Adams and Moodley state that people in the rural communities and the migrant hostels resented the political activism of the urban-based youth as a subversion of the traditional order in which children are obedient and politics is left to the elders. Adams and Moodley stress that, for the older generation, youthful activism was ‘an ungrateful waste of the educational opportunities for which the parents sacrificed so much. On the other hand, youth accuse their parents of having compromised themselves with the system.’¹¹⁴ Anthony Minnaar records that similar tensions took place among the youth, traditional leaders and farm workers in Richmond.¹¹⁵

Evidently this facet of generational conflict of the violence destroyed many families’ cohesion and pitted communities against each other, particularly in the semi-urban settlements surrounding Pietermaritzburg, where rural and urban values clashed directly under conditions of dire poverty.¹¹⁶

In seeking to find historical precedents for such generational conflicts, I have relied upon historian Ben Carton, who suggests that this was one of the root causes of the Bhambatha Uprising of 1906. I quote from Carton:

Youthful rebels so disturbed those African patriarchs who refused to join the rebellion that they taunted them ‘from the hilltop [...] to plait a long rope with which to climb to the heavens,’ and they looted the poll tax. One Nkandla homestead head, Lumbe ka Nombana, reported that ‘old loyalist[s]’ were being warned that they would be killed by the rebels.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

¹¹⁴ Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

¹¹⁵ Anthony Minnaar, “Patterns of Violence: An Overview of Conflict in Natal during the 1980s and 1990s”, in Anthony Minnaar (ed.). *Patterns of Violence: Case Studies of Conflict in Natal* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1992), pp. 1-25.

¹¹⁶ Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993).

¹¹⁷ Carton, B, *Blood from your children: The colonial origins of generational conflict in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000), p. 152.

1.5.5 Studies emphasising the socio-economic factors

Many of the works covering this violence emphasised, as I will show, that socio-economic factors which resulted in the migrant labour and labour laws introduced by colonial and apartheid governments, respectively, were the underlying causes of the violence. Thomas McClendon provides data on social and economic relations within African farm-tenant families in segregation-era Natal. McClendon explores the ways in which rural patriarchy was constructed and contested in South Africa. He believed that the South African state, in conjunction with African patriarchs, sought to further subordinate African minors (unmarried young males and females) to the labour needs of elder males and white farmers, through the use of an increasingly rigid system of “customary” and contract law.¹¹⁸

As some authors feel that socio-economic factors in the region contributed immensely to the start of political violence in the region,¹¹⁹ Bill Berkeley reasons that “there is no doubt that political violence in KwaZulu-Natal has fed upon mass poverty.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Thomas V. McClendon, *Genders and Generations Apart: Labor Tenants and Customary Law in Segregation-Era South Africa, 1920s to 1940s* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002).

See review of the book for H-SAfrica by Aran MacKinnon, Department of History, University of West Georgia. published by H-SAfrica@h-net.msu.edu (January 2004).

¹¹⁹ John Aitchison, “Interpreting Violence: The Struggle to understand the Natal Conflict”, unpublished mimeograph, 1990; see also Douglas Booth and Mlandu Biyela, “Exploring the Spatial Dimensions of Black Resistance and Political Violence in South Africa: The Case of Durban”, *Urban Geography*. 9: 6 (1988), 629-653; Nkosinathi Gwala, “Political Violence and the Struggle for Control in Pietermaritzburg”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 15:3 (1989), 506-524; Doug Hindson and Mike Morris, “Trying to Piece Together the Peace in Natal” *Work in Progress* 69 (1990), 21-23; A Louw, and S. Bekker, “Conflict in the Natal Region – A Database Approach”, in S. Bekker, ed., *Capturing the Event, Conflict Trends in the Natal Region 1986-1992* (Indicator SA Issue Focus, 1992), 15-54; Anthony Minnaar, “Locked in a Cycle of Violence: The Anatomy of Conflict in Bruntville, (1990-1992), in A. Minnaar, ed., *Patterns of Violence: Case Studies of Conflict in Natal* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1992), 143-162; Mike Morris and Doug Hindson, “South Africa: Political Violence, Reform and Reconstruction”, *Review of African Political Economy*, 53:43-59; Rupert Taylor and Mark Shaw, “Interpreting the Conflict in Natal (South Africa)”, unpublished paper presented to Conference on Ethnicity, Society and Conflict in Natal, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1992; G. Woods, “Rebels with a Cause, the Discontent of Black Youth”, *Indicator SA* 7, 1 (1989), 63-65; G. Woods, “Natal Violence: A Contemporary Analysis of Underlying Dynamics”, A. Minnaar ed., *Patterns of Violence: Case Studies of Conflict in Natal* (Pretoria, Human Sciences Research Council, 1992), 37-48. Forsyth P, 'Pietermaritzburg Conflict Chronology: A Chronology of Political Developments in Pietermaritzburg, 1980–1986', produced by the Project on Contemporary Conflict in Natal, Department of Historical Studies, University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg), April 1991. Desai A and Van Holdt K, 'Natal Violence: New Conditions, New Strategies' in South African Labour Bulletin, vol 15 no 4, November 1990. Cronin J, 'For the Sake of Our Lives! Guidelines for the creation of people's self-defence units', Project for the Study of Violence: Seminar Paper No 2, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1991. Cunningham-Brown N, 'The Natal violence continues', South Africa Foundation Review, February 1990.

¹²⁰ Bill Berkeley, “The Warlords of Natal”, *The Atlantic Monthly* (March 1994).

Social and economic deprivation is the factor most often cited by Inkatha itself to explain the violence. Gavin Woods of the Inkatha Institute argued “that reasonably contented communities have a negligible propensity for violence” and “politics is, in itself, not enough to have caused the levels of violence experienced.”¹²¹ Bromberger and Bhamjee explore the high numbers of unemployed in the Natal Midlands townships, especially amongst the youth. Unemployed young people had a lot of time doing nothing and were frustrated about their life conditions. Consequently they resorted to violence.¹²² Radford and Leeb investigated ‘the effects of job loss on the township of Mpophomeni’.¹²³ People left rural areas and went into townships in an attempt to seek employment. Some had been evicted from farms and refugees from the conflict in the greater Durban area came to Pietermaritzburg in numbers in 1984 and 1985. Leeb states that ‘these growing numbers of people [were] forced to share limited resources in terms of land, houses, schools, clinics...’ and the fact that there was a lack of representation in the ruling system, and the oppressive nature of the State, it became apparent that the frustration must give rise to expression.¹²⁴ Adam and Moodley write on vigilantes in KwaZulu-Natal: “A vast majority of vigilantes had no formal education; therefore they were illiterate in a way. Most of them joined the vigilantes as a way of survival, since they were unemployed.” Young believed that being part of the vigilantes meant they were going to achieve something and forget about their unemployment.¹²⁵ Chabani Manganyi blames poverty and unemployment suffered by the people of KwaZulu-Natal as the causes of political violence and vigilantism in the region.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Gavin Woods, "Natal Violence: A Contemporary Analysis of Underlying Dynamics" in Anthony Minnaar (ed.), *Patterns of Violence: Case Studies of Conflict in Natal* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1992), quoted from WRITENET, *KwaZulu-Natal - Continued Violence and Displacement*, 1 July 1996, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6a6bc4.html> [accessed 16 November 2012].

¹²² See, for example, Bromberger, N and Bhamjee, Y, “Unemployment in Pietermaritzburg with special reference to Sobantu”, paper presented at the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa conference, University of the Western Cape, Bellville; see also Bromberger, N, Bhamjee, Y, Francis, M, and Sikhosana, M. J, “Unemployment and public works programme in the Pietermaritzburg district. Development Studies Research Group, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

¹²³ See Radford, J and Leeb, W, “An investigation into the effects of job loss on the township of Mpophomeni”, paper presented to the Industrial Court of Inquiry (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, 2010).

¹²⁴ Wendy Leeb, “Daily life, daily death in Pietermaritzburg” in Aitchison, J, Leeb, W and John, V, *Political violence in the Natal Midlands* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, 2010), p. 72.

¹²⁵ Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (US: University of California Press, 1993)

¹²⁶ N. C. Manganyi, *Political violence and the struggle in South Africa*, pp. 155-156

1.5.6 Literature on effects of violence in the society

Some studies have taken a different approach, by looking not so much at gender or generational dimensions and economic factors that were a cause of the violence, but rather at the effects of violence in schools and on teaching and learning. Authors whose works support the assertions of Leeb are Gultig and Hart, Smith and Khumalo and Nzimande and Thusi. They present more than just ‘raw information’, with some in-depth analysis, for instance Gultig and Hart studied the negative impact the Midlands violence had on schooling. A number of schools were closed in townships near Pietermaritzburg. This caused an escalation of violence, because school learners were frustrated and had too much time at home.¹²⁷ Smith and Khumalo explain the bad effects the violence had on Natal schools.¹²⁸ Nzimande and Thusi concur with Smith and Khumalo that the violence had a serious negative impact on teaching and learning.¹²⁹ Aitchison states that schools in the Midlands were ‘not significant sources of violence’ in the region. Schools were ‘disrupted, and severely so, but this was because of the conflict outside them, usually in the form of external invasions into schools by the groups of armed men.’¹³⁰ As Bonnin puts it, ‘these studies show the huge societal disruptions caused by violence, the destructive effects of violence; the breakdown of community and family life, the resulting poverty, the complete disruption of the education system, and the psychological damage to individuals.’¹³¹ In my thesis, I reason that not only those of the generations and communities involved in the fighting were psychologically affected, but that even generations to come would reap the fruits of the hatred and discord that was sown by those involved in the violent activities. Such future generations will have to ‘clean-up the mess’ created by the unrest.

¹²⁷ Hart, M, “The impact of violence on schooling”, paper presented at the Centre for Adult Education Seminar on Violence, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1988), see also Gultig, J and Hart, M, “The effects of violence on black schooling in Edendale and Vulindlela”, paper presented at the Kenton Conference, Cape Town, 1988).

¹²⁸“Suffer the Children: Refugees and Disrupted Schooling in Natal”, in Anthony Minnaar (ed.). *Patterns of Violence: Case Studies of Conflict in Natal*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1992, pp. 259-264

¹²⁹ Blade Nzimande and S. Thusi, “Children of War: The Impact of Political Violence on Schooling in Natal.” Education Project Unit, (University of Natal, Durban, 1991).

¹³⁰ Aitchison, “Numbering the dead” in Aitchison, J, Leeb, W and John, V, *Political violence in the Natal Midlands* (Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, 2010), p.21.

¹³¹ Debby Bonnin, “Space, Place and Identity: Political Violence in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu-Natal, 1987-1993”, PhD Thesis (University of Witwatersrand, 2007).

I want to reiterate here that few journalists or liberal academics bothered to explore the views of rural people, migrants and squatters, who are thought to be ably represented by popular sophisticated elite. Most of the liberal literature and media (particularly international media) is that Inkatha was regarded as the only cause of violence (with the assistance of the police). The present study shows that, in fact Inkatha and the UDF were equally vicious with each other and the state exacerbated the situation. Many English-language South African journalists, as well as most foreign correspondents writing for a liberal opinion abroad, were more favourably inclined toward the ANC's interpretations than "tribal" Inkatha or Africanist visions.¹³²

1.6 Main argument and contribution to study

1.6.1 Main argument

The main argument of this thesis is that the effects of political violence remain, and become, traumatic in the memory of survivors, affecting their current lives, mostly adversely. I reason that this violence caused much psychological damage and trauma to the victims. As a result, the violence and its consequences influenced the lives of all persons affected by it. This influence was transmitted across generations and sexes, through whole families and communities. It must be realized that these people and their families were affected for a long time and many are still traumatised. The social structure of the community was affected by it and, by implication, that of successive generations was also affected.

How did communities, families and individuals survive these traumatic experiences? How did they cope (or fail to cope) with their experiences, both then and now? To what extent does resentment survive between neighbours and relatives who turned on each other? Answers to these and similar questions are reflected in the stories of pain and loss, alongside hope and a realisation for some that violence was temporary but its outcomes would be permanent

Previous studies dealt with political analysis of the causes of war and sometimes the physical results, death statistics and the vandalism of property. This thesis

¹³² See for example, John Battersby, "In Apartheid's Shadow, Zulu Wages War on Zulu" (*The New York Times*, 9 November, 1987).

particularly contributes to understanding the psycho-spiritual effects that coincides with social destruction, this is the trauma, if you will, that survivors have to cope, or fail to cope, with.

1.6.2 Contribution to Study

Even though the political violence in South Africa has been well documented; albeit unpublished, particularly the records of the Natal Midlands political violence, there is a lacuna in the literature. There is also a lacuna on generational and masculinity tensions which are not well covered in the literature. I should add that any scholarly work is incomplete by definition because it does not include the subjective element.¹³³ Many authors and observers were people outside the communities that were directly affected by the violence. Some who experienced the violence avoid writing their stories from the eye-witness perspective; this is probably because they consider autobiographical life-stories too subjective. I have, however, decided to include a chapter on my own and my mother's experience of the unrest in my home of KwaShange, from 1987 to the present. I feel that the accusations, lack of objectivity and the anxieties of recall are worth recording, in spite of such drawbacks. These details together with those of my interviewees, many of whom were neighbours or relatives, cover a range of age-groupings and both sexes. They can only but enrich the understanding of the trauma caused by the violence stemming from the civil unrest.

Thus the subject matter of this thesis is grounded in my personal odyssey: how I experienced the political violence of the 1980s and 1990s, from the age of approximately eight up until my early teens. This period of uncertainty and violence marked my life and affected my identity. For this reason alone I would argue that my thesis cannot be written without frequent reference to my historically constructed self; the study is shaped by my own history and past experience. Only when the thesis is completed, will I be able to grasp the nature of memory and its relationship to violence-induced trauma that characterised the experience of the civil war that marred my childhood. Mine was a childhood that in its interactions between parents, children and siblings very possibly was echoed in other families in KwaShange. While I am aware that a PhD is a serious and difficult undertaking, I nevertheless feel that this is my chance to come to understand some of the effects of war on families' dynamics.

¹³³ Personal conversation with Philippe Denis, Pietermaritzburg, December 2012.

That is why I, in this thesis, permit my own voice to be heard. My aim with this layer of autobiography is to produce findings that seek to add a contemporary and authentic dimension to the existing knowledge on the experiences of violence in the Midlands and to the methodological use of self in research.¹³⁴

In order to understand the trauma of the survivors, I contend that historians and social scientists must venture to approach persons who are survivors of trauma in order to be able to understand the results of a life touched by such trauma. For example, in Chapter Three I discuss my personal experiences of trauma, while the other chapters quote verbatim accounts of other interviewees' experiences of trauma. This auto/biographical dimension to my study, I realise, is fairly new to South African historiography. While arguably subjective, the pay-off is in-depth understanding. There is also a need to have a cultural understanding and language skills in the survivors' world that can elucidate some of the impact of such stress, in context.

Being an insider, with language skills and community and cultural backgrounds, helps to articulate the depth of the applicability of my hypotheses regarding trauma as post-traumatic stress. In Chapter Seven, Eight and Nine I have studied, in detail, *muthi* within war and, in Chapter Eight, healing of those men who have been doctored and have to return to their communities that they have violated during the unrest. Chapter Nine deals with women's dreams and precognitions of violence. This study has been ignored, often deliberately I suggest, by many political analysts, perhaps for reasons of the cultural dynamics of *muthi* and healing being associated with the IFP in particular, while, in fact, all local parties, the UDF/ANC and the IFP/Inkatha Movement of the time, also used the same cultural practices. The role of war-doctors and the importance of the *impi* being cleansed have perhaps for the first time, been dealt with in a history doctoral dissertation. It is hoped that this will contribute to the African understanding of trauma and healing. Chapter Nine brings to light a new dimension to women and war and their role in the subsequent return to civilian life.

From my language, insider and community position I can advocate confidently for cultural continuity, not only as seen in *muthi* and healing, but where I found, for

¹³⁴ I have dealt with this subject matter in my chapter, "Are Rural Communities Open Sources of Knowledge?", in Philippe Denis and Radikobo Ntsimane, *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008)

instance, that the causation of the civil war could be attributed not just to political partisanship, but also to earlier displacement/settlement practices under the apartheid regime. The tenant-labour laws of the 1960s for example, resulted in families from white-owned farms moving into areas under *Amakhosi* of perhaps related clans, living nearer places of work in cities. Generational tensions arose and younger and older men became aligned in groups during the state of emergency of the 1980s. I argue for a dimension of such clashes that is more than political preferences but also generational frustrations.

Another void in the existing literature is the theme of memory and trauma. Most studies explore and record the interviews of survivors describing what happened, but this thesis takes the matter further by exploring the link between history and memory. I believe that history is what happened and memory is how we remember what happened. This thesis will look into the history of what happened in KwaShange and the history of the manner in which people remember what happened in KwaShange and of how these memories have affected them since then. People are better able to remember an event if they have an opportunity to tell others about it.¹³⁵

1.7 Broad theoretical issues

My study is constructed upon the following concepts, namely narrative and memory, commemoration, trauma and violence, culture of conflict, healing and reconciliation and psycho-social intervention. As a starting point, I think it necessary to explore literature on memory and oral history as these constitute the main method of this study. The works of scholars such as Alessandra Portelli,¹³⁶ Pierre Nora,¹³⁷ Philippe Denis,¹³⁸ Paul Thompson,¹³⁹ Sean Field¹⁴⁰ and Michael Fischer¹⁴¹ are useful in this

¹³⁵ Denis, P, in *Never too small to remember. Memory work and resilience in times of AIDS* (Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications, 2006) gives an overview of the theory of memory.

¹³⁶ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

¹³⁷ For example Pierre Nora, "General Introduction: Between Memory and History", in L. D. Kritzman, ed., *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past. Volume 1: Conflicts and Division*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 1-20.

¹³⁸ For example Philippe Denis, "Healing the Wound of the Past: Oral History in Post-Apartheid South Africa", in G. Danisman ed., *Crossroads of History: Experience, Memory, Orality. XIth International Oral History Conference, Istanbul, 15-19 June 2000*, (Istanbul: Bogaziçi University, 2000), 960-65; Philippe Denis, "Oral History in a Wounded Country", in P. Denis, *Orality, Literacy and Colonialism in Southern Africa* (Semeia Studies, Vol. 46) ed., Jonathan Draper (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature; Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2003), 205-16. Philippe Denis, *Never Too Small to*

regard in that they give a vivid method of understanding oral sources testimonies and their memories.

As Gary Baines pointed out, memory, like history, is a reconstruction of the past from which meaning is derived. He states, however, that “history and memory are not synonymous.”¹⁴² Baines refer to Pierre Nora’s view of memory that it “is in a permanent state of flux, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation.” He argues that there is a tension between history and memory, “[...], history and memory are in a fundamental state of tension. The tension is between the past [which is gone] and the history [which we construct today].”¹⁴³ Memory is the link between the two (we remember the past and our memories become history). Baines see no need for the tension between the two. He reasons:

History and memory are often in contestation but they need not be. Indeed, there can be intersection or elision between history and memory for they are mutually constitutive. So the juxtaposition of history and memory is something of a false dichotomy to start with. What we are actually interested in is memory *in* history, the role of the past in history or, for that matter, in contemporary politics.¹⁴⁴

Remember: Memory Work and Resilience in Times of AIDS (Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications, 2006) gives overview on the theory of memory. See also Philippe Denis, “Introduction”, in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane, eds., *Oral History in a Wounded Country; Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (Scottsville: UKZN Press, 2009).

¹³⁹See for an example, Paul Thompson, *The Voices of the Past: Oral History*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁴⁰Sean Field, “Beyond ‘Healing’: Trauma, Oral History and Regeneration”, *Oral History* 34:1 (2006), 31-42.

¹⁴¹Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

¹⁴²Gary Baines, “The Politics of Public History in Post-Apartheid South Africa” (Rhodes University, 2004), this article can be access online:

<http://sun025.su.ac.za/portal/page/portal/arts/department1/geskiedenis/docs/baines-g.pdf> - accessed on 11 July 2012.

¹⁴³Gary Baines, “The Politics of Public History in Post-Apartheid South Africa” (Rhodes University, 2004) , this article can be access online:

<http://sun025.su.ac.za/portal/page/portal/arts/department1/geskiedenis/docs/baines-g.pdf> - accessed on 11 July 2012.

¹⁴⁴Gary Baines, “The Politics of Public History in Post-Apartheid South Africa” (Rhodes University, 2004), p. 5 this article can be access online:

<http://sun025.su.ac.za/portal/page/portal/arts/department1/geskiedenis/docs/baines-g.pdf> - accessed on 11 July 2012.

Portelli says that “the content of the written source is independent of the researcher’s need and hypothesis; it is a stable text, which we can only interpret.”¹⁴⁵ The interpretation, however, in this case belongs to me as historian. The memories which I use are now texts and reconstructions, reproduced in my text; “from an epistemological perspective, they are subjective reconstructions.”¹⁴⁶ Borrowing from Portelli’s thesis, my intention in here is not only to give information about the events of the past but to describe what the significance of these [political violence] events was and still is for the survivors and perpetrators of the violence in KwaShange and secondarily, for the production of scientific knowledge.¹⁴⁷ In other words, memories are primarily significant for the people who remember and only secondarily for scholars. In this study, I am interested in the memories of a place (KwaShange). Whilst I am looking for facts and the truth (even though these concepts are contested) about the past in oral history, one could note that truth is a problem whether one uses oral history or written sources. Portelli says:

If you are only seeking verifiable factual evidence, then memories presented through oral histories will sometimes give you facts and at other times they will not. But if you are trying to understand how and why people believe what they believe, think what they think and – most crucially – why people act in the way that they do, their memories and oral narratives or text are of vital research significance.¹⁴⁸

Portelli also warns that approaching oral history and memory in a positivist or artifactual manner runs the risk of excluding a wealth of information which is deemed emotional, subjective, nostalgic or immeasurable, and therefore not worthy of study. Research practices that flow from these assumptions are disempowering, and it is unfortunate that these attitudes still drive much academic research.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Alessandro Portelli, “What Makes Oral History Different?”, quoted in Outi Fingeroos, “Karelia: A Place of Memories and Utopias”, *Oral Tradition*, 23/2 (2008): 235-254.

¹⁴⁶ Alessandro Portelli, “What Makes Oral History Different?”, quoted in Outi Fingeroos, “Karelia: A Place of Memories and Utopias”, *Oral Tradition*, 23/2 (2008): 235-254.

¹⁴⁷ Alessandro Portelli, “What Makes Oral History Different?”, quoted in Outi Fingeroos, “Karelia: A Place of Memories and Utopias”, *Oral Tradition*, 23/2 (2008): 235-254.

¹⁴⁸ Alessandro Portelli, “What Makes Oral History Different?”, in R. Perks and A. Thomson eds., *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), 67, 70.

¹⁴⁹ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991) quoted in Sean Field, R. Mayer and F.

Many of my interviewees came from KwaShange and interviews were conducted in KwaShange where, many years before, they had experienced this turmoil. The *place* of KwaShange is significant for the interviewees. Christopher Tilley argues that *place* is a socially constructed expression that is an integrated part of people's everyday life.¹⁵⁰

The interpretation of place includes both subjective and social dimensions, and place cannot be understood without them. In other words, the nature of place depends on the person who experiences it and the way he or she experiences it; a place does not exist without relations and is essentially restricted by the human vision and consciousness. In this thesis, place is understood as a construction that individuals and communities produce through speech and writing and creation of space.¹⁵¹

Nora explains the mechanisms through which the meanings of a phenomenon from the past – such as a place of memory – are recreated.¹⁵² Nora's *Realms of Memory* falls into the genre of history of mentalities, which focuses not on war and politics, as is usual in earlier history-writing, but on the wider world-views of past cultural and social groups. He characterizes his approach as a "history of the second degree." He defines it as "a history in multiple voices ... less interested in causes than in effects ... less interested in 'what actually happened' than in its perpetual re-use and misuse, its influence on successive presents; less interested in traditions than in the way in which traditions are constituted and passed on."¹⁵³ Relying on Nora, my study will

Swason eds., "Introduction", in *Imagining the City: Memories and Cultures in Cape Town* (Cape Town: Human Science Research Council Press, 2007), 9.

¹⁵⁰ Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* quoted in in Outi Fingeroos, "Karelia: A Place of Memories and Utopias", *Oral Tradition*, 23/2 (2008): 235-254.

¹⁵¹ Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* quoted in in Outi Fingeroos, "Karelia: A Place of Memories and Utopias", *Oral Tradition*, 23/2 (2008): 235-254.

¹⁵² Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de mémoire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) quoted in in Outi Fingeroos, "Karelia: A Place of Memories and Utopias", *Oral Tradition*, 23/2 (2008): 235-254. See also Pierre Nora, "The Era of Commemoration", in L. D. Kritzman, ed., *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past. Volume III: Symbols* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 609-37. Pierre Nora, "General Introduction: Between Memory and History", in L. D. Kritzman, ed., *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past. Volume I: Conflicts and Division* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 1-20.

¹⁵³ Pierre Nora, *Remembered Realms: Pierre Nora and French National Memory* from www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/106.3

document how people remember the traumatic events of the political unrest in KwaShange, i.e. the history of what happened in KwaShange.

Theories of memory are especially pertinent to the study of trauma. Evidence from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work has an immediacy that could be missing from such reworked redemptive and master-narrative 'constructions,' as I have mentioned above in my literature review. Readings in trauma and memory are especially important to my study which considers the nature of memory and the nature of healing. Phyllis Kosminsky, a clinical-psychologist dealing with grief counselling, speaks about the difficulties of healing in what she terms 'complicated mourning' situations.¹⁵⁴ These are: violence, conflicted feelings or complication in regard to a death. These feelings may result in the inability to get past the 'block' to face the inevitability of such a death and therefore an inability to heal naturally. Healing may take time and movement through the usual sequence of grieving; denial, confrontation of the full range of feelings evoked and eventual acceptance and accommodation of the loss. She says of one of her patients, "People who witness their loved ones die a terrible death are often left with memories so vivid and unremitting that they can think of little else: not the person's life, not their relationship with the person and all that they shared ... This is the nature of traumatic memory – an image that seems to exist apart from time, with the potential to trigger old stores of emotional pain every time the image is recalled."¹⁵⁵

Time does not drain these images of their power. Nothing we say to ourselves and nothing anyone else says seems to help ... because of the way the brain stores these memories, it can feel as if they are happening *right now* [her emphasis].¹⁵⁶

There is difference between ordinary and painful memory. Being in grief makes people to remember differently. Using the works of Sean Field¹⁵⁷ and Kim Lacy

¹⁵⁴Phyllis Kosminsky, *Getting Back to Life When Grief Won't Heal* (US: McGraw-Hill Books, 2007).

¹⁵⁵Phyllis Kosminsky, *Getting Back to Life When Grief Won't Heal* (US: McGraw-Hill Books, 2007).

¹⁵⁶Phyllis Kosminsky, *Getting Back to Life When Grief Won't Heal* (US: McGraw-Hill Books, 2007), 23.

¹⁵⁷Sean Field, *Lost Communities, Living Memories: Remembering Forced Removals in Cape Town* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001), see also Sean Field, "Remembering Experience, Interpreting Memory: Life Stories from Windermere", *African Studies* 60, 1, (2001), 119-133.

Rogers,¹⁵⁸ however, I shall restrict my discussion to the issue of painful memories in oral history. I shall not deal with grief *per se* because I am not equipped for that.

In this dissertation memory is studied as a source of history and, in my last chapter (Chapter Ten), an object of investigation. The question may be asked, how I envisaged the link between history and memory. I would argue that history is a record of what happened and memory is how we remember what happened. This thesis looks into the history of what happened in KwaShange and the manner in which people remember these events and how these memories have affected them since then. People are better able to remember an event if they have an opportunity to tell others about it.¹⁵⁹

All research needs to be grounded experience and information before theorizing can take place. I have realized that historians and social scientists must venture to approach persons from whom they are ordinarily remote because of differences of age, lifestyle or experience, for interviews on sensitive issues, as it is only by doing so that data on matters concealed, or rarely discussed, will be revealed and made usable. The broader implications of my research are that history will be re-written on the basis of these revelations, and the process of establishing the history of the past by collection of data from oral sources will be validated as a research methodology.

As formal interviews are my primary source, theory around memory and oral history will inform my approach to these interviews. Frisch¹⁶⁰ and Portelli¹⁶¹ draw attention to the “theme” and “plot” of oral narratives¹⁶²; “for all their considerable value, oral history interviews are not an unproblematic source. Although narrators speak for themselves, what they have to say does not.” There are obvious limits to the process of collecting oral history, because people may forget details and reconstitute their

¹⁵⁸Kim Lacy Rogers, “Memory, Struggle, and Power: On Interviewing Political Activists”, *Oral History Review* 15 (Spring 1987), 165-184.

¹⁵⁹Philippe Denis, *Never Too Small to Remember: Memory Work and Resilience in Times of AIDS* (Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications, 2006).

¹⁶⁰Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

¹⁶¹Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

¹⁶²See also, Grele, J. Ronald, “Preface,” *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History* 2nd Edition (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1985), viii. His book deals with the reconstruction of memories in oral history interviews.

tales. In other words, memory is continually being reconstructed. Nevertheless, if interviews are collected within a large group, some consensus should emerge.

This study inserts into scholarship the Zulu perspective on trauma and indigenous methods used to deal with trauma. How do local people define and explain the experiences they went through? How are they dealing with the aftermath of violence? These are questions that are taken up in this study. Political trauma is not simply a collection of symptoms, as is often claimed¹⁶³—in fact symptoms may not follow all traumas.¹⁶⁴ Trauma associated with political conflict is largely about the destruction of individuals, families and the social and political structures of a society. The theme of psycho-social¹⁶⁵ intervention has been explored by Sigmund Freud, who argues that in war people do not “sink so low as we feared, because they had never risen so high as we believed”. For Freud, violence is innate in human nature and finds easy expression in times of conflict.¹⁶⁶

Goldblatt and Meintjies argue that the violence of South Africa’s past has contributed to a climate of violence against women and crime in the country today.¹⁶⁷ According to this view, violence generally continues for decades within the social fabric of societies which have emerged from conflict. Psycho-social studies stress the importance of thinking about trauma from both psychological and social perspectives. The term ‘psycho-social’ recognises that there is a close, ongoing interaction between an individual’s psychological state and his or her social environment¹⁶⁸ Simpson and Rauch of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³See Brandon Hamber, “The Impact of Trauma: A Psychosocial Approach”. Keynote Address to the “A Shared Practice – Victims Work in Action Conference”, (Limavady: Northern Ireland, 7-8 April 2004).

¹⁶⁴Brandon Hamber, “The Impact of Trauma: A Psychosocial Approach”. Keynote Address to the “A Shared Practice – Victims Work in Action Conference”, (Limavady: Northern Ireland, 7-8 April 2004).

¹⁶⁵See Radikobo Ntsimane, “Trauma, Resilience and Reconciliation: Sinomlando’ Psycho-Social Interventions in KwaZulu-Natal”, *Archives News: National Archives and Records Services of South Africa* 1 (2007), 31.

¹⁶⁶Sigmund Freud, *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death* (1915): The Standard Edition of Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol XIV (1914-1916). <http://www.panarchy.org/freud/war.1915.html> accessed 14 July 2008.

¹⁶⁷B. Goldblatt and S. Meintjies, “Dealing with the Aftermath – Sexual Violence and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission”, *Agenda*, 36, (1997), 7-17.

¹⁶⁸I. Agger, “Psychosocial Assistance during Ethno-political Warfare in the Former Yugoslavia”, in D. Chiro and M. Seligman eds., *Ethno-political Warfare: Causes, Consequences and Possible Solutions* (Washington: American Psychological Association, 2001), 305-318.

¹⁶⁹G. Simpson and J. Rauch, “Political Violence 1991”, in N. Boister and K. Ferguson-Brown eds., *Human Rights Yearbook* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1991).

have developed a concept of the “politicisation of everyday life,” which can be used in the consideration of the consequences of political violence.

Most discussions of conflict that invoke culture discuss the influence of culture on the course of the conflict itself.¹⁷⁰ This study will show a particularly Zulu cultural bias towards conflict, in the form of feuding and physical violence. ‘Culture of conflict’ as used in this thesis refers to the beliefs, attitudes and opinions of particular groups that those who disagree with them politically or on any other major issue are enemies and deserve to be destroyed. Such beliefs understandably influence the historical outcome of any conflict. It is possible to explain the conflict-related aspects of particular cultures as culturally specific, since the belief that conflict should inevitably find expression in violence is not universal.

Despite differences between cultures concerning conflict and culturally specific practices and thought patterns, there are many commonalities in the occurrence of conflict worldwide. In order to contribute to a more universal understanding of the topic, these commonalities may profitably be compared to see if conflict occurs in particular cultures which favour, or ‘naturalise’, conflict as a mode of settling disputes. There is no doubt that there are layers of behaviour and thought processes that form part of a culture of conflict, and these need to be recognized as causes of violent conflict. Most processes intended to resolve conflict, like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), do not deal with the transition from violence to peace as a process of cultural change.¹⁷¹ In KwaShange, there are a number of conflicts that erupted before the political violence of the 1980s. My study will explore how the local people of KwaShange have been dealing with the ‘after the conflict’ years. In other words my study will look at the historical dimension of beliefs and behaviour concerning peace-making after conflict, like prayer-meetings and

¹⁷⁰See for instance Michelle LeBaron, “Culture and Conflict”, (UNHCR, July 2003); Michelle LeBaron and Bruce Grundison, *Conflict and Culture: Research in Five Communities in British Columbia, Canada* (Victoria, British Columbia: University of Victoria, 1993); Edward Hall, *Beyond Cultures* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1976); John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 94.

¹⁷¹There is a lot of literature on this subject, see for example, Radikobo Ntsimane, “A Mirage Called Forgiveness: A Critique of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission”, in P. Denis ed., *Orality, Memory and the Past: Listening to the Voices of Black Clergy under Colonialism and Apartheid* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2000); Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, *A Human Being Died That Night: A Story of Forgiveness* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2003).

cleansing, and how these derive from Zulu culture. The prevalence of such rituals is shown by the way in which they have been taken up into African Christian churches, like the Zionist churches and the Zulu Christian Church. This study will show the historical dimension of such beliefs and behaviour. And it will, I hope, thereby contribute to fields that derive from a “culture of conflict”, namely the study of violence, trauma, memory, gender and conflict resolution.

1.8 Brief outline of the chapters

I have divided the thesis into four parts: Parts I, II, III and IV. Part I is divided into three chapters which are introductory, containing information that I believe is fundamental to an understanding of the chapters in Part II. Chapter One is the introduction, which sets the tone and scene of the thesis. I outline my arguments, undertaking a literature review and a brief outline of chapters. Chapter Two describes research methodology and methods, my research experiences in the community under study and my dual positions as a researcher (outsider) and participant (insider). Chapter Three is an auto/biographical narrative, focussing on my personal experiences of political violence and those of my parents and siblings. It gives reasons for selecting the topic and seating it in KwaShange.

Part II of this thesis, which is also divided into three chapters, is dedicated to background and details of the violence. Chapter Four gives background to the history of KwaShange as part of Vulindlela area, previously known as Zwartkop. This background material provides a foundation for the arguments that I raise in the thesis. The chapter also describes the physical background. I begin by describing some of the precipitating factors which could have been seen as contributing to the war. I describe the different clans that came to live in KwaShange from farms in Natal and Zululand and the relationships they had with each other. In Chapter Five I discuss the background to the violence in KwaShange, beginning by profiling community leaders who were at the forefront of the violence and how community members were divided and began to attack each other. I also outline the chronology of events in KwaShange starting from 1987. In Chapter Six I explain the wider politics that stood behind the conflicts of the 1980s and 1990s and show how provincial and national developments,

in particular the emerging tension between Inkatha and the ANC at the national level of leadership, changed the climate in KwaShange and fuelled violence.

Part III is also divided into three chapters: Chapter Seven introduces the reader to the roles played by women in the violence. It focuses on women's prophetic dreams and the effects these dreams had on the violence. Chapter Eight discusses the use of *muthi* in KwaShange during the violence as well as the community's acceptance, under pressure, of practices which they disliked and of which they disapproved. Chapter Nine discusses the effects of this violence on young combatants, families and the community in general and tries to explain how successive generations are affected.

Part IV is the concluding section of this thesis. It is divided into two chapters: Chapter Ten tries to answer the following questions: how do people remember this violence, where and when do they remember? Chapter Eleven summarises the findings of my thesis and attempts an interpretation of the causes of the violence.

Chapter Two

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

The strengths and weaknesses of any research study depend mainly on its methodologies. For any study to be accepted, it is important that the methodology used is correct and appropriate – the subject or theme to be investigated should give direction to the methodology or methodologies to be adopted. The onus is on the researcher to clearly expound the methods to be employed. Crotty stresses that justification of the research methodology choice should relate to the theoretical perspective that underpins the research.¹ Martin Marshal states that a choice of research methods to be employed in any study should be ‘determined by the research questions’ and nature of the study ‘not by the preference of the researcher.’² A good way to choose the best research methodology for any study is to look at the nature of the investigation, theme, and research questions the study intends to answer. If the research questions are more exploratory and investigative — asking how or what — they are usually best answered with qualitative or mixed methods. If the research question presents a hypothesis or a statement that needs to be proven right or wrong, then a quantitative methodology would generally be used.³

This chapter discusses and provides the rationale for the choice of approaches. It elucidates the aim and objectives of the study and the critical questions the thesis aims to answer. It presents the philosophy this research subscribes to and the research methodologies adopted. It explains the research design, the strategies, the instruments, and the data collection and analysis methods, while explaining the stages and process involved in the study.

¹ Crotty, M., (1998), *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*, Allen and Unwin, quoted from Deborah Levy, *Qualitative Methodology and Grounded Theory in Property Research* (University of Auckland).

² Martin N. Marshal “Sampling for Qualitative Research” in *Family Practice* (Britain: Oxford University Press, 1996) vol.13, 6.

³ <http://www.wisegeek.com/how-do-i-choose-the-best-research-paper-methodology.htm>, accessed on 1 Oct 2012.

2.2 Aim and objectives

This investigation was concerned generally with recording and analysing the history of political violence in KwaShange, focussing the account it offers on the testimony of survivors, and its effects on the community members in the ensuing years.

The objectives of the study were to:

- A. Present a historical overview of violence in KwaShange – describe what happened during the years of political violence;
- B. Record testimonies of the survivors of political violence in the area;
- C. Analyse the experiences of the KwaShange community members;
- D. Attempt to answer how the community members, families and individuals survived these traumatic experiences; and
- E. Record how they coped (or failed to cope) with their experiences, both then and 15 years after the end of violence.

2.3 Methodology

In keeping with Martin Marshal's stipulations, the nature of my investigation necessitated that I employ a qualitative rather than a quantitative research methodology.

A basic distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is the methods used to collect, analyse and present information. Atkinson describes qualitative research as a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live.⁴ It presents information with words, in a descriptive narrative. It attempts to understand phenomena in 'natural settings.' "The aim of qualitative studies is to provide illumination and understanding of complex psychosocial issues and are most useful for answering humanistic "why" and "how" questions."⁵ Qualitative research presents data as a descriptive narration and attempts to understand phenomena in 'natural

⁴Atkison, P. A, Coffey, A. J and Delamont, S, *Key Themes in Qualitative Research* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003).

⁵Martin N. Marshal "Sampling for Qualitative Research" in *Family Practice* (Britain: Oxford University Press, 1996) vol.13, 6.

settings.⁶ On the other hand, quantitative research utilises statistical results represented by statistical records and aims to “test pre-determined hypotheses and produce generalisable results. This method is helpful for answering more mechanistic *what* questions.”⁷

The present study utilises the qualitative research method in order to understand the trauma the survivors of political violence in KwaShange experienced, then and now. Qualitative research was selected as the appropriate method for a study of this nature. It considers the meaning survivors of the violence attach to the violence they experienced and describes the lives of people of KwaShange, before, during and after the violence. How do local people define and explain the experiences they went through? How are they dealing with the aftermath of violence? The qualitative research method helped to understand the KwaShange people’s feelings and lived experiences.

The nature of my research in KwaShange, a social inquiry that focuses on the way KwaShange survivors of violence make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live,⁸ dictated the research methodology. This study is somewhat ethnographic, in the sense that it is a scientific study of human social phenomena and a community. Through means such as fieldwork, my study includes more research techniques than just ethnography (observation).⁹ The study is necessarily a descriptive and interpretive case-study that is analysed through qualitative methods. The intent is to provide a detailed, in-depth description of political violence in KwaShange and how the everyday lives and practices of people were affected.

I employed different approaches to gather information: action, participatory, ethnography, and grounded theory to analyse data.

⁶Martin N. Marshal “Sampling for Qualitative Research” in *Family Practice* (Britain: Oxford University Press, 1996) vol.13, 6.

⁷ Martin N. Marshal “Sampling for Qualitative Research” in *Family Practice* (Britain: Oxford University Press, 1996) vol.13, 6.

⁸ Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*-fourth edition (London: Sage, 2009), quoted in, Atkison, P. A, Coffey, A. J and Delamont, S, *Key Themes in Qualitative Research* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003).

http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/BPL/Images/Content_store/Sample_chapter/9780632052844/001-025%5B1%5D.pdf, accessed on 1 October 2012.

⁹ www.DebtReview.co/Blouberg, accessed on 2 October 2012.

Action research and participatory approaches: even though these two approaches are not the same, their similar methods were integrated and applied in my research. The nature of these approaches required that I engage with the KwaShange community members in a democratic, equitable and liberating manner. This involved empowering the community, by inviting them to be partners in the research process.¹⁰ This approach required that the research be carried out by all involved parties. In this way, I focused on engaging KwaShange residents with open minds, whilst making every attempt to allow them to relive the events in their minds. This was an opportunity for everybody to participate in this historical study.

Ethnography: The KwaShange community was studied in their ‘natural culture’ and setting. I took into consideration their context and environment. I spent many years, before embarking on my research observing how people behaved and talked about the violence of the 1980s – 1990s. I attended a number of functions, funerals and local meetings, with the intention of listening to KwaShange people talking about the violence and how it affected them. This was necessary and helped me to prepare discussions, frame my research questions and identify some key respondents and role players.

Grounded Theory: this theory was applied through the analysis of multiple stages of data collection and interpretation. I identified trends, patterns and categories from the collected data which I shared with members of the community, in order to engage with them and solicit their opinions on how to package the information. This made it necessary for me to continuously revisit the process, collect further data, and validate the data.

2.3.1 Interpretive paradigm

This study employed an interpretive approach which is consistent with the qualitative methodology described earlier, as opposed to positivist or objectivist approach. The positivist position is grounded in the theoretical belief that there is an objective reality that can be known to the researcher, if he or she uses the correct methods and applies those methods in a correct manner.¹¹ The nature of reality assumed by positivism is realism, whereby a reality is assumed to exist and can be objectively given – in other words, knowledge is objective and

¹⁰ Cf. Paulo Freire *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) quoted in Thenjiwe Magwaza *et al*, *Freedom Sown in Blood: Memories of the Impi Yamakhanda: An Indigenous Knowledge System Perspective* (Thohoyandou: Ditlou Publishers, 2006).

¹¹ Deborah Cohen and Benjamin Crabtree, “Qualitative Research Guidelines Project” (Princeton: RWJF, 2008) <http://www.quarles.org/Cont-3440.html>, accessed on 14 August 2012.

quantifiable. Positivism is concerned with uncovering truth and presenting it by empirical means.¹² Interpretive researchers believe that reality consists of people's subjective experiences of the external world; thus they may adopt an inter-subjective epistemology and the ontological belief that reality is socially constructed. Jerry Willis states that interpretivists are anti-foundationalists,¹³ who believe there is no single correct way to, or method of, acquiring knowledge. According to Glen Aikenhead, the interpretive paradigm is underpinned by observation and interpretation. To observe is to collect information about events, while to interpret is to make meaning of that information by drawing inference or by judging the match between the information and some abstract patterns.¹⁴ Interpretation attempts to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them.¹⁵ Thomas Reeves and John Hedberg explain that the 'interpretivist' paradigm stresses the need to put analysis in context. The interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is from the subjective experience of individuals. They use meaning (as opposed to measurement) oriented methodologies, such as interviewing or participant observation, that rely on the subjective relationship between the researcher and the subjects.¹⁶

2.3.2 Ethical Considerations (see appendix one)

Although I hold two positions in this thesis, that of a researcher and that of an informant, I have attempted to be as objective as possible by adopting a distanced stance in the research process. I have adhered to the Code of Ethics drawn up by the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee¹⁷ and the Oral History Association of Southern Africa.¹⁸ I also ensured that all those who helped me gather the data conducted themselves similarly. Such consideration

¹² Henning, E, van Rensburg, W and Smit, B, *Finding Your Way in Qualitative Research* (Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers, 2004), p. 17.

¹³ Jerry Willis, "A Recursive, Reflective Instructional Design Model Based on Constructivist Interpretivist Theory", *Educational Technology* 35, 6, 5-23, quoted in uir.unisa.ac.za/.../05Chap%204_...

¹⁴ Glen Aikenhead, "Towards a First National Cross-Cultural Science and Technology Curriculum", (London: Ontario, 1997), quoted in uir.unisa.ac.za/.../05Chap%204_...

¹⁵ Stanley Deetz, "Critical Theory and Postmodernism Approaches to Organisational Studies" in Deetz, S. *et al.*, *Handbook of Organisation Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), quoted in uir.unisa.ac.za/.../05Chap%204_...

¹⁶ Thomas Reeves and John Hedberg, *Interactive Learning Systems Evaluation* (New Jersey: Educational Technology Publishers, 2003).

¹⁷ See Appendix Two (Consent Letter).

¹⁸ For the code of conduct of OHASA (Oral History Association of South Africa) see <http://www.ohasa.org.za/index.php?>. See also Philippe Denis, "Ethics of Oral History", in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane eds., *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008).

of the Code of Ethics ensured the ‘safety’ of my participants. The ethnographic approach I employed invaded the lives of the informants¹⁹ and they frequently revealed sensitive information.²⁰ I used the principle of informed consent in this research, even though it has been criticised by some researchers.²¹ The principle proved vital during fieldwork because it gave people the option to discontinue their participation in the research if they felt it was invading their rights. I obtained written or verbal permission from all the interviewees before I undertook the interviews. In adhering to the principle of informed consent, I offered informants the option to decline to participate in the research and to withdraw from the research at any time should they so wish.

As stipulated in the informed consent forms, maintaining confidentiality is a fundamental tenet of any research and an important ethical obligation for everyone involved in research projects. Disclosure of identities when privacy has been promised is unethical. In this thesis, therefore, when they requested it, I gave my interviewees pseudonyms in place of their real names, in order to protect their identities. The research material such as tapes and notes from this project will be deposited in the Killie Campbell Africana Library, to ensure that it is available for further research. The data will, however, be under embargo for a period of twenty years (2012-2032), to honour the promise I made to interviewees when I requested information from them.

2.4 Data Collection Strategies

The most common strategy for eliciting qualitative data is by interviews. During the interviews, I engaged in open discussions with the interviewees and tried to maintain a role which was, as far as possible, passive, receptive and not dominant. During all the interviews, I followed the principles of interviewing,²² asking closed and open-ended questions as relevant. The interviews were mainly unstructured and unstandardised, allowing interviewees

¹⁹J. P. Spradley, *Participant Observation* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980).

²⁰John W. Cresswell, *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (USA: SAGE Publications, 1994), p. 163.

²¹See, for example, John Arundel Barnes, *Who Should Know What? Social Science, Privacy and Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) and Fluehr-Lobban, “Informed Consent in Anthropology Research: We are not Experts”, *Human Organisation*, vol. 53: 1 (1994), 1-10. See also Appendix Two, example of Informed Consent Letter draft.

²²See C. Frankfort-Nachmias and D. Nachmais, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* 5th Edition (London: Arnold, 1996). See also Benedict Carton and Louise Vis, “Doing Oral History”, in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane, *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008).

a high degree of freedom, as they were not limited to one-word answers or to respond only to pre-determined questions. In addition to this freedom, open-ended, non-directive interviews contained a minimum of control and were 'open' to new material and a change in the order of questions.²³ Unstructured interviews are used in instances where the researcher has plenty of time and can follow up interviews at a later stage with the informants.²⁴ The interviews took the form of informal conversation, which Michael Patton calls '[an] informal conversational interview'.²⁵ This was inevitable, because most informants I interviewed knew me or my family members personally and the violence I interviewed them about I had experienced myself. In most cases, my informants did not regard our conversation as interviews,²⁶ because they sometimes asked me questions or requested me to remind them of some of the incidents. I used closed questions when I wanted exact information, e.g., how many wards there were in the area, and biographical information about the interviewee.

“A tape recorder allows the interviewer to capture so much more than he or she could rely on memory”.²⁷ Permission was requested from the informants to use a video and audio tape recorder in order to record the interviews. Written notes were taken, in case technical difficulties affected my research. Only in one instance was permission not granted: this was during the interview I had with one of the traditional healers at KwaMpande. I did not question why permission was denied, as I thought this would be inappropriate, and would show disrespect to my elderly informant. However, although it is useful, a tape recorder has shortcomings, for example sometimes tape recorder does not work properly, leading to a lot of information being lost, more importantly, some people feel uncomfortable express themselves if there is a tape recorder.

²³See C. Frankfort-Nachmias and D. Nachmais, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* 5th Edition (London: Arnold, 1996); H. R. Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* 2nd Edition (London: Altamira Press, 1995); See also Benedict Carton and Louise Vis, “Doing Oral History”, in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane, *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008).

John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (USA: SAGE Publications, 1994), 163.

²⁴H. R. Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* 2nd Edition (London: Altamira Press, 1995); see also Benedict Carton and Louise Vis, “Doing Oral History”, in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane, *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008).

²⁵ Michael Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Method* (London: Sage Publication, 2002).

²⁶ Michael Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Method* (London: Sage Publication, 2002).

²⁷S. J. Taylor and R. Bogdan, *Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods: The Search for Meaning* (New York: Wiley, 1984), p. 103.

2.5 Data Analysis Procedures²⁸

Both the taped interviews and the researcher's notes were used to analyse the data. I transcribed each tape-recorded interview as soon as possible after the actual interview, when the discussions were still fresh in my mind.²⁹ Miles & Huberman stipulate that data collection and data analysis must be, as far as possible, simultaneous processes in qualitative research.³⁰ Following their stipulation, I simultaneously analysed data and categorised the information received throughout the project. The data categorised was used as a catalyst for further data collection.

2.6 Methods for Verification³¹

Determining the accuracy of the findings and generalising from such findings is important in any study.³² This study aims at validity and reliability to achieve these aims. Validity "refers to the accuracy and trustworthiness of instrumentals, data, and findings in research".³³ According to Bernard, nothing in research is more important than the concept of validity.³⁴

2.7 Sampling Method

There are many different types of sampling researchers use in their research projects: systematic sampling, stratified sampling, quota sampling and convenience sampling. The most commonly used, however, in the fields of humanities and social sciences are random and purposive sampling. "A purposive sampling, also commonly called a judgmental sampling, is one that is selected based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of

²⁸Philippe Denis, "Ethics of Oral History", in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane eds., *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008).

²⁹See C. Frankfort-Nachmias and D. Nachmais, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* 5th Edition (London: Arnold, 1996); S. Sarantakos, *Social Research* 2nd Edition (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998), 315. Benedict Carton and Louise Vis, "Doing Oral History", in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane eds., *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008).

³⁰M. B. Miles and M. A. Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis. A Sourcebook of New Methods* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1984).

³¹Philippe Denis, "Ethics of Oral History", in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane eds., *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008)

³²Johan W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (USA: SAGE Publications, 1994), 163.

³³H. R. Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* 2nd Edition (London: Altamira Press, 1995), 38.

³⁴H. R. Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* 2nd Edition (London: Altamira Press, 1995), 38.

the study. The subjects are selected because of some characteristics”.³⁵ Random sampling is “a sampling technique where [researchers] select a group of subjects (a sample) for a study from a larger group (a population). Each individual is chosen entirely by chance and each member of the population has a known, but possibly non-equal, chance of being included in the sample.”³⁶

Martin Marshal stresses that choosing a study sample is an important step in any research project, since it is rarely practical, efficient or ethical to study the whole population. The selection of an appropriate method depends upon the aim of the study.³⁷ He reasons that random sampling is not appropriate for qualitative studies. “...studying a random sample provides the best opportunity to generalise the results to the population but is not the most effective way of developing an understanding of complex issues relating to human behaviour”.³⁸ Marshal recommends purposive sampling in qualitative research, stating that people are not equally good at observing, understanding and interpreting their own and other people’s behaviour. “Qualitative researchers recognise that some informants are ‘richer’ than others and that these people are more likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher.”³⁹

The method that is used in the present study is purposive sampling. The study is concerned with the memories of political violence in KwaShange in the 1980s and 1990s. I deliberately chose to interview people who were involved in the violence. Members of families that were directly affected by this violence were interviewed, but also family members who were very young at the time of the violence or were yet to be born. The interviewees were males and females from different generations.

The sample size of this study was not predetermined. I decided to stop sampling at the point which I found saturation of information. Michael Quinn Patton, quoted in Bradshaw and Startford, explains:

³⁵ Ashley Crossman, “Purposive Sample” <http://sociology.about.com/od/type-of-samples/purposive-sample.htm>, accessed on 14 August 2012.

³⁶ Valerie Easton and John McColl, *Statistics Glossary*. <http://www.stats.gla.ac.uk/steps/glossary/sampling.html>

³⁷ Martin N. Marshal “Sampling for Qualitative Research” in *Family Practice Journal* (Britain: Oxford University Press, 1996) vol.13, 6.

³⁸ Martin N. Marshal “Sampling for Qualitative Research” in *Family Practice Journal* (Britain: Oxford University Press, 1996) vol.13, 6.

³⁹ Martin N. Marshal “Sampling for Qualitative Research” in *Family Practice Journal* (Britain: Oxford University Press, 1996) vol.13, 6.

There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what [the researcher] wants to know, the purpose of the [study], what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility. [...] what can be done with available information, time and sources. The validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative research have more to do with information-richness and the observational/analytical capacities of the researcher than with the sample size.

To answer questions that this thesis raised, I conducted interviews with selected residents of Vulindlela. My main focus was on the KwaShange inhabitants, particularly those who played leadership roles before and during the violence and those who were directly affected by the violence, such as perpetrators and/or victims. Most were helpful in answering my questions, but I recorded even the occasional refusal as significant. I do acknowledge the subjectivity of the responses acquired via this process, especially of close and deeply involved participants and those who were directly affected. I conducted 93 interviews in Vulindlela, mainly in KwaShange. 33 of these were those who were youth combatants during the period under study. 21 were those who were children and those who were born during and after the violence. The remaining 39 interviewees were males and females from different generations.

In the process of investigating these primary sources, the sensitive nature of the issues at hand was considered, that is the painful memories of the violence. I was aware that people might be offended when they were questioned or reminded of the violence and I acknowledge that this was not an easy task, especially due to the fact that the violence they experienced was horrific. The memories were still fresh in some people's minds and have left an indelible mark on their lives. However, my closeness to the community of KwaShange, where I was born and brought up, not only helped me to get the information, but also impressed on me the ongoing suffering that Vulindlela residents endured and of which I was a child spectator. My experience of the violence enabled me to develop an empathetic relationship with the interviewees. I was able to understand them and, in that way, to minimise the possibly harmful effects of the interviews. Through my close association with the area (since I was a survivor of the same violence), the area chief, local headmen and local councillors, I came to be trusted by many of the interviewees and was able to obtain the necessary information. In the case of members and the leadership of political organisations, I had to explain the significance of the research before I could interview them. I had worked with some of them on another project before my research started and had gained their trust.

Language

A.C Munthali says, speaking a language similar to one's informants is the major advantage. I concur with Munthali, the ability to speak IsiZulu, which is my mother tongue, enabled me to conduct interviews in my informants' first language. I believe this made my informants comfortable during the interviews. All interviews were done in IsiZulu. I translated all interviews and incorporated into this thesis into English for the convenience of non-Zulu speakers. I believe, however, that even the most scrupulous translation has its limitations. In this case I found that IsiZulu words used by my informants which when translated into English lacked weight they carried in the original language. These were for the most part those which related to rituals and those describing emotional states.

I also chose to use interviews with Nunu 'Ngedlezi' Mchunu, Moses Ndlovu and Chris Hlengwa in order to present the thinking of the principal movers behind the violence. I acknowledge that they have a particular perspective on this matter and that their testimonies are their own account and might not represent the unbiased story. Nunu Mchunu established the KwaShange branch of the Inkatha movement when it was still an internal wing of the banned ANC. Chris Hlengwa is a former policeman aligned to the UDF and the late Moses Ndlovu was a unionist and founder of the local branch of the UDF when this organization became the ANC's internal wing, after Mangosuthu Buthelezi was accused of collaborating with the Nationalist government.

2.8 Sources of Information

Up to the point when the original information for this research was gathered, around the year 2008, little scientific work had been done in KwaShange. My research project started in 2008 and was completed in 2010 with a memorial, cleansing and reconciliation ceremony in November 2010 in Vulindlela. The readily available literature was in the form of primary sources: newspapers, oral sources, pictures and a few audio-visual records. To give the research a proper theoretical framework, I had to refer to the general literature on political violence, history and memory in KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa in general: I will cite books, articles, published and unpublished, academic and non-academic material, some presented as conference papers and other material, both primary and secondary.

2.8.1 Primary: Oral Sources

My study covers the period from 1987, the year in which many scholars agree that confrontational violence started, to 2008. In explaining the incidents of conflict from 1987 to 1996, the year which is generally thought (see literature review) to be when the violence ended, I present the viewpoints of Inkatha and the UDF in order to investigate as impartially as possible the supporters of the two political movements, to reflect as fully as is possible the perspectives of each on the escalating violence. The study relies heavily on interview material from community leaders of both Inkatha and the UDF – those who were directly and indirectly affected. In other words, this study will rely on the memories of survivors.

Alessandro Portelli states that oral sources “tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did.” In other words, oral histories are sources with multiple layers of meaning that help historians investigate complex questions of memory, myth, experience, identity, narrative, power and the role of the historian in the construction of history. Commenting on oral history and autobiography, he believes that it tells us less about events, as such, than about their meaning. This does not imply that oral history and autobiography have no factual interest, but it often reveals unknown events or unknown aspects of known events and it always casts new light on unexplored sides of the daily life of the non-hegemonic classes.⁴⁰

According to Portelli, the credibility of oral sources is a different credibility from other sources such as written documents. The unique and precious element which the informant forces upon the historian, and which no other sources possess in equal measure, is the speaker’s or author’s subjectivity and involvement: therefore, if the research is broad and articulate enough, it becomes a cross-section of the subjectivity of a social group or class.⁴¹ Oral sources may not add exact figures to what we know, for instance the number of casualties during the ‘Seven Days War’⁴² in KwaShange. Interviewees may not know the number of people who were involved in the war, but they tell a good deal about its

⁴⁰Alessandro Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue*, London, (University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 49, quoted in Oral History Forum - Remembering Family, Analyzing Home: Special Issue on Oral History and the Family-<http://journal.canoha.ca>, accessed on 14 August 2012.

⁴¹Alessandro Portelli, “What Makes Oral History Different” *Oral History Reader*, quoted in <http://2012.hackinghistory.ca/2012/10/25/blog-5-different-credibility-understanding-the-psychological-parameters-of-oral-history>, accessed on 15 August 2012.

⁴²This term was probably invented by journalists, but is now generally used for the conflict.

psychological costs. Their testimonies make us feel the psychological cost of this ‘war’ for many people in KwaShange and how it caused their need and desire for revolution to be buried within the collective unconscious.

The data from oral sources, especially the accounts of direct participants, will allow for a foundation on which an historical interpretation (supplemented, of course, by other sources) can be built, to measure the changes caused by the violence. Using the narrative data obtained in the interviews, this thesis will attempt to answer the following questions: What happened in KwaShange during the era of political violence? What were the precipitating and underlying causes of the political violence and how did these develop into specific incidents of violence? Did they show transmutation and how did they transmute from faction fights to political party activities? What were the outcomes? How did the aftermath of violence, including the way in which it was remembered, affect the community, its cohesion and the unity of families? How did it affect gender and inter-generational relations? What constitutes memories of violence in KwaShange? What are the effects of such memory on survivors’ behaviour in the post-violence period? How does this fractured, but recurrent, memory of violence affect actual behaviour? Is there a unique, local and Zulu perspective on violence and trauma?

2.8.2 Primary: Archival Sources

The data will also depend on archival sources in the following repositories in KwaZulu-Natal: the Campbell Collections, the University of KwaZulu-Natal Archives, the Alan Paton and Struggle Archives, the Voortrekker Museum Archives and the KwaZulu-Natal Archives in Pietermaritzburg.

I included newspaper accounts of events and stories pertaining to the violence, mainly because they gave a sense of how the vocabulary and the intensity of the violence in the Midlands developed and perhaps played a pivotal a role in shaping people’s perceptions of what was happening. Many of these newspaper clippings are kept in the Alan Paton Centre, the Campbell Collections and the Natal Witness Library. They provide insights supporting one perspective or the other. These reports, however, suffer from defects, in that they tend to give extensive coverage to major events. For example, most cover massacres where there were many deaths and casualties, but they tended to overlook a number of what they regarded

as minor events, which might in fact have played a role in precipitating subsequent massacres. For many years they were censored under emergency regulations for many years, and thus recorded in many instances only the bare facts: for example they would report that a man was killed or a house was burnt down, without explaining the surrounding circumstances, or the political affiliations of victims or attackers. Their coverage of events in rural areas was incomplete and inadequate. It has thus been impossible to acquire all the relevant and desirable information regarding the violence.

The Centre for Adult Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, compiled a database of the Unrest Monitoring Project, now deposited at the Alan Paton Centre. This database contains accounts of incidents of political violence in the Natal Midlands, including Vulindlela and KwaShange. The sources of these records are victims, witnesses, community activists, police reports, newspapers, South African Press Association (SAPA) reports, unionists and lawyers.

Documentary primary sources used in this research include the TRC report, a video cassette on the violence in the Midlands⁴³ and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) case files. The TRC held hearings in Pietermaritzburg in November 1996 and the TRC report and documents related to it were used. There is a plethora of affidavits and statements made by victims of political violence in the Midlands and recorded by PACSA (Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness). The Black Sash collected much information on this period in the form of affidavits and some of their information is kept at the Killie Campbell Africana Library. I also relied on documentaries on the Natal Midlands kept in the Msunduzi/Voortrekker Museum Library. Also used were the amnesty hearings of the Caprivi Trainees and Special Hearings into the Caprivi Trainees.

⁴³COSAW, United Kingdom Video Production Company (a documentary called Killing Fields in Natal).

2.8.3 Secondary Sources: Literature Review (see Chapter One)

The secondary literature helps to provide information on violence in general, even from other parts of the country with similar experiences to the Natal Midlands. This is important for the purposes of comparison and cross-pollination of ideas on the subject. In addition, secondary sources may provide other researchers' perspectives, for example, on how *muthi* was employed against opponents during violence in other parts of the country and the continent.

2.9 Auto/biography and Issues of Positionality

There is a growing trend for researchers working in a diverse range of settings to view themselves as simultaneously being a subject (or the subject), as well as a researcher.⁴⁴ “[...] the researcher may be a participant in the study, the researcher may keep a personal journal as part of the study, or the researcher may keep a record of their thoughts and feelings as part of the process of ensuring that the data generation and analysis is rigorous.”⁴⁵

I am aware, however, that earlier academic historical writings purport to be scientific and objective, as opposed to autobiographical life-stories, which are regarded as subjective and influenced by the vagaries of memory and the intentions of their authors.⁴⁶ “Though history and autobiography both claim to tell true stories about the past, historians have traditionally rejected first-person accounts as subjective and therefore unreliable.”⁴⁷ An opposite concern is raised by contemporary, progressive scholars like Robert Morrell, who make an important point:

⁴⁴Colleen Tenni, Anne Smyth & Carlene Boucher, “The Researcher as Autobiographer: Analysing Data Written About Oneself” *The Qualitative Report*, Volume 8, Number 1 March 2003 quoted in <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR8-1/tenni.html>, accessed on 15 August 2012.

⁴⁵Colleen Tenni, Anne Smyth & Carlene Boucher, “The Researcher as Autobiographer: Analysing Data Written About Oneself” *The Qualitative Report*, Volume 8, Number 1 March 2003 quoted in <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR8-1/tenni.html>, accessed on 15 August 2012.

⁴⁶There is an interesting connection between autobiographical writing and History. Both purport to be non-fiction; both implicitly grapple with memory, with truth and with objectivity and/or subjectivity. I want to explore this connection in my PhD research to use a critical methodology from one to examine the other.

⁴⁷Jeremy D. Popkin, *History, Historians, and Autobiography* (USA: University of Chicago Press, 2005) http://books.google.co.za/books/about/History_Historians_and_Autobiography.html?, accessed on 12 October 2012

For some time, history has been searching for lost voices – those of workers, the peasants, the children, and most recently the subaltern. But there is another voice which historians have been less anxious to access – that of the writer him- or herself.⁴⁸

Arguments concerning self-study (autobiography) and ‘insider-outsider’ research have been addressed in several studies and disciplines in the social sciences and humanities faculties, particularly in disciplines like literature (in which field autobiographies are generally considered) and anthropology (insider-outsider research). History tends to undervalue autobiographies, because of their subjective nature, though not biographies, which are considered to be in the area of historical study. Here I concur with Robert Morrell’s assertion that “even an apparently objective document bears the distinctive and unique mark of its author and his or her past, predilections and disposition.”⁴⁹

The subject matter of this thesis is my personal odyssey: how I experienced the traumatic events of 1987-96, from the age of approximately eight, up until my early teens. This period of uncertainty and violence marked my life and affected my identity. Thus my thesis cannot be written without frequent reference to my historically-constructed self; the study is shaped by my own history and past experience. I feel that only when I have completed the study will I be able to grasp the nature of memory and its relationship to the violence-induced trauma that characterised the civil war that marred my childhood. Mine was a childhood that, in its interactions between parents, children and siblings, was echoed in many other families in KwaShange. Since I have the opportunity provided by the writing of a doctoral thesis, I shall use it to work towards understanding some of the effects of war on family-dynamics. That is why I shall, in this thesis, permit my own voice to be heard. My aim in the study, with its strongly autobiographical elements, will be to produce findings that will add an authentic dimension to existing knowledge of the experiences of violence in the Midlands. At the same time I hope that my work will help to justify the methodological use of self in research.

The use of autobiographies as research-related documents started in the 1980s, when approaches to history and autobiography became more complex. Historians began to relate

⁴⁸Robert Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen: settler masculinity in colonial Natal, 1880-1920* (Pretoria: Unisa, 2001), preface, x.

⁴⁹ Robert Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen: settler masculinity in colonial Natal, 1880-1920* (Pretoria: Unisa, 2001), preface, x.

more personally to events that they had previously analysed from a critical distance.⁵⁰ Jeremy Popkin explores this development, analysing the correlation between autobiography and history, using historians' autobiographical accounts as sources for historical understanding.⁵¹ He defines the links between history and autobiography as a way of reconstructing the past, approaching life-writing texts as a source for the knowledge of the historians' experiences and professional positions.⁵² Jaume Aurell elaborates:

Autobiographical texts can also be used as a reference for comprehending the way historians construct our access to the knowledge of the past: the historical texts. In this way, we increase our understanding not only *of* history, but importantly, of the *writing of* history. Indeed, the practical and methodological links between history and autobiography are important: they share structural formulations that invite us to read them in conjunction, and decipher possible ways their enactments of events might be similar.⁵³

Aurell considers autobiographical texts as historiographical sources which comprehend personal lives and also, significantly, assume the obligation to discern the motives and processes that govern texts which are claimed to be purely historical. He reasons that a critical approach to life-writing enables the reader to examine to what extent the scholarly production of histories, as opposed to autobiographies, by historians, has been conditioned by personal experience. He writes:

Historical texts have been influenced by both the general historical context and the personal story of the historian who wrote them – family background, childhood and

⁵⁰Jaume Aurell, "Autobiographical Texts as Historiographical Sources: Reading Fernand Braudel and Annie Kriegel", *Biography*, 29: 3 (Summer, 2006), 1.

⁵¹Jeremy D. Popkin, *History, Historians, and Autobiography* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), quoted in Jaume Aurell, "Autobiographical Texts as Historiographical Sources: Reading Fernand Braudel and Annie Kriegel", *Biography*, 29: 3 (Summer, 2006), 1.

⁵²Jeremy D. Popkin, *History, Historians, and Autobiography* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), quoted in Jaume Aurell, "Autobiographical Texts as Historiographical Sources: Reading Fernand Braudel and Annie Kriegel", *Biography*, 29: 3 (Summer, 2006), 1.

⁵³Jeremy D. Popkin, *History, Historians, and Autobiography* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), quoted in Jaume Aurell, "Autobiographical Texts as Historiographical Sources: Reading Fernand Braudel and Annie Kriegel", *Biography*, 29: 3 (Summer, 2006), 1.

adolescent experiences, intellectual information, and commitments to ideology or political movement.⁵⁴

Jaume Aurell attributes constructive criticism of historians' academic autobiographies to Pierre Nora's *Essais d'égo histoire*, published in 1987. Aurell writes that Nora's introduction of the documents challenges the principle that made historians "keep themselves out of the way of their work, disguise their personality behind their knowledge, barricade themselves behind their notes, flee from themselves into another epoch, express themselves only through others."⁵⁵ The effect of this was to create a new trend in historians' autobiographical writing. Certainly there had been autobiographies written by historians, but their autobiographical texts were judged separately from overtly historical works, in which the author-historian laid claim to objectivity and distance.⁵⁶

Aurell feels that this epistemological context helps us understand the increasing number of historian-autobiographers who are more and more comfortable in assuming the role of authors of their own stories. Consequently, consciousness of the historian's function as 'narrator', rather than merely 'recorder', has grown significantly, heightening the analogies between historical and literary texts. Thus we find in historians' autobiographies not only testimonies of their lives, but also data that explain their historical projects. For this reason, historians' autobiographies must be examined to reveal information, not only about the context in which the historical texts are articulated, but also about how the writers' ideological and intellectual convictions may have conditioned the methodological and epistemological nature of their texts.⁵⁷ A problem that may occur when reading autobiographies as historiographical sources lies in historians' reluctance to reveal details of the course of their projects, a hesitation that reflects their preoccupation with rigour and objectivity.⁵⁸

⁵⁴Jaume Aurell, "Autobiographical Texts as Historiographical Sources: Reading Fernand Braudel and Annie Kriegel", *Biography*, 29: 3 (Summer, 2006), 1-2.

⁵⁵ Pierre Nora's *Essais d'égo histoire* quoted in Jaume Aurell, "Autobiographical Texts as Historiographical Sources: Reading Fernand Braudel and Annie Kriegel", *Biography*, 29: 3 (Summer, 2006).

⁵⁶ Jaume Aurell, "Autobiographical Texts as Historiographical Sources: Reading Fernand Braudel and Annie Kriegel", *Biography*, 29: 3 (Summer, 2006).

⁵⁷Jaume Aurell, "Autobiographical Texts as Historiographical Sources: Reading Fernand Braudel and Annie Kriegel", *Biography*, 29:3 (Summer, 2006), 3.

⁵⁸Jaume Aurell, "Autobiographical Texts as Historiographical Sources: Reading Fernand Braudel and Annie Kriegel", *Biography*, 29: 3 (Summer, 2006), 4.

In telling the story of my childhood and that of my mother in KwaShange, and linking our experience to historical accounts of violence, I move necessarily across a spectrum that extends from academic autobiography to records of oral history. Though autobiographies which deal with important historical events may appear to be better historiographical sources than more purely personal life-writing projects, I reason that details of historians' lives, isolated or disconnected from their academic careers, also provide valuable information for the creation of historical writings. My own study of political violence in KwaShange is clearly conditioned by my personal experience of that violence, as I myself recognise, years later, that my identity was similarly conditioned.

Historians' autobiographical writing furnishes information on their historical texts to different degrees. Clearly, these are autobiographies which deal with important historical events. Many such autobiographies are relatively recent and are reflections of the evolution of the social sciences during the second half of the twentieth century.⁵⁹ Jaume Aurell states:

During that period, the academic world increased its visibility and influence in Western culture; academics began to be public people, whose opinions on issues and activities beyond the classroom began to matter. One of the effects of this greater visibility is the reinforcement of the connections between academics' personal and professional identities that validate the publication of an autobiography.⁶⁰

Like any other research methods, autobiographical writing has its defects, as literary scholars have emphasised. Michael Sprinker, in "The Writings of Nietzsche, the Precursor of Freud", elucidates:

If autobiography can be described as the self's inquiry into its own history – the self-conscious questioning of the subject by itself – then Nietzsche offers the most fearful warning for any autobiographical text: The danger of the direct questioning of the subject *about* the subject and of all self-reflection of the spirit lies in this, that it could be useful and important for one's activity to interpret oneself *falsely*.⁶¹

⁵⁹Jaume Aurell, "Autobiographical Texts as Historiographical Sources: Reading Fernand Braudel and Annie Kriegel", *Biography*, 29:3 (Summer, 2006), 4.

⁶⁰Jaume Aurell, "Autobiographical Texts as Historiographical Sources: Reading Fernand Braudel and Annie Kriegel", *Biography*, 29:3 (Summer, 2006), 4.

⁶¹Michael Sprinker, *The Writings of Nietzsche, the Precursor of Freud*, (1980), 334.

Sprinker further reveals that crucial Freudian ideas (particularly concerning repression) are related to Nietzsche's fundamental insight. Drawing also on Vico and Kierkegaard, Sprinker associates autobiography with reflection and subjectivity and, in the case of Freud, with the silence surrounding repression.⁶² Following Mandel, we might indeed suspect the repressive nature of autobiographical silence, where "[the] ego has attempted to manipulate and distort, to *prevent* disclosure."⁶³

"In qualitative research the role of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of the study."⁶⁴ "To be reflexive is to insist that researchers systematically and rigorously reveal their methodology and themselves as the instrument of data generation."⁶⁵ My perceptions of how this violence is remembered have been shaped by my personal experiences. Therefore my experiences and my personal ideology will shape my interpretation of this study. However, I believe that being away from KwaShange for more than 10 years, and being a trained historian, have given me a better knowledge of the subject being researched, the sensitivities involved and the ability to explore the topic objectively. The fact that my research was conducted amongst people with whom I share the language, and who come from the same region and have the same cultural identity, needs to be taken into consideration.

"A person studying their own culture can be likened to a fish trying to describe the water."⁶⁶ I grew up in the same setting, in the rural area in which my study has taken place; because of this I felt connected to my informants, mainly because of our shared knowledge of the violence I am writing about, language and cultural identity, as we are all Zulu. I spent my formative years with all my informants in the community that was ravaged by the civil wars.

⁶²Michael Sprinker, *The Writings of Nietzsche, the Precursor of Freud*, (1980), 338.

⁶³Siegfried Mandel, *Nietzsche and the Jews* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1998).

⁶⁴John W. Cresswell, *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (USA: SAGE Publications, 1994), 163.

⁶⁵Jay Ruby, "Exposing Yourself: Reflexibility, Anthropology and Film", in *Kinesis Reports*, 3:1 (1980), 153.

⁶⁶Peter Just and John Monaghan, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 30.

2.10 The research's dual positions: insider and outsider

The problematization of an author's position is not new and a number of authors have debated and attempted to address it.⁶⁷ Abdi Kusow notes that 'the insider-outsider debate in field research has recently been identified as one of the more important areas of research' in the social sciences and humanities.⁶⁸ I shall use my fieldwork as a survivor of political violence in the 1980s-1990s in the Natal Midlands to promote the argument of Sharan Merriam *et al.* that the categorisation of insider-outsider roles is rather the product of the particular situation in which a piece of fieldwork takes place and not necessarily due to the researcher's status or character within a community.⁶⁹

Many authors have highlighted the significance for oral historians or researchers from any field of study, be it social or behavioural sciences, to explain their motivation for their research, especially for those utilising qualitative methodologies that require reflexivity.⁷⁰ As part of their explanation of their role in the field interaction, these researchers frequently position themselves as either 'insiders' or 'outsiders' to their research domain.⁷¹ In the previous section I alluded to the fact that this thesis is partly my autobiographical narrative. In Chapter Three I discuss my experiences of political violence as a child, and my family's membership of the KwaShange community in the 1980s-1990s, and I explain my motivation for the study. In this section I clarify my position as a researcher and the role I occupy in regard to my doctoral research, including the experiences that led me to consider myself to

⁶⁷ Ashforth, B. E., Kreiner, G. E., Fugate, M., "All in a day's work: Boundaries and micro role translations, *Academy of Management Review*, (2000) 25, 472-491; Bartnek, J. M and Louis, M. R *Insider/Outsider team Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1996); Coghlan, D and Brannick, T, *Doing action research in your own organisation* (London: Sage, 2001).

⁶⁸ Abdi Kusow, "Beyond Indigenous Authenticity: Reflections on the insider/outsider debate in immigration research", *Symbolic Interaction* Vol 26, No. 4, 2003.

⁶⁹ Sharon, B. Merriam et al., "Power and Positionality: Negotiating Insider/Outsider Status within and Across Cultures", in *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol 20, No 5 (September-October 2001) 405-416.

⁷⁰ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approach* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994). See also Michael Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process* (Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1998); Kim Etherington, *Becoming a Reflexive Researcher: Using ourselves in Research* (London: Jessica, Kinglay, 2004) and Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed) (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002). See also Benedict Carton and Louise Vis, "Doing Oral History" in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane, *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (Scottsville: UKZN Press, 2008), 53.

⁷¹ Ann Bonner and Gerda Tolhurst, "Insider-outsider perspectives of participant observation", *Nurse Researcher* 9: 4 (2002), 7-19, quoted in Sharon, B. Merriam et al., "Power and Positionality: Negotiating Insider/Outsider Status within and Across Cultures", in *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol 20, No 5 (September-October 2001) 405-416.

be neither ‘inside’ nor ‘outside’ to my particular research domain.⁷² In this, I am building on the argument I made elsewhere,⁷³ as well as a personal interview I had with Benedict Carton (Associate Professor of History, George Mason University), conducted in 2004.⁷⁴

The dichotomy of the insider and the outsider is relevant to my present study, particularly because of the centrality I have given to my account of the trauma I experienced as a child as a result of the Natal Midlands violence of the 1980s and 1990s (see Chapter Three). It is equally important in my accounts of the interaction, empathy, knowledge and interpretation of the biographical narratives of my interviewees. I had set out to prove that the violence did, indeed, have traumatic after-effects and, certainly in my own and my family members’ cases, the insider-outsider continuum has served me well. This concept of insider and outsider has also influenced how knowledge of political violence has been, and is being, transmitted in community-memory, in indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) (which emphasise that people should record their own stories because they know better than those who do not ‘own’ the story). Consequently, a description of the experiences of political violence in Vulindlela might best begin with a discussion of the concept of insider-outsider and my position as researcher and where I locate myself, on the continuum between the two, or as either, or both.

The usefulness of the insider-outsider distinction in this study depends, in part, on the extent to which one can define ‘being a member of the community’ or ‘not being a member of the community’,⁷⁵ in other words, how clearly one can define ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ in this community context. Sharon Merriam asks pertinent questions in this regards. “What does it mean to be an insider or an outsider to a particular group under study? Can women study men? Can Whites study Blacks?” To add on to these questions I ask, can the present self-reflect on the past self and its changing position within this insider-outsider continuum?

⁷² Sharon, B. Merriam *et al.*, “Power and Positionality: Negotiating Insider/Outsider Status Within and Across Cultures”, in *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol 20, No 5 (September-October 2001) 405-416.

⁷³Mxolisi Mchunu, “Are Community Sources of Knowledge”, in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane, *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (Scottsville: UKZN Press 2008).

⁷⁴Benedict Carton and Louise Vis, “Doing Oral History”, in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane, *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (Scottsville: UKZN Press, 2008).

⁷⁵Mxolisi Mchunu, “Are Rural Communities Open Sources of Knowledge”, in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (Scottsville: UKZN Press, 2008), 130.

Sharon Merriam *et al.* note that early scholars, mostly from the fields of anthropology and sociology, labelled themselves as *either* insiders or outsiders to their studies.⁷⁶ They reason:

This position, [...] consists in having an ‘outsider’ writer who has ‘inside’ information about a group of people he or she is studying. Within this research paradigm, the researcher locates him or herself in the following ways: he or she obtains ‘inside’ knowledge from the people who are, of course, ‘insiders’ to their experience, tradition and community; then writes for a readership who has no ‘inside’ knowledge. As he does so, he invests in him or herself the authority to write about the people being studied, partly by claiming ‘outsider-objectiveness’, for it is assumed by such supposedly objective researchers that those studied do not possess sufficient objectivity regarding their specific reasons for doing things in a specific way. Further, the researcher or writer may even believe that his or her knowledge gives him or her authority or power over the people or tradition that he or she is studying.⁷⁷

Some recent discussions of the insider-outsider status have shown ‘the complexity inherent in either status, and have acknowledged that the boundaries between the two positions are not clearly defined.’⁷⁸

Drawing from my research experiences, I explore insider-outsider issues in terms of my positionality, power and knowledge and claim that my experience reflects a combination of insider-outsider status. Even though differentiations between ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ in the humanities and social sciences have been influenced by particular political and cultural agendas, and have in recent years come under scrutiny by scholars who feel sidelined by IKS, it is important for me to evolve some kind of concept of membership of the community under study. Usually, insider-researchers are those who choose to study the group to which they belong, while outsider-researchers do not belong to the group under study. It is common for researchers using qualitative methodologies to study a group, organisation, or culture to

⁷⁶Sharon, B. Merriam *et al.*, “ Power and Positionality: Negotiating Insider/Outsider Status Within and Across Cultures”, in *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol 20, No 5 (September-October 2001) 405-416

⁷⁷Sharon, B. Merriam *et al.*, “ Power and Positionality: Negotiating Insider/Outsider Status Within and Across Cultures”, in *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol 20, No 5 (September-October 2001) 405-416

⁷⁸Sharon, B. Merriam *et al.*, “ Power and Positionality: Negotiating Insider/Outsider Status Within and Across Cultures”, in *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol 20, No 5 (September-October 2001) 405-416 See also my personal interview with Carton and Vis, 9 July 2004, and personal communication with Oscar Zondi, one of the custodians of the history of ‘Impi Yamakhanda’ [the Bhambatha Uprising], March 2005.

which they belong and, in doing so, begin the research process as an insider.⁷⁹ Insider-researchers are often intimately engaged with their research-domains and, unlike outsider-researchers, would rarely be described as those who “parachute into people’s lives... and then vanish.”⁸⁰

Having dealt with my own story as a child-survivor of the political violence that took place in Vulindlela, KwaShange, the question this chapter aims to pose is: can I, as an adult who has lived elsewhere for many years, claim to be an insider? What does it mean to be an ‘insider’ and what does it mean to be an ‘outsider’? Do, I, coming from an academic environment, have an identity other than that of a KwaShange resident? If I use this theoretical discourse of insider-outsider then I am presumably an ‘outsider’ to the community I am studying. I am no longer the child I once was during the 1980s-90s violence. Alessandro Portelli explains:

The fact remains however that today’s narrator is not the same person as the one who took part in the distant events which he or she is now relating. Nor is age the only difference. There may have been changes in personal subjective consciousness as well as in social standing and economic condition, which may induce modifications, affecting at least the judgement of events and the ‘colouring’ of the story. For instance, several people are reticent when it comes to describing forms of struggle approaching sabotage. This does not mean that they don’t remember them clearly, but that there has been a change in their political opinions in the line of their party, whereby actions considered legitimate and even normal or necessary in the past are today viewed as unacceptable and are literally cast out If the interview is conducted skilfully and its purposes are clear to the informant, it is not impossible for him or her to make a distinction between present self and past self, and to objectify the past other than now.⁸¹

Here I admit that the ways in which my experience as an insider-outsider (that is, a witness of the events, who has, however, been away from the area for many years) influenced my choice

⁷⁹Ann Bonner and Gerda Tolhurst, “Insider-outsider Perspectives of Participant Observation”, *Nursing Researcher*, 9: 4 (2002), 7-19. See also Jaqui Hewitt-Taylor, “Insider Knowledge: Issues in Insider Research”, *Nursing Standard*, 16 46, (2002), 33-35.

⁸⁰Nikki Gerrard, “Some Painful Experiences of a White Feminist Therapist Doing Research with Women of Colour”, in J. Adleman ed., *Racism in the Lives of Women* (1995), 55-64.

⁸¹Alessandro Portelli, “The Peculiarities of Oral History”, in *History Workshop Journal* 12:1 (Oxford University Press: 1981), 96-107; doi:1093/hwj/12.1.96.

of research topic, the scope of my study, my access to informants, the collection and analysis of data, and the maintenance of my integrity as a researcher. I concur, however, with Ashforth *et al.* that the insider-outsider dichotomy is simplistic and is unlikely to be applicable to all researchers. They suggest that, instead, the role of the researcher is better conceptualised as a continuum, rather than as an either/or dichotomy.⁸² My role in all my writings, and more specifically in terms of my PhD fieldwork, is neither that of an insider nor an outsider, and this positioning has maximised the advantages of each, while minimising the disadvantages.⁸³

Sharon, B. Merriam *et al.* warn us that “as researchers, we cannot stand outside the larger society and activities such as “science” or “objective research” are striated with procedures for minimizing the presence of the researcher in the research product.” My recognition of this dilemma is integral to questions about my own position in relation to my academic target group. When I, as a researcher, enter the field as an insider, one whose biography (gender, race, class, sexual orientation) gives me a ‘lived’ familiarity with the researched community and tacit knowledge informs my research interpretation and output, I am in a different position from one who enters the research field as an outsider, or who does not have intimate knowledge of the researched community. Consequently, my research interpretation and output is affected by my past intimacy with community members and my eye-witness status in the past.⁸⁴

2.10.1 Understanding the complexity of my position as a researcher

To reiterate, despite describing the differences between the supposedly diametrically-opposed positions of insider-outsider, along with their underlying epistemologies, I considered myself to be neither an insider nor an outsider in the context of my doctoral study. I subscribe to the argument that the insider-outsider dichotomy is simplistic and that neither term adequately captures the role I occupied throughout my own field of research. Rather I

⁸² Ashforth, B. E., Kreiner, G. E., Fugate, M., “All in a day’s work: Boundaries and micro role translations”, *Academy of Management Review*, (2000) 25, 472-491

⁸³ Ashforth, B. E., Kreiner, G. E., Fugate, M., “All in a day’s work: Boundaries and micro role translations”, *Academy of Management Review*, (2000) 25, 472-491

⁸⁴ Sharon, B. Merriam *at al.*, “ Power and Positionality: Negotiating Insider/Outsider Status within and Across Cultures”, in *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol 20, No 5 (September-October 2001) 405-416.

found myself in a constantly-changing continuum between the two positions.⁸⁵ I see that it is necessary to be conscious of these issues and to apply them to myself as a researcher. Vigilance is the key to this process, so as not to be ‘swallowed’ up by either status and lose one’s position or perspective.

I acknowledge that my personal experiences influenced my decision to research the KwaShange political violence; my experiences also influenced the way I chose to research this topic. For some researchers, the motivation for their choice of topic results from a combination of experiences.⁸⁶ For myself, it began in the very early hours of 9 July 2004. I was interviewed by Benedict Carton,⁸⁷ for one of the Sinomlando Centre’s projects. This was the first time I noticed how important the subject of political violence in KwaZulu-Natal was to me. I felt uncomfortable being selected to be interviewed and felt that others in my family and community should have been acknowledged before myself. After all I was only a child at the time, certainly affected by the violence, but yet not suffering as much as those around me. I was not a combatant and did not know much of the causes of the civil war. It is for this reason that I consider myself both an insider and an outsider to the experience I researched. Yet it was my own and my mother’s experiences, some of which I describe in the third chapter, that influenced my decision to research the topic. It was my lack of understanding of what I had lived through as a child, my longing for the more secure life of my early childhood and my grieving for lost friends and relations that motivated my research.

In the following section, I discuss the ensuing development of the study.

The recruitment of informants can be difficult when the researcher occupies the position of outsider, largely because the researcher must first establish trust and rapport with the group. Unlike outsider-researchers, I did not struggle to recruit traumatised informants. As a result of being ‘silenced’ by those around them, the survivors of violence were keen to ‘voice’ their experiences to someone who was willing to listen, even if I did not share aspects of their experiences. My position as an ‘outsider’ was far more apparent in my attempts to recruit and

⁸⁵ Sharon, B. Merriam *et al.*, “Power and Positionality: Negotiating Insider/Outsider Status within and Across Cultures”, in *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol 20, No 5 (September-October 2001) 405-416

⁸⁶K. White, “Maintaining Meaning in Life: The Central Challenge for Palliative Care Practice”, PhD thesis, (Sydney: University of Sydney, 2000).

⁸⁷ Benedict Carton is a History Professor at the George Mason University in the United States of America.

interview the main perpetrators of the violence. Interviews with them were formal and shorter.

Insider-researchers have a tendency to rely primarily on informants with whom they are familiar and feel most comfortable. However, I knew only three of the traumatised informants and had previously met three of the combatants. Familiarity with three of the survivors affected the interview with one of them. Although I did not ask her to do so, she used the respectful third person form to me, as though I was a stranger, rather than someone she knew who just happened to be interviewing her. Upon looking at the transcript and tape, I became aware that the informant's brother had tried to act as an officious censor of what she said."⁸⁸ While the informants were keen to know why I was interested in the research topic, they were not interested in the motivation for my research. Some seemed to assume I was an outsider, as they said things that they probably would not have said to someone who was a part of the community. For instance, when I broached the subject of cannibalism and *muthi* (magical medicine), which I knew as an 'insider' was integral to the war, they became defensive and angered by what they thought was an outsider's ghoulish curiosity. This curiosity was, in fact, motivated by insider knowledge of the importance of *ukugqaba* (doctoring) – they thought that I had no right to such secret, insider information. Though I was an insider in the conflict, I was an outsider in the case of certain kinds of information, because I was not old enough, nor did I possess the qualifications of an *inyanga* (traditional healer). It is considered culturally taboo to discuss these matters with non-participants. This was no surprise to me, because I had experienced a similar reluctance in the descendant of Bhambatha Zondi's *inyanga* to even entertain questions. Our multiple identities, in terms of demographic characteristics, as well as our role in the research, impact upon data collection, in terms of what is 'seen' and 'unseen' and what is considered 'important' and 'unimportant'.⁸⁹

⁸⁸Valli Kalei Kanuha, "Being Native versus Going Native: Conducting Social Work Research as an Insider", *Social Work* 45 (2000), 439-447.

⁸⁹Regina Langhout, "Where am I? Locating Myself and Its Implications for Collaborative Research", *American Journal of Community Psychology* 37 (2006), 267-274, quoted in Sharon, B. Merriam *et al.*, "Power and Positionality: Negotiating Insider/Outsider Status within and Across Cultures", in *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol 20, No 5 (September-October 2001) 405-416.

Indeed, being 'in the middle' made me more aware of the dangers of either an insider or outsider stance and constant questioning of community dynamics and values, as would befit an outsider. Insistence on the research process was essential during the data collection and analysis procedures, as well as adherence to processes recommended for qualitative researchers.

How would I describe my experiences in my middle ground position between insider and outsider? I am not the same person I was in 1987, when I was a child of ten, although I feel sympathy for this self that once was. This sympathy draws me to the insider end of the continuum. At the same time I am not fully an outsider, because even though my present-day maturity and historical knowledge would make me shift to an outsider position, the fact is that to this day something can happen in my life that can spark a reaction to a trauma relating to my childhood experiences and push me back into the insider position. Conscious of the dichotomy of the insider-outsider position, I must constantly monitor my reactions and observe my responses, so as to position myself in the middle.

The fact is that as an outsider I have to police myself to retain objectivity as an academic, to ensure that I am not 'swallowed' up by memories of past pain. My insider status also informs my interaction with my informants. I find that I know when not to pursue issues such as profound trauma and accept that I am sworn to secrecy on matters such as who is responsible for having killed whom during the violence. Many of the informants are my relatives and former neighbours and an insider such as myself works at a more profound level than an outsider researcher. Only an insider would know one of my overriding feelings: my longing for the community life that pre-dated the civil war; the friends that are no longer there; and happy moments like the performances of my father's *isicathamiya* group. In the present, there are more serious consequences than this nostalgia of which I speak and that many others experience. Many of my informants, who suffered long terms of imprisonment for killings associated with the political violence, have never been able to get employment and their wives are bitter and angry.

My insider cultural value system prescribes that one does not divulge family issues to an outsider. I knew a UDF informant who had served a jail sentence because his brother used his gun in attacking Inkatha youth at the time of the violence. Although I knew the story, as well

as the resulting family tension, I could not pursue this line of inquiry because of the cultural injunction of silence.

Through this research experience I have learnt that ‘the research partnership between an insider and an outsider would balance the advantages of both positions, while minimising the disadvantages of each’.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Sharon, B. Merriam *et al.*, “ Power and Positionality: Negotiating Insider/Outsider Status within and Across Cultures”, in *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol 20, No 5 (September-October 2001) 405-416.

Chapter Three

AN AUTO/BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I shall explore inter-subjectivity and interpretive authority in life-history research, through the case study of my mother, Jabulile Mchunu, and myself. I examine the ways in which individuals frame their autobiographical accounts in relation to the public discourse available to them.¹ I shall highlight the relationship between interviewer and interviewee² and reflect on how sharing my initial interpretation of my experiences with my mother altered our relationship,³ since she was aware of and approved my research, and affected the final outcome. I shall also foreground my feelings about the research project and analyse the manner in which our relationship, both within and outside the interview setting, shaped the study as a whole. This chapter will not focus on great incidents or historical moments, but on the multitude of ‘small emotional and psychological effects’⁴ that stemmed from my mother’s and my experience of the political violence. In other words, it will try to answer these questions: how did this ‘abnormal’ situation of war affect everyday life; how did this ‘imprint the mind and soul’ of the ordinary KwaShange community member? And what happened to those who were children at the time? In this chapter, I shall therefore attempt to do many things: Firstly, I shall describe the process of doing research when violence has partially disrupted, or even obscured memories, which must be revived by the researcher. Secondly, it is about

¹Ben Jones, “Telling Family Stories: Interpretive Authority and Intersubjectivity in Life History Research”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, University of Sussex, vol. 7 (2004), 1.

²Philippe Denis, *Never Too Small to Remember: Memory Work and Resilience in Times of AIDS* (Cluster Publications, Pietermaritzburg, 2005). See also Sean Field, “What Can I Do When the Interviewee Cries?” Oral History Strategies for Containment and Regeneration, in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane eds., *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa*, (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008).

³Kim Foster, Margeret McAllister and Louise O’Brien, “Coming to Ethnography: A Mental Health Nurse’s Experience”, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 4, 4 (2005), 1.

⁴This type of research into oral sources, as Alessandro Portelli reminds us, “tell us not only what people did, what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did [...]”, in other words, oral histories are sources with multiple layers of meaning that help historians investigate complex questions of memory, myth, experience, identity, narrative, power, and the role of the historian in the construction of history.

how to research a traumatic event that one had experienced oneself. Thirdly, this chapter will investigate the influence the past has had on the present and the memories of violence which survive today. By reflecting on myself, I will explain the effects of the violence on many of the children in the Natal Midlands.

My research has taken place fifteen years after the end of violence in the province, and the children who experienced this violence are now adults. Some have their own families. I shall argue that the impact of any war is felt beyond the immediate survivors and can become part of the identity of those who survived, particularly those who were children at the time.

In this chapter (and the rest of this thesis), I acknowledge newspaper-articles and monitors' warnings. I will attempt to reveal what happened to the children who experienced the violence. I am one of them and I shall analyse my story and supplement it with testimonies from neighbours of my age to find some commonalities of experience, psychological effects and conclusions. Children of the violence did not understand the genesis of the war. What they knew was gleaned from fearful mothers, from siblings and from actual experiences of hunger, fleeing, hiding and panic. They became orphans, or were abandoned. The newspaper reports of the time predicted their identity crisis. My question is, what happened to these children? The violence started when I was eight and only subsided when I was fifteen. I could be considered 'lucky' in having retained my mother and my home. Through my autobiographical narrative and analysis of my close association with my mother, I tell of my experiences and my survival, but at what cost? My teenage years were marked by anger and distrust. During my early university years my family sent me to a diviner and traditional healer who concluded that I was spirit-possessed (*amandiki*).⁵ It was only on my becoming a re-born Christian that some of the stress lifted, but even today I am considered arrogant.

⁵For details on the topic of Amandiki and possession see, Julie Parle, "*States of Mind: Searching for Mental Health in Natal and Zululand, 1868-1918.*" (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2007).

There is a second category of ‘children’ of violence, youths –*izinsizwa* age (from fourteen to twenty); those were differently affected: they were instigators, party members, ‘soldiers’, if you like. It is important to see what happened to them, and I deal with them in Chapter Nine.

Often in the case of war-torn societies, where the conflict has continued or has broken out sporadically for years, these behaviours may eventually become *accepted* and may be common to large portions of the population, and may be considered cultural phenomena. Adam Curle noted, regarding societies torn by civil conflict that “alienation has tended to escalate into post-traumatic stress syndrome. Violence generally continues to exist within the social fabric of societies coming out of conflict for decades to come.”⁶ Goldblatt and Meintjies argue that the violence of South Africa's past has contributed to a proliferation of violence against women and children in the country today.⁷ Psychosocial studies stress the importance of thinking about trauma from psychological and social perspectives. The term ‘psychosocial’ recognises that there is an ongoing interaction between an individual's psychological state and his or her social environment.⁸ Simpson and Rauch of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg⁹ have developed a concept of the “politicisation of everyday-life,” which can be used in the consideration of the consequences of political violence.

3.2 Autobiographical Narrative

In this section, I outline how I came to use autobiography as a narrative inquiry exploring my own experiences of being a child growing up in KwaShange, KwaZulu-Natal, in the 1980 - 1990s civil war between Inkatha/IFP and UDF/ANC supporters. I discuss my

⁶ Adam Curle, *Another Way: Positive Response to Contemporary Violence* (Oxford: Jon Carpenter Publishing, 1995).

⁷Beth Goldblatt and Sheila Meintjies, “Dealing with the Aftermath – Sexual Violence and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission”, *Agenda*, 36 (1997). 7-17.

⁸Inger Agger, “Psychosocial Assistance during Ethno-political Warfare in the Former Yugoslavia”, in D. Chirof & M. Seligman eds., *Ethno-political Warfare: Causes, Consequences and Possible Solutions* (Washington, USA: American Psychological Association, 2001), 305-318.

⁹G. Simpson and J. Rauch, “Political Violence 1991”, in N. Boister and K. Ferguson-Brown eds., *Human Rights Yearbook* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1991).

experiences and identify techniques I found useful in preparing for my research into the history and memories of violence and trauma in the area.

This section does not focus on verifiable facts and events, but on personal experiences of the violence in the civil war, that arguably affected many other persons to a greater or lesser degree. It is the inside story of KwaShange, told by two of its survivors, namely, my mother and myself. I remind the reader that this chapter is not focusing on the great incidences of historical moments, but on small emotional and psychological effects that stem from my experience. So the question remains: how did this abnormal situation of civil war affect everyday life and how did this ‘imprint the mind and soul’ of the ordinary KwaShange community member? It is not easy to answer this question, especially for a historian; probably psychologists have better ways to investigate these matters. That is why I have opted to use myself and my mother as examples of reactions to such stress. Through my observation of my mother and the interviews I have had with her, I can conclude that she went through a traumatic time and she was psychologically affected.

Most of what I describe here did not take place in the public eye. Nor did my experience relate only to the death and suffering of men (talking from a patriarchal society’s viewpoint) who fought heroically to fend off attack in KwaShange. Neither is it about prominent men who founded local UDF or Inkatha branches and acted as ‘war lords’ or organised vigilante groups that perpetrated the violence in the area. Rather this is about sacrifices and emotional agony and its psychological impact on unrecorded victims, who were invariably women and children. It was easy for the ‘outsider’ to get the wrong perception of the daily lives of these people, and perhaps pity those who were courageously fighting for survival. For little did observers know of the attempts and fights for existence which raged among women and children during the civil war. This was an unrelenting struggle for life itself, on the part of parents, for their own lives and for their children.

Many factual accounts concerning this violence will be dealt with in the chapters of my thesis. Here facts will be significant only as far as they are part of both my mother’s and

my own experience and how we affected each other. Even though the KwaVulindlela violence has been researched by many scholars, the view from the angle of parent and child has not been given enough attention. This is crucial for a study like mine, where the effects of political violence in KwaShange on the memories of survivors for the period 1987-2008 are being explored, because it gives first-hand accounts of life during that period, making my mother and myself primary sources which provide windows into the past. I am trying to understand and explain through the words and images of ordinary people, like ourselves, who experienced it. This window is important for historians because, unlike scholars studying contemporary people and societies (psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists), historians cannot use direct observation to *prove* their arguments and are dependent on testimonies.

3.3 How I (as a child) understood my mother's experiences

I shall view the times through the experience of my mother, a domestic worker who still had to attend work despite the horrors at home. My world was 'coloured' by my parent; I watched her for confirmation of the experiences of war and yet often found myself even more perplexed than before. By writing from her perspective I have accessed memories and understanding I would otherwise not have come by. As a qualitative research method, autobiography and biography are useful for making connections between researcher and other interviewees, deepening interpretive analysis of common and differing experiences, and producing knowledge drawn from compassionate understanding and rigorous reflection.

3.3.1 Theatre of the Mind: Living in a violent era and area

It is always a challenge to 'paint a picture' of an incident or to describe one's feelings to another person in an objective way, let alone to illustrate another person's subjective perspective. I will describe my mother's social context, as a woman living through a civil war in the 1980s-1990s in the greater rural district of Vulindlela.

Imagine a domestic worker: my mother, Jabulile MaMadlala Mchunu, who was working for Afrikaner-families in Pietermaritzburg. She came from rural KwaShange which is 25 kilometres away from the city. She worked six days a week, from Monday to Saturday, travelling back-and forwards daily. It was 16h00, time for her to go home to KwaShange. Her employer gave her a lift to the bus stop, because walking in the street alone was dangerous. She arrived at the bus stop (East Street in Pietermaritzburg). This was where all those who lived in the crown areas¹⁰ of Vulindlela commuted to and from the city. She noticed that only a few people were waiting for buses to go back home. This had become the norm, because people opted to stay at their respective employers' places to avoid commuting, and on this day there were almost no women. Only people who had to go to town urgently did so at that time. My mother waited for a 17h00 bus which arrived on time. She eventually got onto a bus with a lot of men. These men were forced to return home; there was a war going on and they had to patrol to protect the area at night. They had to release those who had been patrolling during the day. Whilst she was still waiting at the bus stop, she heard that many women and children had already left KwaShange and fled for their lives, because a message had come that Inkatha would attack the area that same night.

In telling me later, she exclaimed, “*ngaphelelwa asonzwaneni! ngicabanga izingane zami*. (I just lost the little energy I had, thinking about my children)”. My mother was not sure if the bus would reach KwaShange. There were many reasons why this might not happen. Firstly, this bus could be stoned when passing Edendale. Even although Edendale was UDF aligned area, it was dangerous to go through, because ‘*amaqabane*’ (comrades) stoned any bus that passed through Edendale going to ‘*ngaphezulu*’ (the higher ground of the Midlands), as almost all villages described as *ngaphezulu* were IFP-strongholds. There IFP supporters attacked anybody who was not obviously of their party. (My home area of KwaShange was under Chief Shayabantu Zondi, who refused to

¹⁰‘Crown areas’ are still common terms for the people living in them; here the reference is to the upper regions or ‘*ngaphezulu*’ of greater Pietermaritzburg. I believe the word originated from when the province of Natal still fell under British rule. The ‘crown’ was a reference to the English queen Elizabeth II or her father, George VI. Once South Africa became a republic such land would have become State lands.

allow his people to become UDF party supporters; hence it was singled-out for attack by Inkatha in an attempt to displace these UDF supporting families.) So UDF people in Edendale, in support of KwaShange would stone any bus passing by, even though the bus could well contain persons from the latter area. Usually, KwaShange buses would be accompanied by an Edendale car to allow them safe passage. Secondly, this same bus could be stopped by Inkatha people in Mvundlweni, the area opposite KwaShange, another strong IFP area. These were known to be merciless killers of UDF supporters. My mother had had the experience of being in a minibus that was shot at in Mvundlweni that the same morning, and the person who had been sitting next to her was injured by a bullet. Many people lost their lives in the area of Mvundlweni. Lastly, this bus was in danger, also because police patrols could think it contained people returning from a rally somewhere – potential trouble-makers. The police were known for wasting no time to shooting to kill.

Luckily that day my mother arrived home safely at almost 17h45. She was safe, but fearful. It was quiet with no people moving around. You could hear a dog barking from afar, but see no fire-smoke, no-one leading a normal life, or cooking. People had gone to seek refuge somewhere far from the area. Others were hiding. One could hear a whistle as a warning of possible attack – comrades communicating with each other from different parts of the area. Women and children had been instructed to move out of the area, but those who had nowhere to go, were hiding.

My mother often claimed that throughout this time, “the only thing that I was concerned about was your whereabouts [children]: Nathi, you [myself], Siyabonga and Khomby.” She would come home only to find the younger children waiting for her arrival. Anything could have happened on her way back home. As the oldest of the three younger children, I would be filled with anxiety for her to return. I could not think of what I would have done without her, and yet some children were left orphans. “I did not expect to find your older brothers anyway, *kwakuliwa, kuchitheka igazi* [they would have been in the patrolling *impi*].” My elder brothers had gone. She did not know where they were, but wherever they were, they were patrolling and they had weapons to defend the area from

Inkatha-attackers as well as from policemen, who often came as a ‘third force’.¹¹ My mother on her return would pace up and down, locking the house and surrounding rondavels and preparing herself and the younger children for another night in the nearby forest. Her eyes would be full of tears, but she was not crying. Later she explained, “I had to be brave because if I showed fear, all of you would cry, and I would not know how to control myself either.” She would tell her children, “Let us go, everything will be fine after all, tomorrow we will sleep in our home and nothing will happen to us.” When my mother said this, I, as a child, did not understand what was really happening, and did not know who to talk to because my mother was too anxious, her body was there but her mind was miles away. I did not know where my father was, but subsequently, I realized that he had stayed at work because there was no transport from town to KwaShange. I was unsure whether to believe my mother’s promises that “things would get better”, because she had been saying this for some time, but it never happened. To me as a child, she was not telling the truth and I felt afraid, at the time and later felt angry. Perhaps I would have preferred to have been told the truth. I loved my mother and I wanted to believe her, even though what she was claiming sounded contradictory to what was happening. Yet when I did not believe her, I felt guilty and it was like I was betraying her in some way that I could not fully explain.

My mother was also anxious about her two elder sons who were, as I have explained, patrolling. She knew that they were angry with her because she worked for the ‘dogs’ (*amabhunu*, Boers as they were called at that time) who oppressed black people. The context was the UDF’s policy to “make South Africa under the Nationalist Government ungovernable.” My mother explained, “The reason why I was so scared was because it had happened to other neighbours, whose children turned against them [parents]; people had ‘gone mad’.” My mother eventually went to sleep in the forest with her three children; her employer gave her three sleeping bags to sleep in the cold outdoors. She got up in the morning of the following day, not too early, because Inkatha would attack the

¹¹This term is generally used to describe the Nationalist state police who killed black people mainly in Townships and rural areas. In KwaShange they assisted Inkatha combatants to attack UDF supporters. For details on this on State Police collaborating with Inkatha, see TRC report www.doj.gov.za/trc_frameset.htm (last accessed on 14 February 2011).

village early in the morning: she could not leave the forest before 4h30 at the earliest. She eventually left the forest with us children at 4h30, because she had to catch the bus at 5h30 in order to go to work. Her explanation was, “One had to respect the employers because I knew that I would need their assistance one day, so I had to pretend that things were normal.” She was not sure if she would reach work, because the bus might be attacked in the dangerous neighbouring Inkatha area. So the stressful journey of the previous day was repeated. She left us children in fear, because we were not sure if everything would go well at school. At this time there were few children at school as many had left the area. It was not a normal situation, teachers that we knew were no longer there and our primary school was in danger because it had Inkatha children and UDF children. Each organisation wanted to come and look after its party members’ children.

One day my mother came back in the afternoon to hear that her uncle had been stoned to death by UDF boys in the area. They accused him of being a spy and having a relationship with Chief Shayabantu Zondi, who was an Inkatha leader. My mother could not go to see her uncle’s body because she was afraid that she would be killed next. As she locked herself in her room, crying, she heard the news that her uncle’s wife had been killed too. This aunt had threatened to mention the killers’ names to the police, as she knew the people who came to kill her husband, some of whom were blood relatives. The aunt’s family had a mentally disabled daughter aged 25 at the time. She had slept with her dead parents the whole night because she did not realise that they were no longer alive. My mother’s later comment was, “I remember myself losing my mind, the whole night I could not sleep, and I was shouting ‘blessed are those who are dead’.” In her anger and frustration she decided not to go to the forest. That night she decided to sleep in her own house. She explained, “If I am to die, I would like to die with my children in my house.”

This narrative is but one story of my mother with her children in the area of KwaShange; there are many other women in this and surrounding areas who experienced similar ordeals. I have only described what I saw of my mother at the time and what she tells me

now. This is individual and collective memory, added to my knowledge of historical events in the area at the time. When I embarked on this study, I had already conducted ten interviews with people, who were children at the time, and who described what they went through in the civil war. When questioned about what they felt about their parents' states of mind, almost all described their parents as people who had 'lost it'. Two sisters described their mother's condition as "needing psychological therapy", but other family members described her as being 'possessed by spirits' '*twasaring*' (they thought she was being called to become a *sangoma*). Others thought their mother was at the initial stage of *ukuhlanya* (madness).

3.4 My Personal Experiences and Memories of Violence

My memories of childhood are swamped by political violence. I only remember bits of my life up to eight years old: my first day at school, how I missed home. I ask myself, what I missed when I went to school. I think it was childhood games, playing with clay and mud, building houses and wire toy cars. We would escape from home to a small stream, known as *iNembe*, to swim. Along with my siblings, I was always happy because we knew that after working hours my mother would come back from work with slices of bread, with jam, and occasionally with fruit and cakes. These were good memories but they were short-lived because the political violence started in 1987. I was then in Standard two (Grade four) in Henley Lower Primary School. I was only ten years old. I was the seventh child in a home of nine. I had five brothers and three sisters.

My father was working for the University of Natal, Agriculture Department, and my mother was a domestic worker. My father's second wife was living in KwaShange some distance from us. She was unemployed. My grandmother, who was a pensioner, my aunt and her three children, and my eldest sister with her two small children stayed with us. Not far from home were my paternal uncles, my father's brothers. They had their own nuclear-families. Our neighbours were my maternal uncles and aunt, while other neighbours were close family-friends, who had come to the area of KwaShange at the same time as my grandparents in the 1960s.

From 1986 when I was in standard one (grade three) at school, we did a subject called *ubuntu-botho*. I liked it most because it meant that we stopped normal classes, and we joined together with groups from other classes and we sang. I remember there was a song that I liked that went, “*Uphilela ntoni wena, uShenge uyasiphilela isizwe*” (What are you living for; Shenge (Buthelezi, leader of IFP) lives for the nation.) We would sing these songs even at home. One of my paternal uncles used to enjoy it and encourage us and sing these songs along with us. He often came to school to meet with our principal and teachers, but we did not know what it was about. But we felt important that our uncle knew the principal. In retrospect, from my interviews with him, I realised that as a leader of the local Inkatha, he was campaigning for the teachers to join Inkatha.

In 1987 there was a serious tension between my parents and this ‘Inkatha’ uncle. We were warned to stop going to his home, but no explanation was given. My grandmothers interceded and calmed down the situation, but still my parents were not happy when we played at my uncle’s house. In the same year, there was a group of young people who gathered at school every Friday afternoon for meetings. On these occasions, they would come out and sing slogans on the road, persuading people to join Inkatha. I still remember some of the songs: ‘*joyini, joyina, joyina Inkatha. Inkatha leyo eyesizwe*’ (join, join, join Inkatha, Inkatha of the Nation.) We as children would follow them and sing.

One day my mother came back from work to find my elder brother and I had attended one of these meetings. She reprimanded us severely and warned us to never again go to such gatherings. Later I realised that she may have known more about the political situation and I found out that the tension between my parents and my uncle stemmed from his attempts to persuade them to join Inkatha. It was at such meetings that the first violent conflict of 1987, which I shall explain below, was discussed. This led to the killing of thirteen boys, so my mother unknowingly had saved her sons.



Inkatha Youth on the March, KwaShange, 1987¹²

Later that year, I remember, it was cold. It had been raining the whole night; this was the time of the 1987-floods. In the morning I was seated near the fire in my maternal uncle's house, opposite our own home. Through the door, I saw a number of yellow police cars struggling to move on the muddy road. Outside were my mother and my aunt, who were talking in low voices, almost whispering. I could not hear what they were saying. All I remember is my mother calling me to go home with her. Once at home, she instructed all of us not to go anywhere. My elder brothers were all at home that day. It was indeed a strange day: I had never seen such quiet people in my life. Worries were written in everybody's eyes. Outside, it was silent: everybody was indoors. All that I could see of KwaShange was still - the bad weather probably contributed. It was a strange atmosphere.

¹² Courtesy of the KwaZulu-Natal Museum (Natal Museum), Pietermaritzburg.



KwaShange, picture taken on 26 September 1987¹³

When my grandmother, in the silence, broke into loud praying, I realised that something had gone wrong. Secret talks between my mother and my elder brothers worried me. That day marked the beginning of the end of my childhood, and that of many of my age group. I heard in the prayer of my grandmother that some people had been killed. I remember feeling deeply disturbed but not knowing the whole story. It only became clear when another aunt, who was close to the house where Inkatha youth had gathered to plan an attack on UDF supporting homes (particularly that of Hlengwa) came and explained. This house had been attacked. She had heard the whole event and saw flames and heard guns and she was completely panic-stricken, especially because most of the boys who had died were her husband's extended Zondi family members.

¹³ Courtesy of Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository. This picture was taken by a member of South African Police on 26 September 1987. It shows the homestead where thirteen Inkatha Youth was attacked and killed by the UDF supporters.

Pictures of the massacre, 26 September 1987¹⁴



¹⁴ These images were taken by members of SAP in 26 September 1987, “KwaShange Massacre”.

From 1987 until 1990, the area of KwaShange changed completely. Many people that I had known since I was still small were no longer there - either they had died or relocated without us knowing. We would wake up in the morning and hear that so-and-so family was no longer in KwaShange, and no-one could tell us children where they had gone. The same thing happened with my paternal uncle, the one who knew the school principal. We heard in the morning that he had fled, but nobody knew where his family had gone into hiding. His sons, who were our close family members and friends, had gone, and that meant we would never see them again. I remember how I desperately missed them at evening prayers. By that time I understood that there was a war between UDF and Inkatha. *We* were obviously UDF and *they* were Inkatha. Between 1987 and 1990, killings were daily activities. The UDF was ‘cleaning-up’ the area and any person who was suspected of being an Inkatha supporter was attacked and killed and his house burnt. Almost everyday, we would receive threats from Inkatha neighbouring areas that KwaShange would be attacked. People were ‘on the run’ all the time. I remember that as children we were trained by our older brothers to make petrol bombs for self-defence. We were told to hold up plastic bottles at arm’s-length and they would aim and shoot at them. Later I realised that this was to toughen us, to become young combatants in order to defend our home. During this period we often were woken up at night or early in the morning, and had to run into hiding at a moment’s notice, so we slept fully-clothed, even down to our shoes.

These things continued until 1990 when the greatest horror started - the “Seven Days War.” I was in standard five (grade seven). I was entering adolescence at that time and I was aware of what was happening in the area and neighbouring areas. My understanding of politics started when Mandela was released from prison in 1990. I remember my brothers and sisters talking about it and we heard the news on the radio. At that time I thought, “Shoo! This person is obviously a white person and he is so important!” I went to our neighbour to watch television, because I was so interested. I remember there were drops of rain and obviously it rained in Auckland Park as well, because the news reader said “*kwaXhosa imvula isho ukuthi kunama thamsanqa*” (drops of rain mean luck in Xhosa belief). This happiness preceded a great horror for KwaShange.

It was on the 27th of March 1990 when Inkatha attacked the area of KwaShange and many other areas. It had been raining for a few days and the Msunduzi River was overflowing. It was still early in the morning and we had just woken up. One of my cousins came to tell us that there was going to be an attack. When the message came, many people left their homes and moved away from near the road to hide in the forest. My mother, myself and two younger siblings left late and it was not possible for us to run far. As we were running, bullets were flying over our heads, and we knew that if we heard a gun-shot, we had to lie down on our stomachs; it was safer that way. My mother realised that if we continued running, we would be killed by the bullets. She decided that we should hide in the nearby stream. The Inkatha people were only two minutes away from us and we could hear them swearing at us “*Sizonithola Maqabane *****¹⁵ yonyoko, elamanqamu namhlanje*” [We are going to catch you, Maqabane ***** of your mothers, today is your last day]. We hid in the stream from approximately 6h00 until approximately 23h30.

Whilst we were in the stream, many things happened. Firstly we were joined by a woman of my mother’s age. She was followed by her dog which was drawing attention to us, causing tension between my mother and the owner. My mother wanted her to get rid of her dog, but the owner did not know how. Later the police helicopter flew over us intending to force us to leave the stream, so as to be seen by Inkatha people who were only a few minutes away from where we were hiding. We could hear the latter talking and shooting of bullets; we could smell the houses burning. Police sprayed ‘tear gas’ on us; at that time - I did not know that it was tear gas. I remember praying, a frightened 14-year-old, and longing for the bank to open and bury me, my mother and my siblings. I was longing to die naturally rather than be killed by the Inkatha people. Whilst we were being tear-gassed, we saw grass and trees by the stream moving, where we were hiding, so somebody was coming towards us. It was in fact an old woman, our neighbour, but I had already concluded that some people had figured out that we were in the stream, so they came to ‘finish’ us. To me as a teenager, this tear-gassing was an answer from God. I thought He heard my prayer and this was the process of dying, as by then I was fearful

¹⁵ Swear word was used, I have chosen not repeat the word in this thesis, it is derogatory and misogynistic.

that everyone was dead - my grandmothers, my elder brothers, and my sisters. Somehow the knowledge that there was a person - not a power but a person - named Jesus, who could see, hear, and answer my prayers gave me the hope that I needed to get beyond that night. By night time, we knew that things had calmed down, but we did not know where to go because we thought that our house had been burnt. The neighbour that had joined us later in the stream suggested that we go to the local church. She had heard that there were people who had gathered there. We sat in the church for a few hours until 2h30. Nobody was prepared to risk going home. Many old people, children and babies who had gathered in the church walked the many kilometres to Edendale where we sought refuge.

My mother encountered many severe challenges and hardships. In my early years my mother was virtually a single parent and who was often distressed and did not know what to do; her mental suffering often caused great hardship to those around her. She had the burden as the senior woman of giving hope to the family that was steadily disintegrating. Many times she had to deal with my elder brothers who kept complaining that they lived in bad conditions, dropping-out of schools because of our uncle who started the violence in the area, with the result that they were jailed during the state of emergency. My early childhood is filled with memories of terror at physical and emotional violence, yet also of tenacity and a will to live. This was however, also the dawning of my faith. I remember praying earnestly for the first time when I was eleven years old. My mother's uncle had been killed, stoned to death by KwaShange UDF youths, who accused him of being an Inkatha informer. My mother came back from work worried; her heart was broken because she was not sure if my elder brothers were part of those who had attacked her uncle. It was common for UDF people to ask the relatives of a person who was about to be attacked, to kill their relatives if they belonged to a rival political group. I recall that at the time my brothers would come home in drunken rages, were using *muthi*, meaning they were probably forbidden to talk to women. I was afraid for my life, and for the life of my mother and younger siblings, and so in desperation I cried many tears.

My life is different now - as I write this I am sitting in one of the oldest and most prestigious, academic institutions in South Africa, the Campbell Collections of the

University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am altered in other ways too: I am taller, fatter, and richer than I was when I was 10 to 14. I have more debt, but I am also 'reborn', I now have a wife and children, I have a Masters degree and am writing a doctoral thesis. I am also happier, more grateful, and much more privileged. Remembering what I lived through to get to this point helps me to savour these moments and experiences. They cannot be taken for granted! Even though my life is different, I am still the same in essence, but I remember my past and long for a better future. I still enjoy adventures and love to pray. My memory makes me more resilient. God has never forsaken me - God heard my prayer when I was 11, and when I was 14 in the stream and He still hears my prayer today.

3.5 Effect of violence on children and mothers: an overview

The political upheaval of the 1980s - 1990s in the Midlands tore whole communities and families apart—from Vulindlela to Edendale to Howick. Entire generations had grown up in the midst of brutal armed conflicts. Children as young as ten observed, and others were involved in wars as either victims or perpetrators of violence. This was because some were forced by circumstances to get involved and fight to defend their communities. Children have, of course, always been caught up in warfare. They usually have little choice but to experience, at least, the same horrors as their parents—as casualties or even combatants. When they have to sleep in forests, hide in the streams at night, and when food runs short in refugee camps, it is children who have been hardest hit, since their growing bodies need steady supplies of nutrients. The trauma of exposure to violence and brutal death has emotionally affected generations of young people for the rest of their lives. One woman in Pietermaritzburg commented on her experience of political violence:

I am bitter that all my children died within a short space of time in this (tragic) way. They respected me. And one of them was supporting the family, but I am thankful that they are now free from these times of hatred and distrust. I am also free from an endless life of fear, fearing for their safety. Nonetheless, it is still a

horrible experience to be a parent of any black family: in these days (speaking of the then civil war) our male children are being slaughtered.¹⁶

Newspapers at the time reported that children as young as ten years were killing people in the Pietermaritzburg areas, and it was feared that the war was spawning a generation of hardened killers. This observation resulted in community leaders calling for the urgent establishment of rehabilitation programmes for the thousands of children who were ‘roaming wild’, witnessing brutal mob murders, copying their elders and playing violent games.¹⁷

By this time, schools were affected by the lack of teachers. Many teachers were reported to be seeking employment somewhere else (especially those from rural Vulindlela), where people belonged to the Inkatha movement, while teachers who taught in these schools came from Edendale and Imbali, and belonged to unions that were affiliated to COSATU and the ANC. Large numbers of children were reported to be on the run and others were abandoned by parents who fled in fear of their lives. According to the Council of Churches that met in the Midlands, children had been “so badly traumatised they [might] never recover.” “We are deeply concerned about children who have been drawn into the violence. Some are only eight years old”, said Reverend Ben Nsimbi, a Methodist minister from Georgetown, a township in the Edendale valley. Many children were seriously damaged psychologically: some reacted by becoming fearful but others turned highly aggressive. By that time, children less than ten years old were emulating their parents and adopting violence as an exciting new game (like stabbing, verbally abusive insults, destroying property, using vulgar terminology and petrol bombing). Reverend Musa Zondi commented then, saying, “[...] their future is being permanently paralysed by what they are learning now.”¹⁸

The violence disrupted normal family life and destroyed the fabric of society. At the most impressionable and sensitive age, children got used to seeing people being brutally killed.

¹⁶*Sunday Tribune*, 21 February 1988.

¹⁷*Sunday Tribune*, 21 February 1988.

¹⁸Interview of *Sunday Tribute* with Rev. Musa Zondi of Inkatha, *Sunday Tribune*, 21 February 1988.

They were being subjected to things they should never have experienced at that age. Mr Musa Zondi compared the situation in Pietermaritzburg with those in Beirut and Northern Ireland, “where you see children throwing stones even though they don’t understand the conflict”. Peter Kerchhoff, organiser for the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA), said that children were being psychologically traumatised and undoubtedly needed care. Others were proposing rehabilitation but there was doubt whether the rehabilitation programmes would work while violence and injustice continued. There was a need to end the violence first.

“The children are scared because they can see the adults are scared. People really do not know what is happening,”¹⁹ said one woman in Elandskop. This woman was suffering the anguish of being a parent in a troubled area. Many people were frightened, especially at night, “when a knock at the door could set your heart racing.”²⁰ Families had taken to sleeping in the veld for fear that their homes would be set aflame in the night. The woman in Elandskop said she had taken three young children, whose parents left them in the care of relatives as they worked in other areas, to her employer’s home where they had stayed for a week until things had calmed down in Elandskop. Many children were getting lost in the ensuing confusion and some were being sent to relatives in more peaceful areas. The numbers of children who were being killed in the turmoil are largely unrecorded. The plight of children amidst that turmoil was an area of grave concern to the monitors.²¹

A thirteen year old boy from Edendale said he had left home (presumably the crown rural area of Pietermaritzburg) about three months before when political tensions had prompted him to take to the streets with his friends.

I had to make a choice between my friends, who are politically active in organisations such as UDF, and the traditions of my family. My father is a chief

¹⁹Anonymous informant interviewed by *Sunday Tribune* journalist in Vulindlela, 21 February 1988.

²⁰Anonymous informant interviewed by *Sunday Tribune* journalist in Vulindlela, 21 February 1988.

²¹Reports from the 24-hour Monitoring Group of the Midlands Crisis Relief Committee - 25 March to 28 July 1990” is available in the Alan Paton Collection in Pietermaritzburg.

and an Inkatha member. I have no fight with either organisation but even friendships become political and at home my loyalties were continually questioned. It was easier to leave although this has meant quitting school.²²

In a statement issued by the institute for clinical psychology in September 1988, psychologists expressed concern that the damage to people resulting from the unrest would impair mental health for generations.

3.6 Literature review on violence and its impact on children

In the course of my research, I have found that academic and journalistic articles written on the political violence's effect on children.²³ All these authors agree that violence had negative impact on families; as a result children were seriously affected. To mention a few of these works: a report compiled by John Aitchison entitled "Political Violence in the Natal Midlands: Reports from the 24-hour Monitoring Group of the Midlands Crisis Relief Committee- 25 March to 28 July 1990"²⁴ is available in the Alan Paton Collection in Pietermaritzburg. Matthew Kentridge focused on political violence in Pietermaritzburg.²⁵ Philippe Denis concentrated on the political violence in the area of KwaNxamalala.²⁶ Few authors have highlighted the role of inter-generational tensions, with young people more inclined to take a militant line and elders upholding traditional

²²*Sunday Tribune*, 21 February 1988.

²³See John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", *The role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization*, ed., in Ran Greenstein (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94. S. Stavrou, "Underdevelopment: Natal's Formula for Conflict", *Indicator SA* 7/3 (Autumn 1990), 52-56. Anthony Minnaar, *Conflict and Violence in Natal/KwaZulu: Historical Perspectives* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1990); Rupert Taylor and Mark Shaw, "The Natal Conflict", in John Brewer ed., *Restructuring South Africa* (London: St. Martin Press, 1994), 35-52; A Johnston, "Politics and Violence in KwaZulu-Natal", in W. Gutteridge and J. Spence eds., *Violence in Southern Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 78, 107. Anthea Jeffery, *The Natal Story: Sixteen Years of Conflict* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1997).

²⁴See also John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s".

²⁵Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

²⁶Philippe Denis, "Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of the Political Violence in Nxamalala (1987-1992)" 64-94, *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* (2007), 24 - 25.

tribal authority.²⁷ My previous research in KwaShange looked into the issue of generational tensions and relationships between fathers and sons.²⁸

As I have shown, much academic research has been done on political violence in the Natal Midlands, but very little of this work reflects on the experiences of children. It was in newspaper reports that reference is made to the status of children at the time of civil war. There are predictions that “[Children’s] future is being permanently paralysed by what they are learning now [...]” Of the contemporary writers, only Denis, who was dealing with AIDS and grief in general, related his findings to the immense social disruption of the civil conflict.²⁹ One result of the civil war and its attendant social breakdowns has been the AIDS epidemic. Denis’s book tells of the work done among AIDS orphans in KwaZulu Natal through the use of ‘memory boxes’, which aim to build greater resilience in children and child-headed households, where both parents have been lost to AIDS. The Memory Box-project allows the children and their care givers to make use of narrative (story-telling) to recount the memories that they have of their parents (both the good and the bad). It allows them to articulate, analyse, understand, and move through these memories. In doing so, the children are given a far greater resilience to cope with their past, make choices in their present life, and form a new future. I will deal with this issue in detail in a separate chapter.

²⁷See Guelke, “Interpretation of Political Violence during South Africa’s Transition”, 248. For a study of young people involved in political violence in Natal, see Ari Sitas, “The Making of the ‘Comrades’ Movement in Natal, 1985-91”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18/3 (September 1992), 629-41. See also Mxolisi Mchunu, “Cultural Change, Zulu Masculinity and Intergenerational Conflict in the Context of Civil War in Pietermaritzburg (1987-1991)” in T. Shefer et al eds., *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2007); see also Catherine Campbell, “Learning to Kill?: Masculinity, the Family and Violence in Natal”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18/3 (1992), 614-28.

²⁸Mxolisi Mchunu, “Cultural change, Zulu Masculinity and Intergenerational Conflict in the Context of Civil War in Pietermaritzburg (1987-1991)”, in T. Shefer et al eds., *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2007).

²⁹Philippe Denis, *Never Too Small to Remember: Memory Work and Resilience in Times of AIDS* (Pietermaritzburg Cluster Publications, 2005).

3.7 Conclusion

In this autobiography, I have attempted not to edit out references to my emotions. My autobiography gave me space to constitute myself in more complex terms. I hope the reader will detect any exaggerations of the sort that have been argued by Michael Sprinker and others.³⁰ As traumatic as the experience of which I speak was, I hardly think it an area of self-aggrandizement.

³⁰ Michael Sprinker, *The Writings of Nietzsche, the precursor of Freud*, (1980), 338.

Chapter Four

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF KWASHANGE AS PART OF THE FORMER 'ZWARTKOP¹ LOCATION'

4.1 Introduction

A number of authors have written about Natal and Zululand, of which Vulindlela, formerly known as Zwartkop, was later a part.² There is consensus amongst historians and anthropologists that the Midlands had occupants even before 'the white men came.'³ Some historians have published the recent history of the area and given more attention to Vulindlela than Natal and Zululand.⁴ Beside these historical writings, some authors have written novels about the Midlands.⁵ However, none of these

¹The 'Z' was no doubt softened to an 'S' when the early Voortrekkers of the 1840s, who named the mountain, changed from High-Dutch or Netherlands to Low-Dutch or Afrikaans. The indigenous name for the mountain is *Mbubu*. *Mbubu* is the name of the grass used in the roof of Zulu huts or rondavels.

²John Wright, "Before Mgungundlovu", in John Laband and Robert Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988); see also John Laband and Paul Thompson, "The Reduction of Zululand, 1874-1904," in Andrew Duminy and Bill Guest eds., *Natal and Zululand from the Earliest Times to 1910: A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1989), 223. See also John Lambert, *Betrayed Trust: Africans and the State in Colonial Natal* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1995), 36. John Laband and Robert Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1988), 18-21. Adam Kuper, "The 'House' and Zulu Political Structure in the Nineteenth Century", *Journal of African History*, 34 (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 469-487. Jeff Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom: Civil War in Zululand 1879-1884* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1994). Trevor Wills, "Segregation, Separation and Desegregation: Pietermaritzburg since 1910", in B. Guest and J. Sellers eds., *Receded Tides of Empire: Aspect of the Economic and Social History of Natal and Zululand Since 1910* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1994). Colin Webb and John Wright, *The James Stuart Archives*, 1-5 (Durban, Killie Campbell Africana Library and Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1975-2001).

³A. T. Bryant, *The Zulu People, As They Were before the White Man Came* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1949); see also John Wright, "Before Mgungundlovu", in J. Laband and R. Haswell, (eds.) *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988) and T. V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town, T. V. Bulpin) 341. See also interview with Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 10 July 2008.

⁴Philippe Denis, "Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of the Political Violence in Nxamalala (1987-1992)" 64-94, *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* (2007), 24-25. See also Mxolisi Mchunu, "Cultural Change, Zulu Masculinity and Intergenerational Conflict in the Context of Civil War in Pietermaritzburg (1987-1991)", in T. Shefer, K. Ratele, A. Strelbel, N. Shabalala and R. Buikema eds., *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007)

⁵Sibusiso Nyambezi, *Inkinsela yaseMgungundlovu (The Rich Man of Pietermaritzburg)* (Shuter and Shooter, 1961). This novel was written by Nyembezi in 1961, and is set some years earlier in rural northern Natal. The rich man of Pietermaritzburg tells the story of a con man coming from Pietermaritzburg and trying to cheat the locals in rural Nyanyadu, in the Dundee area of northern Natal. The central characters are the family of Zeph Mkhwanazi, his son, daughter and his wife, maNtuli. They have been selected by Ndebenkulu for a scam which he hopes will cheat many of the locals out of precious herds of cattle. It is the younger, more educated, people who see through Mr Ndebenkulu first.

historians, anthropologists and writers of historical novels have written about the history of KwaShange location. KwaShange was a single area falling within the Vulindlela Magisterial district of KwaZulu.⁶ The area received an influx of people after the Native Land Act of 1913 and again after the Group Areas Act of 1950.⁷ This latter act, declaring that different population groups were to live in separate geographical areas, was formally implemented in Pietermaritzburg in 1960, through a series of proclamations.⁸ Segregation between African and white colonists, however, was deeply rooted in a long history of dispossession of land rights from Africans, beginning with the Native Land Act of 1913.⁹ Trevor Wills points out that accountability for the apartheid city of today does not simply lie with the post-1948 authorities.¹⁰ By the time of the implementation of the Group Areas Act, Africans mostly lived beyond the Pietermaritzburg city borders. In terms of forced removals, it was the Indian population of the city that was most severely affected.¹¹ However, Africans were not unaffected. Those living in the Hilton area were forced to move to ‘designated African areas’, such as Vulindlela, leaving land and homes that had been in their families for generations.¹²

I have always wondered why KwaShange, in particular, is called by many older residents “*Isigodi sokuphola*” (The Valley of Peace). This appellation is also given to

Their natural respect for their elders is tested by Ndebenkulu’s patronising manner and rudeness and they cannot help being amused by his name (which means the one endowed with long lips), and his protruding tooth. And they are suspicious of his get-rich-quick schemes (this book became a SABC TV and radio drama). See also Kenneth Bhengu, *Uphuya waseMshwathi* (The Poor Man of Mshwathi) (Shuter and Shooter, 1983). This book is about migration from a rural environment to the city. Bhengu was a Zulu writer of historical novels that focussed primarily on aristocratic Zulu culture.

⁶Mxolisi Mchunu, “Discipline, Respect and Ethnicity: A Study of the Changing Patterns of fatherhood of Three Generations of Zulu Fathers and Sons in KwaShange, Inadi, Vulindlela area of Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal from 1930s to the 1990s”, MA thesis (Durban, UKZN, 2005).

See also John Laband and Robert Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1988), 18-21.

⁷Trevor Wills, D. Davis and R. Haswell, *Maritzburg after the Group Areas Act* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal, 1987), 296.

⁸Trevor Wills, D. Davis and R. Haswell, *Maritzburg after the Group Areas Act* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal, 1987), 296.

⁹Mahomed Moosa Motala, “The Group Areas Act and the Effect of the Proclamations made in Pietermaritzburg Environs”, (Paper presented at ‘The Group Areas Conference, held in Pietermaritzburg on 28 and 29 January, 1961).

¹⁰Trevor Wills, “A Study of Intra-Urban Residential Mobility in Pietermaritzburg, 1970-1972”, MA thesis, Geography (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal, 1976).

¹¹Mahomed Moosa Motala, The Group Areas Act and the Effect of the Proclamations made in Pietermaritzburg Environs (Paper presented at ‘The Group Areas Conference’, held in Pietermaritzburg on 28 and 29 January, 1961).

¹²Beverley Haddad, “African Women’s Theology of Survival: Intersecting Faith, Feminisms and Development”, PhD thesis (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2000).

the whole area of Vulindlela. When asked why this area is so called, the collective local knowledge of the elders is that many of the clans and families inhabited the area while fleeing from their areas of origin because of wars or faction fights, while others were escaping from farms because of the strict labour-tenancy laws imposed by white farmers on them in 1913.¹³ For most people who live there now, and who lived there in 1990, the area of Vulindlela is a new home, where refugees can find peace. The irony of this name has continued to puzzle me: '*Isigodi sokuphola*'. How can this area now be associated with peace? It was the area from which violence and civil war spread during the 1980s and 1990s and engulfed the entire district. Did refugees fleeing from unrest elsewhere bring with them their initial penchant for rebellion against conditions elsewhere? Did the violence occur because few families had longstanding ties to other families in the area? These are themes I shall explore.

In conducting research in the area, I have concluded that the phrase: *Isigodi sokuphola*, as applied to KwaShange, is an ideal scenario, but one that those displaced there may never attain in reality. Those fleeing there were not to find the peace they desired. The history of the area extends from battles that affected all Zulus, nationally, to small localised tensions that affected neighbours and kinship groups only. They can be grouped as follows:

- The Mfecane or, as many historians now prefer to call them, the wars between indigenous peoples and, at times, the Voortrekkers, in the early to mid-nineteenth century.
- The intrusion of the Voortrekkers into Natal and the Transvaal and conflicts with the British (c1830-40s).
- The British annexation of the Colony of Natal and Shepstone's "Location system" and proclamation of "Zwartkop" (mid-19th century).
- The Native Land Act (1913) and the administration of "Native" areas with chiefdoms and customary law.
- The apartheid era (1948–1994) and the establishment of the homelands of KwaZulu, circa 1975-1994¹⁴, which included the migrations and clan faction

¹³Interview with MaZamisa Shange, KwaShange, 14 March 2010. Interview with Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 15 March 2010.

¹⁴KwaZulu was a homeland or Bantustan that did not take 'independence'.

fighters (c.1960s); the establishment of the Inkatha Movement (c.1970s); the armed-struggle (c.1980s) between the UDF and the ANC (c.1980s-1990s).

- The first democratic elections of 1994 and the years of democracy.

This chapter will give details of these epochs and how they affected the KwaShange area, with the object of determining the roots of the violence of the 1980s and 1990s within this complex history, where there has been ceaseless unrest, despite the search by the residents for refuge and peace.

The area called KwaShange in the Location of Zwartkop only came to be named in the early 1900s. This chapter seeks to give the background to the history of KwaShange, much of which is unrecorded. I shall start by giving the background of the Zwartkop Location and how the area was before ‘the white men came’.¹⁵ For this I depend on an oral interview I had with Sungubeza Madondo, fourth generation descendant of Nobhiyane Madondo, King Shaka’s diviner¹⁶ and with Manciza Zondi, the only living descendent of the section of the Zondi clan which left Ngome, near Greytown, before the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906.¹⁷ This group came to the area, later called Edendale, in the 1820s, but were relocated to Zwartkop, in the Inadi area, which is part of Vulindlela district today.¹⁸ I also depend on an interview I had with an elderly woman, MaZamisa Shange, who was married to a son of the first Shange clan, which moved to Zwartkop in the early 1900s when escaping from Ngomankulu (near Richmond) because of faction fights.¹⁹

In the light of the above, I concur with Beverly Haddad²⁰, when she says that the Vulindlela area history is unrecorded. I quote from her PhD thesis:

¹⁵Phrase borrowed from A. T. Bryant A, *The Zulu People, As they were Before the White Man Came* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1949).

¹⁶Interview with Sungubezi Madondo, Entembeni, 11 April 2010.

¹⁷Interview with Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 14 March 2010.

¹⁸John Wright, “Before Mgungundlovu”, in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988).

¹⁹Interview with MaZamisa Shange, KwaShange, 14 March 2010. Interview with Senzosenkosi Mkhize, Richmond, 10 April 2010.

²⁰For details of the geographical and social study of the area of Vulindlela, see Beverly Haddad, “African Women’s Theology of Survival: Intersecting Faith, Feminisms and Development”, PhD thesis, (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2000) and Sinomlando Centre, Oral History project in which some parts of Vulindlela district are discussed. See also Mxolisi Mchunu, “Discipline, Respect and Ethnicity: A Study of the Changing Patterns of Fatherhood of Three Generations of Zulu fathers and Sons in

People of Zwartkop Location have no written history. Their history remains in the hearts of those who live there and increasingly in the spirits of their ancestors! Geographically and socially it epitomises the South African context where the forces of colonialism, racism, and apartheid raged unabated until 1994. Their untold histories are one of subjugation and control and suffering as they struggled to ensure their children survived.²¹

Scholars who have explored the history of Natal and Zululand agree that there were people living in Zwartkop before the arrival of colonists. Before this area became Pietermaritzburg, it was called Mgungundlovu.²² The word is stated to have been interpreted by Henry Francis Fynn, one of the first pioneers in Natal, as “the place of the elephant.” This was a reference to the Zulu king Dingane, one of whose kraals had borne the name. T. V. Bulpin described Mgungundlovu in the 1800s as full of misty hills that ‘are beautiful and gently and as full of moods as the face of a maiden’.²³

The story of the human beings who settled among these hills is varied - full of humour, achievements, personal tragedies, hopes, trials and disappointments. ‘Let us roam at will among these midlands hills and watch the human play enacted in their green setting, for it provides both a diversion and a study of all the good and ill of which man’s nature is capable.’²⁴

Some accounts of the history of the Mgungundlovu area portray the area as if it had never been occupied. John Wright made the following observations about Mgungundlovu, of which Zwartkop was later to become a part:

(T)he intrusion of Boer pastoralists into the region of the Drakensberg in the late 1830s, the emergence of the Republic of Natalia, and the establishment of

KwaShange, Inadi, *Vulindlela area of Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, from the 1930s to the 1990s*, MA thesis (Durban: UKZN, 2005).

²¹Beverley Haddad, “African Women’s Theology of Survival: Intersecting Faith, Feminisms and Development”, PhD Thesis (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2000).

²²T. V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town: T. V. Bulpin), 341. See also John Wright, “Before Mgungundlovu”, B. Haddad, “African Women’s Theology of Survival: Intersecting Faith, Feminisms and Development”, PhD thesis (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2000).

²³T. V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town: T. V. Bulpin), 341.

²⁴T. V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town: T. V. Bulpin), 341.

Pietermaritzburg as its capital, have too often been seen as having occurred in a demographic and political vacuum.²⁵

Voortrekkers penetrated into a region that had largely been depopulated by the Mfecane wars in the 1820s.²⁶ Most historical accounts describe the dealings from 1837 onwards of the Voortrekkers with the Zulu kingdom to the north of the Thukela River and with the British hunter-traders at Port Natal.²⁷ Bryant lists numbers of clans coming from this very area. They were pushed out by the Mfecane and the Voortrekkers moved into that vacuum.²⁸ When the Mfecane destabilisation had subsided these clans returned to reclaim their land and Shepstone placed them in locations, some of which had the same peoples again.²⁹

The existing recorded history pays little attention to the interaction that took place between Voortrekkers and local African communities in this area, or to the prior

²⁵ John Wright, "Before Mgungundlovu", in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988).

²⁶ Thompson Leonard, *A History of South Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

²⁷ Reins M.J. de Haan, *Mission on the Margin: A Case Study on Reformed Mission Prospects in eNkumane, KwaZulu-Natal* (Dorpspruit: Cluster Publications, 2010). See also John Wright, "Before Mgungundlovu", in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988).

²⁸ The story of the Mfecane is controversial; even today historians who studied the event have not reconciled the contradicting views about the turmoil. Fynn, who was close to Shaka, claims on no evidence whatsoever that Shaka slaughtered a million people. Such exaggeration suited colonial notions of black self-destructive violence; the idea that the region had been depopulated by Shaka gelled with settlers' desire for uncontested land. The image of a landscape littered with human bones, launched by Nathaniel Isaacs, persists as a melodramatic icon of Shaka's reign, even into the most respected of modern histories, such as Leonard Thompson. Similarly, the early historian George Theal arbitrarily upped the number of dead to two million. These exaggerations spawned the concept of the Mfecane (usually translated as the crushing): the notion that Shaka had been solely responsible for an explosion of aggression which sent neighbouring tribes scattering and marauding over most of the sub-continent. The Mfecane became the historiographical sibling of the Great Trek: where the tribes displaced by Shaka had ended up provided the basis for Bantustans (areas allocated under apartheid to black people). The issue of depopulated land has long been exploded as myth (see Shula Marks in *History Today*, January 1980. Andrew Duminy and Bill Guest eds., *Natal and Zululand from the Earliest Times to 1910: A New History* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1989), xxix, 489 state that Caroline Hamilton and John Wright, in their revisionist study of Mfecane theory analyses historical figures such as Shaka. The controversy concerning the intensification of the conflict over resources is articulated in various ways by such writers as M. Gluckman, J. D. Omer-Cooper and Jeff Guy, but remains unresolved.

²⁹ Edgar Harry Brookes and Nathan Hurwitz, *Natal Regional Survey, 7: The Native Reserves of Natal* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1957), 2-3. A. T. Bryant, *The Zulu People, as they were before the White Man Came* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1949). See also Colen Webb and John Wright, *The James Stuart Archives*, 1-5 (Durban, Killie Campbell Africana Library and Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1975-2001).

history of these communities.³⁰ The testimony of Mancinza Zondi, a surviving descendent of Mancinza Zondi (father of Bhambatha Zondi, the ‘rebel’ leader of the 1906 Uprising, who lived at Engome, Greytown), confirms Bryant and Wright’s claim that there is evidence that the region which is now called Pietermaritzburg and Edendale *did* have resident African peoples ‘before the white men came.’ The establishment of a Voortrekker community in Pietermaritzburg can be set in the context of local history, rather than exclusively in the white settlers’ version.

Wright observes that the valley of the Msunduzi, where Pietermaritzburg now stands, and the area to the west and south, was occupied by a group of Nqondo chiefdoms. According to some traditions, the section of the Nqondo who lived on the site of the city and in its immediate environs (like Edendale) was since about 1820 under a woman chief named Machibise ka Mlithwa, or kaMlifa (according to my informant, she was a daughter of Dlaba)³¹, her name survives today as the designation for part of Edendale.³²

Wright states that towards the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, the struggle for supremacy among large African states emerging north of the Thukela was intensifying. From time to time the southward flight of refugee communities brought these conflicts to the attention of the inhabitants of Natal, but until the late 1810s they remained largely undisturbed by the political events taking place in the regions across the river.³³

In about 1819, the victory of the Zulu under Shaka over the Ndwandwe of Zwide ka Langa sent large numbers of refugees spilling across the Mzinyathi (Buffalo) River into northern Natal. The Bhele and Zizi inhabitants of this region fled southwards through the Natal Midlands into East Griqualand and beyond, breaking up the chiefdoms which they encountered. A year or so later a large group of Thembu fled

³⁰A. T. Bryant, *The Zulu People, as They were before the White Man Came* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1949).

³¹Interview with Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 14 March 2010.

³²John Wright, “Before Mgungundlovu”, in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988), see also T. V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town: T. V. Bulpin), 341.

³³John Wright, “Before Mgungundlovu”, in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988), 15.

from the lower Mzinyathi, where they escaped subjugation under the Zulu, and forced their way through the Midlands and southern Natal across the Mzimkhulu. Soon afterwards their former neighbours, the Chunu, followed suit. A short while later, chiefdoms in the northern Midlands, also driven by fear of the Zulu, formed a military alliance and fled in a body through the already shattered communities to the south.³⁴

It was not until after the death of Shaka in 1828 and the establishment of a new Zulu regime under Dingane that a few small communities began to re-establish themselves in central and southern Natal. Predominant among them was a group of Nhlungwini, under Fodo ka Nombewu.³⁵ These people had originally lived between the lower Mtshezi and Mpofana Rivers, but had fled during the upheavals of the early 1820s.³⁶ In the course of nearly a decade of struggling for an existence in southern Natal and East Griqualand they had managed to preserve their cohesion as a group better than most other refugee groups had. By 1830 they had settled on the middle reaches of the Mkhomazi River and were trading ivory with the British hunter-traders who had been operating from Port Natal (later Durban) since 1824.³⁷ In the early 1830s they came under the hegemony of the Zulu king Dingane who, to avoid conflict with the British traders at Port Natal, was withdrawing his garrisons and cattle posts from the coastlands south of the Thukela and, to compensate, was beginning to extend effective Zulu authority over parts of the interior of Natal. In 1835, when Captain Allen Gardiner visited Fodo at his great place, Dumazulu, the Nhlungwini chiefdom numbered several thousand inhabitants.³⁸

³⁴John Wright, "Before Mgungundlovu", in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988).

³⁵T. V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town, T. V. Bulpin), 341. See also A. T. Bryant, *The Zulu People, as they were before the White Man Came* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1949). John Wright, "Before Mgungundlovu", in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988).

³⁶A. T. Bryant, *The Zulu People, as They Were before the White Man Came* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1949). John Wright, "Before Mgungundlovu", in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988).", and Interview with Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 14 March 2010.

³⁷A. T. Bryant, *The Zulu People, as They Were before the White Man Came* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1949).

³⁸Siyabonga Mkhize, *Uhlanga LwaSembo: The History of the Embo People* (Durban: Just Done Production, 2007), 35. See also A. T. Bryant, *The Zulu People, as They Were before the White Man Came*, (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1949). John Wright, "Before Mgungundlovu", in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988).

Two smaller groups which established themselves in the southern Midlands in the early 1830s were a section of Mpumuza under a regent, Yenge kaNontshiza, who acted for the young chief Nobanda kaNgwane; and a section of the related Nxamalala (Zuma) under Lugaju kaMatomela.³⁹ Fear of the Zulu under Dingane had led them to separate from their respective parent chiefdoms, whose territories both lay near the confluence of the Mooi and Thukela Rivers, and to migrate southwards together. After many vicissitudes they found a refuge among the forests of the Zwartkop region, where they became tributaries of the Nhlangwini.⁴⁰ In those years a section of the Fuze tribe, under Madlenya kaMahawule, was allocated land by Fodo near what is now Boston, after a succession dispute had impelled them to leave the Fuze territory near Greytown. Slightly later arrivals were the Zondi (or Nadi), who moved from near the Mooi-Thukela confluence for reasons which are not recorded. Under their chief, Dlaba ka Nomagaga, they were settled by Fodo in the Zwartkop region near their genealogically junior relatives, the Mpumuza. A hundred and fifty years later, all four of these groups still have a presence in Vulindlela.⁴¹

The area which was later to be called Vulindlela had its place in Zulu history. About 30 kilometres from Pietermaritzburg city there is a valley called Ntembeni; part of the original Zwartkop, that included KwaShange. In the Ntembeni valley there is the grave of King Shaka's *isangoma* [diviner] and on the west of Ntembeni there is an area called KwaMpande [the Place of Mpande], named after Shaka's half-brother, King Mpande.

I have made the point that the area which will be my focus in this study is one which was settled, in the not very distant past, by refugees from conflicts elsewhere. I shall now give a detailed account of one such refugee and his family who settled there, after a traumatic conflict and a long pursuit by enemies. His story was available to

³⁹Philippe Denis, "Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of the Political Violence in Nxamalala (1987-1992)" *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* (2007), 24-25. See also John Wright, "Before Mgungundlovu", in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988), and Interview with Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 14 March 2010.

⁴⁰John Wright, "Before Mgungundlovu", in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988).

⁴¹Philippe Denis, "Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of the Political Violence in Nxamalala (1987-1992)" *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* (2007), 24-25. See also John Wright, "Before Mgungundlovu", in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988).

me, because his descendants survive and recounted it to me, but it may be seen as representative of the backgrounds of many present-day residents in the area. The tale goes that King Shaka was sceptical of diviners, for whom he had developed distrust. When there was drought in Zululand, the toll of disease and death caused massive social and economic dislocation, which impelled Shaka to take a hard line against diviners who idly blamed others for natural catastrophes. According to Mpitikazi, “Shaka took the blood of a beast and sprinkled it in the doorway in his *isigodlo* during the night, without being seen by anyone.”⁴² This act was intended to put diviners to the test. The next morning, he ordered his *izinduna* [head men] to gather all doctors and people of the land at the capital, Bulawayo. As Mpukane recounted, the diviners “*smell out* people in various directions.” Only a few doctors, Mleku, Mbube, Mehlo and Nkuna, led by Nobhiyane Madondo, were exceptions. In their metaphoric jargon, they concurred that the sprinklings of blood were not “*the work of a man*”, but that of “*the heavens*”.⁴³ They were held in high repute for correctly ‘smelling-out’ the king as the culprit. The rest of the diviners were executed, in full view of the masses, as a deterrence.⁴⁴

This is a commonly known tale in the history of Shaka and the Zulu nation, yet it sounds more like myth than fact. It may well be an event that never happened or a story that was told by the colonial writers, wanting to show that Shaka was cruel to his people because the story ends when Shaka killed all the diviners who told lies about who had splattered the blood. The story, however, ceases to sound like pure myth once one meets the descendants of King Shaka’s diviner and listens to the story of Nobhiyana Madondo, as told by his fourth generation descendent.⁴⁵ And seeing the grave of Nobhiyana Madondo deep inside the forests on the mountain of Ntembeni in Vulindlela makes the tale sound factual. The family tells that the former KwaZulu chief minister and champion of the Zulu language and culture, Chief Mangosuthu

⁴²Colin Webb and John Wright eds., *The James Stuart Archives*, 1, (25 July 1919), 9.

⁴³Colin Webb and John Wright eds., *The James Stuart Archives*, 1, evidence by Mpukane: 18 March 1909, 331. (Italicized in the original). ‘Man’ implied any ordinary person, including a wizard. ‘Heavens’ was used as an expression for Shaka.

⁴⁴Colin Webb and John Wright eds., *The James Stuart Archives*, 1, evidence by Nongila: (19 February, 1903), 195.

⁴⁵Interview with Sungubezi Madondo, 14 April 2010.

Buthelezi, was eager to see the grave of the ‘hero’, whom he had heard about from his royal family and he decided to unveil the tombstone in 1983.⁴⁶

Anger that Nobhiyane alone had prevailed caused a plan to assassinate him to be made. This was the beginning of the flight of Nobhiyane and his family. He sought refuge in Mvoti near Greytown. After a short period, his enemies found that he had settled in Mvoti, and they resumed their hunt for him. This resulted in Nobhiyane fleeing from Mvoti to Mtshezi, near Estcourt, to where his enemies followed him. He and his family landed in Mgungundlovu, in an area that later became Ntembeni. When Nobhiyane and his family sought refuge in Zwartkop he built two homesteads, one in the Ntembeni area, where his descendents are still living and where he is buried, and the other homestead in Nadi, which was later occupied by the Zondi clan from Ngome near Greytown. It is said that Nobhiyane built two homesteads because he did not want his enemies to find him easily.⁴⁷



Photograph of the grave with tombstone inscription: “A memorial to Nobhiyana Madondo, the celebrated diviner of King Shaka’s days.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶Interview with family members of the Madondo clan, Ntembeni, 14 April 2010.

⁴⁷Interview with Sondubezi Madondo, Ntembeni, 14 April 2010.

⁴⁸This memorial was unveiled by the honourable Prince Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi, chief minister of KwaZulu, president of Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe and patron of the Bureau for Zulu, Language and Culture, on 12 November 1983. The erection of this memorial was financed by a contribution from the Bureau for Zulu Language and Culture and the descendants of Nobhiyana Madondo.

In Vulindlela there is a village still called KwaMpande, named after King Mpande. Two versions are given by informants as to why the area was named after this king. The first is that the Zondi clan arrived in the area during Mpande's reign. The clan had had a long relationship with the Zulu royal house. The naming relates to the Zondi clan honouring Mpande at the time of settlement.⁴⁹ The second version of the naming is that chief Langalibalele of the Hlubi clan was in hiding in what was then Zwartkop. He had refused to submit to the Zulu monarchs, thus making Mpande his adversary. The story goes that Mpande's warriors went there with the aim of attacking Langalibalele, who was hiding there. The area was then named after Mpande, because his troops settled there for a short period of time, hiding in caves and along river banks, waiting to ambush Langalibalele and his people. I find it difficult to accept this version. There is recorded evidence, in at least four records⁵⁰, that there was tension between the Hlubi nation under Langalibalele and the Zulu nation, caused by the strength and independence displayed by the Hlubi nation. The amaHlubi, whose historical name was imiHuhu, were historically the largest clan in south east Africa.

In Bishop Colenso's records, taken during the trial, Langalibalele's son, Mango, testified that "Langalibalele said he was King, and could not obey the [to attend a magistrate's court] summons"⁵¹, while in John Wright and A. Manson it is reported that 'as early as 1852, when only in his mid thirties, Langalibalele sent an envoy in to Pietermaritzburg to remind Shepstone (the Governor) that he was a great and influential Chief (read King) who resented having to put up with threats from the local magistrate.⁵² There were fears that Langalibalele's general defiance, his independence and possession of firearms, were a security threat to the Colony's white community. Rumour was that Langalibalele was collecting guns for the purpose of planning a rebellion. Given his prominence, it was a threat the British could not take lightly. Learning of the intention of the colonial government to attack his tribe and arrest him,

⁴⁹Interview with *induna* Khulekani Hadebe, KwaMpande, 24 April 2010. Interview with Chief Sondelani Zondi, KwaNkosi, 25 April 2010. Interview with Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 14 March 2010.

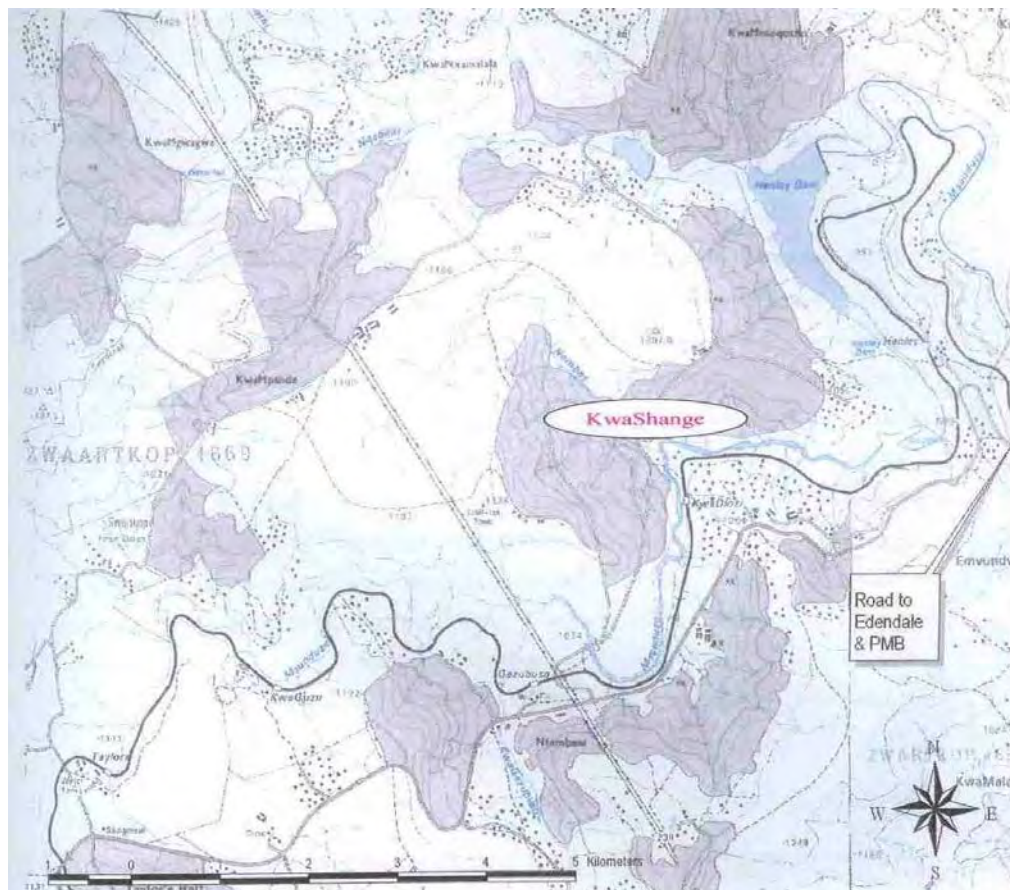
⁵⁰T. V. Bulpin, *The Annals of Natal*, 141, see also A. T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (chapter 7), 147, see also N. Herd, *The Bent Pine* (Ravan: 1976), 2.

⁵¹Jeff Guy, *The View Across the River: Harriette Colenso and the Zulu Struggle against Imperialism* (Cape Town: David Philips Publishers: 2003).

⁵²John Wright and A. Manson, "The Hlubi Chieftdom in Zululand-Natal: A History" (Ladysmith, Natal: Ladysmith Historical Society, 1983), x, 94.

he planned his escape with some of his troops. This act was to be considered by the colonial administration as an act of treason. Langalibalele was exiled to Cape Town until 1887, when he was allowed to return to Natal and resettle in the Zwartkop area under some form of house arrest. History records that Mpande was the king of the Zulu nation from 1840 to 1872. By the time Langalibalele was under house arrest in Zwartkop in 1887, Mpande was no longer king. Because of this fact, the first version sounds more accurate. These were the first noted cases of the area being a refuge for peoples fleeing from elsewhere, thus getting the name of Valley of Peace. Their descendants, as I shall show, retain some of the fears and distrust of others which they inherit from their ancestors.

4.2 KwaShange (as part of Zwartkop) in Historical Context⁵³



⁵³See attached map (Zwarkop 4669), which shows the KwaShange area in relation to neighbouring areas, roads, railway line and Msunduzi River, copied from Edgar Harry Brookes and Nathan Hurwitz, *Natal Regional Survey, 7: The Native Reserves of Natal* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1957).

KwaShange is still a largely rural area, about 25 kilometres from Pietermaritzburg, in the Midlands of the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. KwaShange is a small village in the Inadi part of the Vulindlela area, falling under the jurisdiction of Chief Sondelani Zondi. This area was one of the earliest of the Natal locations, gazetted by Lieutenant-Governor West on 7 April 1849⁵⁴. It was named Zwartkop.

Historically, the first location in Natal (Natal at this early date was a colony of Great Britain. Zululand was the area across the Tugela River toward the coast.) was the ‘Zwartkop’ location near Pietermaritzburg, which was demarcated in November 1846 for about 8, 000 Zulus, 3, 000 of whom were under chiefs who were “original occupiers of the localities.”⁵⁵

The proclamation was the result of the Natal Native Commission of 1846-7, under a policy that became known as the ‘Shepstone Policy’, one that was “criticized for having gathered the Natives together, and left them to stagnate under a re-created tribalism.”⁵⁶ Because of economic restraints, Shepstone “made the best of things.” To quote the *Natal Regional Survey*:

Having no officers to rule, he [Shepstone] rebuilt the shattered tribes and ruled through their chiefs. Inevitably he recognised Native customary law. By the 1850s the pattern of Reserve policy in Natal was fixed, the part of the 1846-7 Commission in it being the acceptance of the principle of large but scattered and the sitting of some of the more important among them.⁵⁷

Around the 1970s, the Nationalist government instituted their homeland policy, and the area then became known as the Vulindlela Magisterial District, under the KwaZulu administration, stationed in far-away Ulundi. The Zulu homeland government of the apartheid era refused to take independence. After South Africa’s

⁵⁴Mxolisi Mchunu, “Discipline, Respect and Ethnicity: The Study of Changing Patterns of Fatherhood of Three Generations of Zulu Fathers and Sons in KwaShange, Inadi, KwaVulindela Area of Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, from the 1930s to the 1990s”, MA thesis (Durban: UKZN 2005), 5.

⁵⁵Edgar Harry Brookes and Nathan Hurwitz, *Natal Regional Survey, 7: The Native Reserves of Natal* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1957), 3-4.

⁵⁶Edgar Harry Brookes and Nathan Hurwitz, *Natal Regional Survey, 7: The Native Reserves of Natal* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1957), 2-3.

⁵⁷Edgar Harry Brookes and Nathan Hurwitz, *Natal Regional Survey, 7: The Native Reserves of Natal* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1957), 3-4.

first democratic elections in 1994, the area was once again absorbed into the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

It needs to be stated that any rural area falling under a chief was, until the promulgation of the South African Constitution in 1996, and still is to an extent, subject to African customary law (formerly termed the Natal Code), which covered the laws in the locations of this province (before 1975 these areas were termed Locations if they fell within the borders of Natal and Reserves if falling within the area of Zululand). These laws are essentially those of traditional Zulu culture itself, although there have been notable amendments.

KwaShange has remained predominantly rural, and the population comprises both Methodists, who were historically associated with the mission at Edendale⁵⁸, and who are still termed *amaKholwa* (Believers), and those who regard themselves as largely traditionalist Zulu, subject to a chief and his *izinduna* [headmen]. N. J. van Warmelo's 1933 survey lists these initial inhabitants of Nguni or Zulu origins as the Zondi, Ximba (Mlaba), Mafunze (Ngcobo) and Nxamalala (Zuma).⁵⁹ The family surname is given in brackets after the relevant clan name.

Speaking of Edendale and its surroundings, McClendon has some interesting observations of what problems the area of Vulindlela has had to contend with, over time:

Just over the ridge from that relatively comfortable pocket [Edendale Mission] lie the densely packed 'township' (black suburb) areas in the Edendale valley. That area is one of many sites in the province (KwaZulu-Natal) of a decade-long war in the late 1980s and early 1990s and involving a complex mix of

⁵⁸See Marc Epprecht, "Health, Environment and the Racialisation of Space in Pietermaritzburg/Edendale, 1880-1950: Revisiting the 'Sanitation Syndrome'", unpublished article (7 April 2010); Sheila Meintjies, "Edendale 1850-1906: A Case Study of Rural Transformation and Class Formation in an African Mission in Natal", PhD thesis (University of London, 1988).

⁵⁹N. J. van Warmelo, "A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa (Pretoria, Louis Trichardt Annual Report, 1933); see also Philippe Denis, "Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of the Political Violence in Nxamalala (1987-1992)" *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* (2007), 24-25. See also John Wright, "Before Mgungundlovu", in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds. *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988).

struggles over political allegiances, culture, gender, generation, wages and state repression.⁶⁰

The Edendale area is vital to the understanding of politics and happenings in neighbouring KwaShange and greater Vulindlela, not only because the Zondi clan, under whom the area of KwaShange falls, first resided in Edendale before they moved to the Crown lands of Mgungundlovu. Some of the KwaShange people sought refuge in Edendale during the violent unrest of the 1980s and 1990s, especially during the ‘Seven Days War’ (the conflict between Inkatha and the ANC in 1990 in the Midlands). The hospital and refugee camps served as a locus for peace monitors, politicians, church activists and help-groups. The Edendale road forms part of the way to KwaShange from Pietermaritzburg and Edendale Hospital is to be seen on the left of this road. The hospital was founded in 1954, when the major apartheid laws were being passed. It served Africans and Indians who, in terms of these laws, could not be cared for at Grey’s Hospital, which was for whites only.

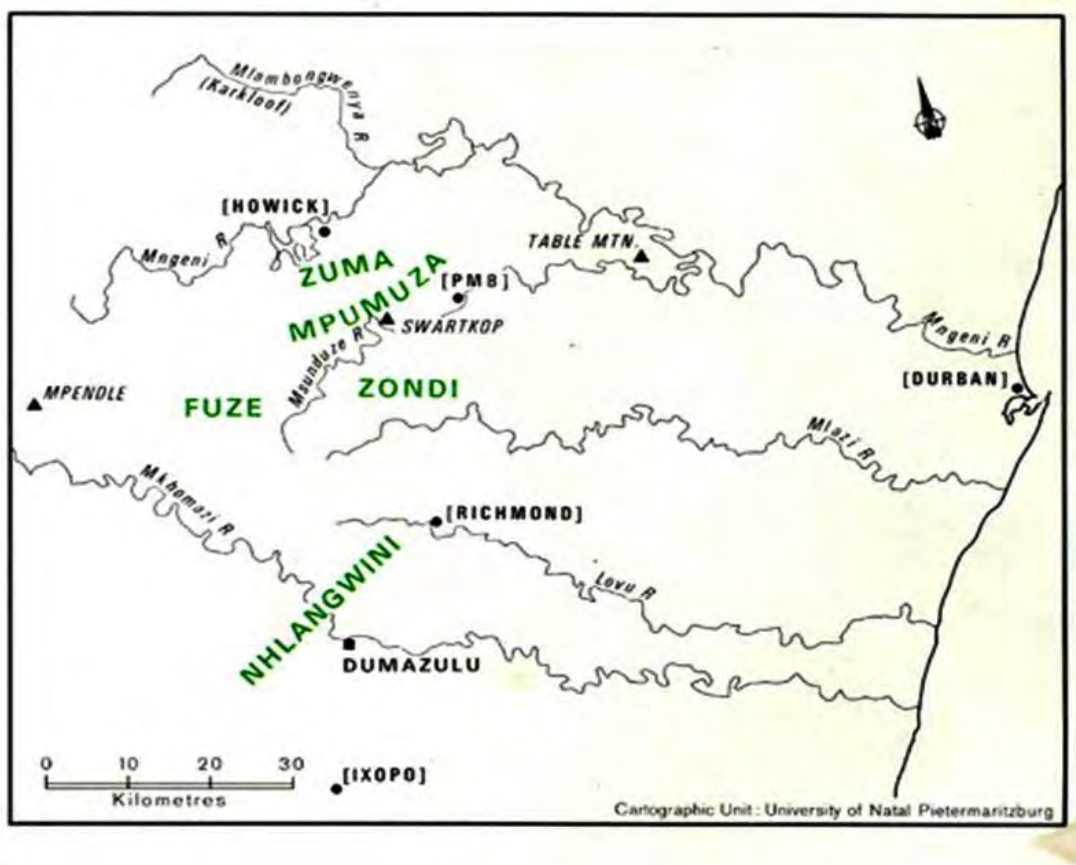
Andreas Pretorius founded Edendale in 1846, having his farm there, according to the Dutch system of land-ownership. The Rev. James Lindley then bought it in 1855 in order to establish a Methodist Mission Station. The area, however, was previously occupied by Africans who were probably still there in the mid-nineteenth century, despite the dislocations of the early to mid-nineteenth century. What is certain is that by the time of the settler occupation of the 1840-50s, Edendale was known as Machibisa, named after the Zondi Chief’s daughter, Machibisa. It was perhaps the suitability of the land for cattle which made Andreas Pretorius lay claim to the land following the Voortrekker take-over after the battle of Ncome in 1838. After the British occupation and defeat of the Voortrekkers in 1842 and when Rev. Lindley bought the farm for an American Board Mission, Christian Africans also bought much of the Edendale land.

As one passes Edendale, the drive is up a steep hill; just before reaching KwaMnyandu village, on the right, there is a SAPPI forest and in the middle of the forest is Henley Dam. This is a significant site in KwaShange history, because a large

⁶⁰Thomas McClendon, *Genders and Generations Apart: Labour Tenants and Customary Law in Segregation Era South Africa, 1920s-1940s* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002).

number of men from the area worked there, looking after the dam and the forest. This is where a number of bodies of people who were drowned in the Msunduzi River during the violence were later found. In this same forest a number of the political battles took place. The dam and forest separates KwaShange and a part of greater Edendale, a valley called Esigidini [the valley].

Vulindlela map showing four tribal areas:⁶¹



Since the early twentieth century Vulindlela has been divided into four tribal areas (*izizwe*): Mpumuza, Inadi, Mafunze and Nxamalala. According to Zulu custom, each area has a ruling lineage. Mpumuza’s and Inadi’s chiefs are Zondis; Mafunze’s is an Ngcobo and Nxamalala’s is a Zuma. The two Zondi chiefs were Inkatha members; Zuma was an ANC member. In the late 1980s and early 1990s all four areas were

⁶¹John Wright, “Before Mgungundlovu”, in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988).

under the influence of Inkatha, but included pockets of UDF affiliates in places such as KwaShange, Mphophomeni and Mthoqotho.⁶²

The rule of chiefs remains influential in the present era, despite some limitations. If men wish to obtain land in KwaShange they must go to the local *induna*, who will refer the claim to the chief, who authorizes the area a man can occupy with his homestead. This applies to Zulu male homestead heads, even those coming in from outside the area. This ground is not owned by the man himself but he has the usufruct.

During my field research I have come to recognise that the history of KwaShange remains in the 'hearts' of its residents and, more especially, it resides in the spirits of their ancestors, in their graves. The descendants of early residents often possess knowledge of the history of the area, which is otherwise inaccessible to the living. I had the privilege of interviewing the two most senior local residents of KwaShange from the two most prominent clans, Zondi and Shange, namely Manciza Zondi and MaZamisa Shange. Zondi is 90 years old and is illiterate and blind; his father died at the age of 125 in 1986. His knowledge is not based on what he read from history books but is information that has been passed on from one generation to the next. And MaZamisa Shange is also approximately 90 years old. She married young into the Shange clan and is also illiterate. These two surnames are powerful because the Zondi people were owners of the land in the late nineteenth century and were predominant in Vulindlela, even before the 'white men came'. The area of KwaShange was named after a clan, Shange, whose members were the first to occupy the small village of Inadi.

⁶²Philippe Denis, "Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of the Political Violence in Nxamalala (1987-1992)" *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* (2007), 24-25.

4.3 The Zondi people in Zwartkop

I quote from my interview with Zondi, who was discussing the relocation of the Zondi clan from Ngome near Greytown to Zwartkop:

My father's name was George. We are descendents of Mancinza ka Jangeni. Mancinza was the father of Inkosi Bhambatha Zondi of Ngome. My grandfather was Mzimba, the son of Dlabha, who left Ngome even before the well-known 'war of the heads' [Bhambatha Uprising] took place. Before the uprising started, tension between the Zondi people in Ngome and white people was already high. That is why my great-grandfather, Dlabha, left and settled in a place called Mhlathikazi. They did not stay long there before white people started provoking them and they moved again. By that time it was clear that there was going to be a war between colonials, farmers and the Zondi people. Dlabha, my great-grandfather, and some of his extended family, decided to move far way from other family members like Bhambatha, who was clearly ever ready to fight against white people.⁶³

Zondi spoke of Dlabha moving away from Ngome before 1906, the year associated with the 'Bhambatha Rebellion'. Even if Dlabha moved away from Ngome before 1906, his departure did not necessarily precede the arrival of the Voortrekkers of 1838. It was more likely that Shepstone settled the Zondi at Zwartkop. Even the naming of the area after Dlabha's daughter, Machibisa, does not indicate that his people arrived before Pretorius. The informant makes an emotive claim, not necessarily supported by facts.

The Zondi people today believe that their ancestors left Ngome before the Bhambatha Uprising of 1906. Before the Bhambatha Uprising there was already tension between Bhambatha and colonial officials. Dlabha and his household relocated, leaving Ngome and relocating to Mhlathikazi. Even there, in Mhlathikazi, the Zondis under Dlabha did not stay long, since they resented the poll tax, which had to be paid in money, and therefore forced some of the people to seek employment in the colonial economy. The

⁶³Interview on 14 March 2010 with Mr Mbongeni Zondi, translated by me from the original Zulu.

Zondi left Mhlathikazi and resettled in an area today called Machibisa in Edendale. When Dlaba died, his daughter Machibisa acted as the chief of the clan. She and her warriors fought a number of battles and succeeded in defeating chiefs who wanted to take advantage of her because she was female. Later the Zondi people under Machibisa were displaced or removed by the colonial government officials and people of Swazi origin were placed there, which is why even today you will find Msimangs, Mzolos and Smelanes there. Zondi people were relocated to *Ngaphezulu* (higher grounds or mountainous areas, called Crown Lands). The timeframe of Machibisa's reign is vague and the oral accounts of elderly people are understandably imprecise. There is almost nothing about her in literature except the mention of her name by John Wright.⁶⁴

The names of the Nadi chiefs who reigned from when the Zondi clan moved to *ngaphezulu* Zwartkop, are listed below. This information was provided by Mancinza Zondi and confirmed by other Zondi clan members who reside in KwaShange.

The first chief was Mzimba. There is a school, Mzimba Primary School, in the area on the other side of the Msunduzi River from KwaShange, named after Chief Mzimba. His son, Mhlola, succeeded him. Mhlola reigned for a long time. Upon his death, his son, Dlokwakhe, took over as chief; he was not the legitimate heir, genealogically speaking. Apparently Zwelakhe was supposed to succeed Mhlola, but due to the fact that he was exiled, he was overlooked. The Zondi people disputed the succession in this case, and even today the Chief's homestead is called eMbangwani (Place of Dispute).⁶⁵

⁶⁴John Wright, "Before Mgungundlovu", in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988).

⁶⁵Inkosi yokuqala uma besuka kwaMachibisa kwaba uMzimba. Emva kwaMzimba kwathatha uMhlola, owabe eyindodana yakhe. Waphatha kahle uMhlola kwaze kwaba uyafa kwathatha indodana yakhe uDlokwakhe. Ngokomthetho, uDlokwakhe kwakungamele abe yinkosi. Owayeyinkosi uZwelakhe. UZwelakhe wadingiswa wayiswa eMaMpondweni ngoba belwile noMqanjelwa. UMqanjelwa wayezalwa inkosikazi uMhlola ayemthathe kuqala, wabe esethatha inkosikazi ezozala inkosi uZwelakhe. Babe sebebanga-ke, balwa-ke kwafa abantu- kulwa abantu bakwa Zondi bodwa kubangwa ukuthi ubani ozoba inkosi. Yikhona phela ikomkhulu kuthiwa iseMbangweni. Wabe esedingiswa-ke uZwelakhe, wayiswa endaweni okuthiwa isemaMpondweni. Udingiswa nje usembulele uMqanjelwa. Lapho-ke kwabe sekubekwa u Dlokwakhe.

There is another version of why he was exiled, according to the Shange old woman, Mazamisa, who happened to know the history of KwaShange. Zwelakhe fornicated with his sister. It was a disgrace, a taboo. The Shange people say that the Zondi clan were ashamed to tell the truth because they would be embarrassed, whilst the Zondi clan say that the Shange clan discredited the Zondi clan because they were interested in the position. They wanted the chieftaincy to be given to one of them. Shange's version is convincing.

Dynastic quarrels have continued until the recent past and in the period of ANC – IFP conflict a chief called Shayabantu, whose legitimacy was also disputed, is known to have caused violence in Vulindlela, as he was responsible for collecting funds to build the KwaZulu parliament in Ulundi. This caused a lot of problems in the area. This speaks to his political association with the Inkatha, to retain his 'illegitimate' position. He attacked people in KwaShange and other areas that were UDF aligned (see Chapter Two).

4.4 The Shange clan

The Shange people arrived in Zwartkop in the early 1900s. They originally came from Ngomankulu near Richmond, named after the mountain Ngomankulu across the Umlazi River. Shange was a prominent clan in the area, but there were other clans, such the Mkhizes. In 1906 there were disputes between two Mkhize factions, when *Inkosi* Skhukhukhu Mkhize fought with *Inkosi* Tilongo Mkhize. Inkosi Tilongo was supported by Mguquka, whilst Skhukhukhu was supported mainly by the Shange clan. Skhukhukhu was the loser in this conflict and the Shange clan realised that they had no future in Ngomankulu, so they fled.⁶⁶

⁶⁶In 1906 Mnuqwas was the leader of Chief Mguquka Mkhize's warriors. He was captured and sentenced to many years in prison for his involvement in the *Impi YaseMbo*, a war between the Embo clan and the Mabhoyi people (Mabhoyi area comprised of different clans: Shange, Mchunu, Ngubane and a few Mkhize people were there). This war coincided with the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906. Many Mkhize warriors hid in the caves in the area called Gudlintaba, but Tilongo was imprisoned in 1906 and this ended the Embo war. The Shange clan had already left the area and they never returned after Tilongo's imprisonment.

Three senior Shange men went around looking for a place where they could take refuge.⁶⁷ They approached the Zondi chief at the time in Zwartkop, Mhlola, giving him an account of what had happened to their clan – the battle with the Mkhize clan. The Shange people were given land on the other side of the Msunduzi River in the Nadi area. The area thus came to be called KwaShange which means “the place of the Shange.”

When they arrived in this part of the Inadi area there was only one homestead, that of the Mkhize. My informant reasoned that this area should have been called KwaMkhize, rather than KwaShange, but she said that when the Shange clan was allocated this piece of land, the three men returned to Ngomankulu in Richmond to fetch all the members of the Shange clan, who then relocated to Zwartkop. The name of the Shange homestead was Endabeni. Because the Shange clan was in the majority, the area was named KwaShange. Soon after that, another person from the Msane clan arrived from Mafunze and he and his family were given land in this area, KwaShange.

4.5 The KwaShange headmen

Although I have placed the KwaShange Location *indunas* in order of succession, I have not included the dates, as nobody knows them for certain.

Nzwakele was the first induna or headman when the Shange clan first arrived in Swartkop.

- When Nzwakele died, his son Mhlazane Shange took over the position. After his death, the Zondi chief deployed his adherent from a neighbouring area (Mvundlweni) to act as KwaShange headman. The chief trusted no one from the Shange clan to take over as headman after Mhlazane, because Shange people were ambitious and wanted to be independent from the Zondi chieftom. This nominee, Zuma, acted for two years.

⁶⁷My interviewee could not remember the names of these three men, except that of his father-in-law, who was one of the three men. His name was Mhleane Shange. In my interviews with other people in the area, two other prominent names appear: Kufakakuceli Shange and his brother Nzwakele Shange. From this I deduce that the three men were Mhleane Shange, his father Nzwakele and his brother Kufakakuceli. (She probably refused to mention his name because, according to the custom of *hlonipha*, or Zulu respect culture, daughters-in-law do not mention their in-laws by name.)

- After that period, Msane, who had come from Mafunze, was given the position of headman.
- When Msane died, Ndawonde was appointed to succeed him. Ndawonde was known to be very strict and fought with other clans. When he took over, he tried to change the name of the area from KwaShange to Ndawonde's Kraal. For many years, the area had two names, KwaShange and Ndawonde's Kraal. In this period, chief Zondi sent some of his clan to KwaShange to reside there to ensure that the area did not become independent from the Zondi chieftainship.
- After Ndawonde's death, the position of *induna* reverted to the Shange clan. Dukuza Shange succeeded Ndawonde.
- After Dukuza's death, Masondilika Shange took over the position.
- He was succeeded by his son Mbokodo, who was a drunkard. He was recalled unceremoniously from the position.
- Mbokodo's younger brother, Skhosiphi Shange, took over the position.
- Phineus Ngubane was the next *induna*. He reigned until the beginning of the political violence of the 1980s and 1990s. In 1987, as *induna*, he no longer had the power to maintain discipline and order in the area. He himself was directly affected by the political violence of the 1980s. In 1987 his wife was found stabbed to death and her mutilated body was found lying in the cattle kraal.

After Ngubane, no one wanted the position because there was 'nothing to look after - people had gone mad and violence was rife.'⁶⁸ For a short period a KwaShange businessman, Zondi (who owns stores in KwaShange), acted as the *induna*, but because of the violence, he resigned and the position was vacant.

- In 1990s, after the Seven Days War, two senior men were appointed by the chief to share duties of *induna*: Shange and Mbanjwa.
- In 2008 Mbanjwa passed away and Shange stepped down as headman and the current headman, Mabhoiyi Madlala, was appointed.

⁶⁸Interview with Mvunyelwa Ngubane, KwaShange, 8 March 2009.

My interviewees are from families who originated outside the area. Some of them settled in Inadi during the 1800s. Some moved from white-owned farms in Midlands areas such as near New Hanover and Howick, while others came from Greytown and Vryheid. When I did my Masters research, all interviewees gave as their reasons for moving that they thought they had poor economic prospects as farm tenant labourers and hoped for an improvement in their family fortunes by obtaining work in the cities of Pietermaritzburg and Durban.

It ought to be emphasized that the labour tenants who lived on white farms had no land rights, worked hard, were often (but not always) brutally treated and, until recently, were often paid no, or very meagre, wages. Usually a tenant had rights to work some land and graze cattle in exchange for labour (his own and that of his children) but no security of tenure. Tenant labour was appreciated by some Africans, because it allowed them to stay on the land, but often this was determined by increasing demands of farmers for more and more labour from the households head's families. This was one of the reasons why young men left to seek paid labour in the cities.

Currently, unemployment rates in the area of KwaShange are high and some members of the community have been retrenched, which adds to the problem. Most older women are housewives and part-time crop farmers, leading a life that is rural and largely traditional, while some obtain work as domestic workers. Very few people in the community are professionals and those that are work as teachers, nurses and police officers. Children stay in the rural areas and attend local schools, although some attend schools outside the community and later go to tertiary institutions.

Zulu-dominated rural areas are known for faction fights between residents and neighbouring clans. In the KwaShange area the people of neighbouring Polela, the Dlamini group, have always been antagonistic to the Zondi from Zwartkop and from time to time fighting has erupted. The fights relate to access to and control of land. The more recent settler families are also subject to political conflicts and tensions. The incoming Mchunu, for instance, were in conflict with the established Ndaba family from the 1960s to the 1980s. The Ndaba, also called Mhlungwini, from the Estcourt area, mocked the Mchunu, saying they are 'country bumpkins' and

‘outsiders’ or *amakula* (coolies), whereas those who were there since the area was established are referred to as *Amarashiya* (Russians) and are regarded as ‘more traditional’.⁶⁹ Even today in KwaShange there is a section called *kwaMnanayi*, a derogatory term for Indians. Another section is KwaGudlintaba. This name came with the Shange clan; the place where they lived in Richmond before they sought refuge in Zwartkop was Gudlintaba. They named the section where most ‘original’ KwaShange people are situated, Gudlintaba. This is where die-hard traditionalists are found, mainly Zondis and Shanges. In 1987 most people who were aligned to Inkatha came from this section and relocated elsewhere in fear of their lives. Most people in the *KwaMnanayi* Section were associated with the UDF. The Mchunus were supported in these fights by the Ndlovu and Madlala, who had emigrated with them from New Hanover during the 1960s. The worst clash between the Mchunus and Ndabas took place at a shebeen [drinking-spot] known as Gomorrah, in Edendale Township. The traditional clans’ conflicts which I have described above lent bitterness to the party political conflicts of the 1980s and 1990s.

These clan faction fights were characteristic of the KwaShange area, as they still are in Msinga, but during the period of the late 1980s to 1990s they were eclipsed by the political unrest and the struggle against the Nationalist apartheid regime. This unrest was known locally as ‘civil wars’ between the UDF supporters and Inkatha supporters. The ready use of weapons was characteristic of both kinds of conflict.

I have argued in this chapter that violence was a normal feature of life in the Midlands of Natal. Historically, Natal, of which Vulindlela (once Zwartkop) was part, has been structured around violence. Structural violence, repression and coercion were the central features of the era before colonialism and continued under apartheid. Violence embedded itself into every facet of our society and shaped the nature of state power. While political violence was not a new phenomenon, what happened in 1987 in KwaShange was different from anything that had preceded it.⁷⁰

⁶⁹Philippe Denis, “Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of the Political Violence in Nxamalala (1987-1992)” *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* (2007), 24-25(2006-7), 64-94.

⁷⁰Jacklyn Cock, “The Feminist Challenge to Militarism”, *Agenda* 36, “No to Violence” (*Agenda Feminist Media*: 1991), 27-39.

During the unrest of the 1980s-1990s, according to the understanding of the media and political analysts, the UDF was conducting the main struggle against the apartheid regime, while the Inkatha movement, which was associated with the ethnic grouping of the Zulu, was considered to be reactionary, in collusion, to an extent, with the Nationalist government. However, there were in fact no clearly defined political motivations for belonging to either of these parties within the community of KwaShange and this exacerbated the 'civil war' situation. Matthew Krentz, in *Unofficial War*, describes this situation as one of violence that dominated the media reports: stories of murder, dispossession and the displacement of people were frequently published.⁷¹ KwaShange is known by black people in the Pietermaritzburg area as a place notorious for such violence; it was named 'Slaughter House', because people were slaughtered like animals there. This particular conflict expressed itself in many incidents of violence, which I will discuss in following chapters.

⁷¹Matthew Krentz, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1996).

Chapter Five

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN KWASHANGE

5.1 Introduction

It is generally known that tension between Inkatha and the UDF started in the early 1980s in the Midlands.¹ Random attacks and killings took place, but the seriousness of these attacks became apparent only on 25 September 1987, a date which marks the start of organised and large-scale violence in KwaShange.² Newspapers and electronic media reported the events. The incident is known as “The KwaShange Massacre”, but locally even today it is referred to by the community as *Ulwesihlanu Lwezibhelu*, (Friday of Killings). This incident was to precipitate the wider fighting in Vulindlela. Thirteen Inkatha Youth Brigade members attending a meeting in a house were killed by a group, including three off-duty police officers, in KwaShange, Pietermaritzburg.”³ The Vulindlela and Midlands violence was so bad that John Wright declared that “it was probably the worst since the ‘Bhambatha Rebellion’ of 1906.”⁴ At the first ANC national conference within the country, at the University of Durban-Westville in 1991, KwaShange was used as a case study in the discussion of the ‘political violence that had taken place inside the country for almost two

¹The history of political violence in the Natal Midlands is documented in the transcripts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission victims’ hearings held in Pietermaritzburg between 18 and 21 November 1996: www.doj.gov.za/trc/trcframeset.htm.

²See for instance Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 24 June 2005; Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange 13 August 2008; Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 14 August 2008. Interview with Bhekithemba Mbanjwa and group interviews I had with a significant number of informants, KwaShange, 12 March 2010. These interviewees confirmed what is documented in a body of literature that deals with the history of violence in KwaZulu-Natal, see for instance, Anthony de Villiers Minnaar, *Conflict and violence in Natal/KwaZulu: historical perspectives* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1990); Rupert Taylor and Mark Shaw, “The Natal Conflict”, in John Brewer ed., *Restructuring South Africa* (London: St. Martin press, 1994), 35-52; Alexander Johnston, “Politics and Violence in KwaZulu-Natal”, in William Gutteridge and J. E. Spence eds., *Violence in Southern Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 78-107. See also John Aitchison, ‘The Origins of the Midlands War’ and “KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72. John Aitchison, “Numbering the Dead: The Course and Pattern of Political Violence in the Natal Midlands 1987-1989”, MA thesis (University of Natal, 1993), 114. See also Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), 35-40.

³ <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/chronology>

⁴John Wright, “Background of Political Violence: Pietermaritzburg Region 1987-8 in Pietermaritzburg since 1838-1988”, in J. Laband and R. Haswell eds., *A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988), 221-2.

decades.’⁵ After 1987 there were many court cases that attracted a number of people in KwaShange who were either aligned to Inkatha or the UDF. All these court cases took place in Pietermaritzburg, which is why there are instances quoted in this chapter where supporters of these two movements brought the war into the City centre. UDF and Inkatha supporters would meet in court for hearings. After the hearings they would attack each other at bus stops, mainly at the downtown bus stops in East Street and Retief Street.

This chapter is based mainly on the interviews I had with informants in KwaShange: It contains first-hand accounts of attacks and counter-attacks in the civil war during the period under review. This provides windows into the past for readers who are not familiar with the civil war and its results. I shall refer to secondary sources such as newspaper articles that reported events in KwaShange and violence that took place in Pietermaritzburg itself, related to the KwaShange unrest.

Much information related to the 1980s-1990s violence in KwaZulu-Natal, and South Africa in general, has not been recorded. This was probably one of the largest and longest ‘black on black’ conflicts of the twentieth century. It has been argued about and analysed, both before and after democracy was attained in South Africa in 1994. It continues to excite the imagination of those that did not experience it, because it was full of paradoxes (for instance, the struggle was by blacks against white domination but the violence was ‘blacks against blacks’). Another fascinating factor about this violence was the weapons used, probably for the first time in the history of ‘black fighting against another black’, machine guns and petrol bombs were. Not all weapons, however, were new. Old-fashioned methods of fighting battles were used: the use of *muthi* and ‘doctoring of wars’ overshadowed the war (even though it was not generally known and is still a taboo subject in KwaShange).⁶

In this chapter, I attempt to be consistent in dating all the events, taking them from secondary resources such as news reports, so as to date events mentioned by eye-witnesses and involved informants, who, in most cases, have forgotten the exact time,

⁵See Appendix, extract (transcribed by Mxolisi Mchunu) from the “The Violence Commission” at the ANC conference that met to formulate an adequate response to this counter-revolutionary war.

⁶See Chapter Eight.

but have not forgotten the time of the day when these events occurred in KwaShange. Again, I have not given numbers of deaths and casualties, because not all those who died or were injured during the KwaShange violence were counted.⁷

Violence in KwaShange appeared spontaneous and reactionary. Attacks were not usually strategised, as they were invariably defensive, unlike in an official war situation, with insurgence and counter-insurgence and trained national armies.⁸ Attacks would start when people were in town, at home cooking, in the forests getting firewood or at the river washing clothes. But due to the fact that people were aware that these surprise attacks took place anytime of the day and at any location, they were always ready to run or fight. It is impossible, however, to do full justice to the recording of KwaShange events, because there were so many, taking place almost every day from 25 September 1987.

I give a brief chronological background in this chapter. I shall begin, however, by profiling the ring-leaders who were regarded as instigators of the violence in KwaShange.

⁷John Aitchison, "Numbering the Dead: The Course and Pattern of Political Violence in the Natal Midlands 1987-1989", MA thesis (University of Natal, 1993), 114.

⁸For an overview of the interpretations of political violence in Natal, see Andrian Guelke, "Interpretations of Political Violence during South Africa's Transition", *Politikon* 27:2 (2002), 239-54; William Beinart, "Political and Collective Violence in Southern African Historiography", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18:3 (September 1992), 455-485; Alexander Johnston, "Politics and Violence in KwaZulu-Natal", 82-90. There are also case studies that have been published on many areas in KwaZulu-Natal such as the Midlands, see Nxamalala study, Philippe Denis, "Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of the Political Violence in Nxamalala (1987-1992)" *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* (2007), 24-25(2006-7), 64-94. KwaShange study, Mxolisi Mchunu, "Cultural Change, Zulu Masculinity and Intergenerational Conflict in the Context of Civil War in Pietermaritzburg (1987-1991)", in T Shefer, K. Ratele, A. Strebel, N. Shabalala and R. Buikema eds., *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society* (Cape Town, UCT Press, 2007), Edendale, Nkosinathi Gwala, "Political Violence and the Struggle for Control in Pietermaritzburg", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 15:3 (April 1989), 506-524. Mpumalanga, Debby Bonnin, "Claiming Spaces, Changing Places: Political Violence and Women's Protests in KwaZulu-Natal", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26:2 (June 2002), 301-316; Debby Bonnin, "Legacies of Political Violence: An Examination of Political Conflict in Mpumalanga Township", *Transformation* 62 (2006), 59-83. Pietermaritzburg, Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990). For Durban studies, see Douglas Booth and Mlandu Biyela, "Exploring the Spatial Dimension of Black Resistance and Political Violence in South Africa: The Case of Durban", *Urban Geography* 9:6 (1988), 629-53; Doug Hindson, Mark Byerley and Mike Morris, "From Violence to Reconstruction: The Making, Disintegration and Remaking of an Apartheid City", *Antipode* 26:4 (1994), 323-50. Molweni, see S. Stravrou and A. Crouch, "Molweni, Violence of the periphery", *Indicator SA* 6:3 (Winter 1989), 46-50.; S. Stavrou, Underdevelopment: Natal's Formula for Conflict", *Indicator SA* 7:3 (Autumn 1990), 52-56.

5.2 Profiling KwaShange's ring-leaders

5.2.1 Overview

In a discussion of politics in KwaShange, Vulindlela, the names of prominent men who may have been instigators or at the centre of the conflict cannot be ignored. Their involvement in the struggle was wider than the KwaShange area. Yet the happenings in KwaShange resulted in their participation in the broad politics of the region, then Natal and Zululand, now KwaZulu-Natal.

I shall start by giving notes taken by myself, gleaned from interviews with four ring-leaders and from newspapers of the period of the violence in KwaShange. The interviewees were Nunu 'Ngedlezi' Mchunu, Chris Hlengwa, Moses Ndlovu and Philippe 'Makhekhe' Thabethe.⁹ These men's political activities were central to the civil unrest of the 1980s-1990s and thus important to an understanding of my topic. My interviews with Moses Ndlovu took place whilst I was doing my Masters research.¹⁰ He was not interested in talking about my research into fatherhood, but hijacked my interviews to tell stories of political violence in KwaShange; hence I added a chapter specifically about the interconnectivity of violence and discipline to my Masters thesis. This was a timely interview, because when I started working on my PhD project, Ndlovu had died. This means that there are gaps in my interviews with him which I cannot close. In regard to 'Makhekhe' Thabethe, I was unable to track his whereabouts after he fled from KwaShange during the violence and nobody knows if he is still alive or not. I relied upon his interview with *The London Times* in 1988.¹¹ However, I was able to conduct interviews with Nunu 'Ngedlezi' Mchunu and Chris Hlengwa and asked both about Ndlovu and Thabethe. My interview with Mchunu was particularly fruitful, as he related of his recollections of the times and I regard these discussions as invaluable insights into the violence.

⁹These names were mentioned by all interviewees who participated in this study and appear here with the consent of the individuals.

¹⁰Mxolisi Mchunu, "Discipline, Respect and Ethnicity: A Study of the Changing Patterns of Fatherhood of Three Generations of Zulu Fathers and Sons in KwaShange, Inadi, Vulindlela Area of Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, from the 1930s to the 1990s", MA thesis (Durban: UKZN, 2005).

¹¹John Fisher Burns, "Black versus Black in South Africa", *The New York Times*, 21 January, 1988, 5-7. http://www.nytimes.com/1988/01/21/world/black-vs-black-in-south-africa_p5. Accessed on 23 March 2009.

I did not profile many other people who were prominent in KwaShange politics. I was unable to do them justice, as I failed to find data on them in published material (probably because it does not exist) or could not set up interviews with them. These include the late Chief Shayabantu Zondi (Nadi chief before the current chief, Sondelani Zondi) and late *induna* Guvaza Khanyile. Neither Chief Zondi nor *induna* Khanyile was resident in KwaShange, but their names are linked to almost every incident of violence and they must be considered amongst the instigators of the political violence. Others include young ring-leaders who were known as most troublesome and strong fighters: Bhoyo Hlophe (UDF), Mlungisi Ngubane (Inkatha), Mathi Ngcobo (UDF), Lindiwe Ngcobo (UDF), MaZondi Maphumulo (UDF) Seni Mhlongo (UDF), Tana Zuma (Inkatha), Nurse Mchunu (Inkatha), Ntongo Thusi (UDF) and Mzi Zuma (Inkatha).¹²

Of the four ring-leaders I profiled, Ndlovu and Thabethe lived only a kilometre apart.¹³ So did Mchunu and Hlengwa. Ndlovu and Thabethe became political rivals, but were once good neighbours, belonging to one church, played for one soccer team and exercised together as young men of KwaShange. They shared jokes; their children attended the same school.¹⁴ Mchunu and Hlengwa were once best friends. All these families shared and exchanged gifts, like mealies, *amadumbe* and sweet potatoes; they enjoyed each other's harvests, itself a culturally valued interdependence in a community. My interviews will give insight into the breakdown of this community into civil war.¹⁵

¹²Interview with Moses Ndlovu (2006), Nunu Mchunu and Chris Hlengwa (2008). In all interviews done in KwaShange for this study, names of these men and women were mentioned as people who were at the fore-front of violence in KwaShange.

¹³Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 10 August 2006.

¹⁴Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 10 August 2006. See also interviews with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008, and with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 15 March 2008.

¹⁵The theme of division in communities because of political violence in the 1980s-1990s has been dealt with in a number of studies. For instance, Debby Bonnin questioned why communities in Mpumalanga turned against each other because of their different political parties; see Debby Bonnin, "Space, Place and Identity: Political Violence in Mpumalanga Township, KwaZulu-Natal, 1987-1993," PhD thesis (Wits University, 2007). See also Anthea Jeffery, *The Natal Story: 16 Years of Conflict* (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2007). Philippe Denis, Radikobo Ntsimane and Thomas Cannell, *Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of Political Violence in Nxamalala (1987-1993)* (Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications, 2010), investigated how political violence divided the Nxamalala community that once lived together in harmony.

The rivals Ndlovu and Thabethe are representative of party factionalism, which was further divided along union lines, e.g. COSATU and the United Workers' Union of South Africa (UWUSA).¹⁶ Mchunu and Hlengwa represented the local factions, Inkatha and UDF, respectively, in KwaShange. The population of Vulindlela (of which KwaShange formed one sub-area) was comprised of peoples from different regions, e.g. farms near New Hanover, Greytown, Estcourt and Crammond.¹⁷ Ndlovu and Thabethe, along with Mchunu and Hlengwa, reflect the localized nature of township politics in the era of violence. Moreover, Inadi, of which KwaShange was part, fell under the chieftainship of Shayabantu Zondi, who was aligned to Inkatha.¹⁸ These four men actively participated in the political activities of their political movements at provincial and national level. In KwaShange, UDF-aligned residents were at war with the Inkatha-aligned residents who rallied under the Zondi chief who was in sympathy with Ulundi. Inkatha received support from the Nationalist government, while the UDF formed the ANC in exile's inner wing in the struggle declared in June 1986.¹⁹

¹⁶For details on the history of the formation of these two Unions, see John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War and KwaZulu-Natal", 51. He states that COSATU managed to gain considerable sway over the black working class, including migrant workers in Natal. Large numbers of Inkatha members were to become loyal COSATU supporters. It explains the infatuation of organised business interests in Natal and elsewhere with Inkatha and its state-funded clone, UWUSA.

¹⁷For details on the history of KwaShange and the home bases of many interviewees, see Chapter Four, "Historical Background of KwaShange."

¹⁸Interview with Nunu Mchunu, Moses Ndlovu and Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange (2006-2008). These men confirmed that Chief Shayabantu Zondi of Inadi was a leader of Inkatha in Vulindlela; other authors called the Chief the "staunch supporter of Inkatha" see Philippe Denis, Radikobo Ntsimane and Thomas Cannell, *Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of Political Violence in Nxamalala (1987-1993)* (Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications, 2010), 10. Nunu Mchunu who was an ally of the late Chief, mentioned that "Ulundi (capital of Zululand) expected Chiefs and *izinduna* (headmen) to comply with the Act that stated that they had to be leaders of Inkatha in their respective places: Chief Shayabantu Zondi had no option (but to lead Inkatha in Vulindlela)"; see also Zulu Chiefs and Headmen's Act (8 of 1974), KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, quoted in Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and the Politics of Loyal Resistance*. (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), 230.

¹⁹Powers in State of Emergency (1986-1990). A State of Emergency is a governmental declaration that may suspend normal functions of the executive, legislative and judicial powers, alert citizens to change their normal behaviour, or order government agencies to implement emergency preparedness plans. It can also be used as a rationale for suspending rights and freedoms, even if guaranteed under the Constitution. Such declarations usually come during a time of natural or man-made disaster, during periods of civil unrest. Many authors have written on the 'State of Emergency' of 1987 and the bias shown by the Nationalist government towards Inkatha supporters. John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War and KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization*, (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 64; see also Detainees Aid Committee. *Detention Under Three Emergencies: A Report on the Natal Midlands, 1986-1989*. Pietermaritzburg: Detainees Aid Committee, 1989).

My interviews with these four men made me realize that KwaShange was the centre of the initial clash which led to the ramifying violence in the greater Vulindlela area and to the “Seven Days War” in March 1990. These happenings were merely part of a conflict that reflected the politics of the country as a whole.

5.2.2 Moses Ndlovu²⁰

Moses Ndlovu was born on 19 June 1944 at Swayimane in the Otto Bluff area, near Pietermaritzburg. His parents were farm tenants. He attended primary school in Crammond and later was faced with racial oppression and exploitation when, at the age of 14, he was forced to work on the farm, according to the tenant-labour system of the times.²¹ He was embittered by his experiences and deliberately drove the farmer’s cattle onto the railway line in front of an oncoming goods train. They were killed or maimed, which led to him and his family being expelled from the farm.²²

Ndlovu then relocated to Pietermaritzburg, KwaShange location. He enrolled at a local school where he studied until he reached standard eight. He was forced to leave school after his father’s death, and he then had the duty, as the eldest son, to look after his siblings and his mother.²³ He was employed at Meadow Feeds in 1962. In 1963 he moved to a newly built industrial area in Hammersdale, where he worked until 1972. Here he was exposed to trade unionism.²⁴ When he was recruited into the ANC, his initial assignment was trade union work, mobilizing workers into trade unions. Among the highlights of his unionist career were the well-remembered 1973 strikes in Durban.²⁵ He worked closely with Barney Dladla and Alec Erwin in the Trade Union

²⁰For details on Moses Ndlovu’s experiences and involvement in political violence in the Midlands see Lou Levine ed., *Faith in Turmoil: The Seven Days War, Through Stained Glass Windows: Moses Ndlovu- KwaShange* (PACSA, 1999), 63.

²¹Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005. Jabulani Sithole has conducted interviews with many old ANC and COSATU leaders in KwaZulu-Natal. He mentioned that many young men of his age joined unions later because of their experiences on farms, author’s conversation with Jabulani Sithole, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 11 June 2010.

²²See also [http:// www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=5618](http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=5618), accessed on 4 February 2008. See also Lou Levine ed., *Faith in Turmoil: The Seven Days War Through Stained Glass Windows: Moses Ndlovu- KwaShange* (PACSA, 1999), 63.

²³Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005.

²⁴Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005.

See also [http:// www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=5618](http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=5618), accessed on 4 February 2008.

²⁵Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005.

See also [http:// www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=5618](http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=5618), accessed on 4 February 2008.

Advisory Coordinating Council (TUACC). In 1975, he was tasked to do the underground work of identifying suitable young men and women within the trade union structures who could be sent abroad for military training.²⁶ Ndlovu worked in his original home of KwaShange, recruiting mainly young males.²⁷ He also recruited youth in other places in Natal and Zululand. This brought him closer to seasoned unionists and ANC leaders such as Harry Gwala, Mathews Meyiwa, Alpheus Mdlalose and William Khanyile.²⁸

During his work as an underground operative he evaded the dragnet of the apartheid security police until Harry Gwala and Azaria Ndebele ordered him to co-ordinate transport for families of his comrades who were standing trial in Pietermaritzburg in 1976-1977. He was banned from 1977 until 1981 and prohibited from being in the company of more than three people at one time.²⁹

When his banning order expired, Ndlovu had an opportunity to contribute to the formation of the trade union COSATU structures in the Natal Midlands Region, in 1985. He joined forces with Jay Naidoo, Johnny Makhathini, Kenneth Dladla, Theo Nene and Pat Horn and began to organize workers into unions under COSATU. When the executive decision was taken that sector-based affiliates of Fosatu should be established, Ndlovu and Makhathini contributed to the formation of almost all the Pietermaritzburg-based trade unions that subsequently became affiliates of COSATU. He organized workers as far away as Ladysmith and Cato Ridge.³⁰

At the height of violence in Natal, Ndlovu provided leadership. He led the formation and co-ordination of Self-Defence Units (SDUs) in the greater Vulindlela area. As a result he was subjected to constant harassment by the national security police and

²⁶Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005.

See also [http:// www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=5618](http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=5618), accessed on 4 February 2008.

²⁷Interview with 10 men who were recruited by Moses Ndlovu in KwaShange, 13 September 2008. Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange 11 August 2005. Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 15 March 2008.

²⁸Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005.

²⁹Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005. Interview with Dumisani Lushozi, former ANC Ward 4 Councillor, KwaShange 21 January 2008. Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 11 March 2008. See also [http:// www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=5618](http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=5618), accessed on 4 February 2008.

³⁰Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005. See also [http:// www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=5618](http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=5618), accessed on 4 February 2008.

Inkatha vigilantes.³¹ Nunu Mchunu of Inkatha said Ndlovu was regarded as the ‘most “rotten potato”, which is why KwaShange received more attention from state security police and Inkatha leadership, locally and provincially.³² Ndlovu not only witnessed the killing of his friends, but he was to experience the pain of the murder of his daughter by vigilantes in KwaShange.³³

5.2.3 Nunu Mchunu, commonly known as ‘Ngedlezi’³⁴

Mchunu was singularly instrumental in the conflict in the KwaShange area: he was connected with the Inkatha Movement and participated in national strife, as well as in KwaShange conflicts.³⁵ He represented more than 3 000 members of the Natal Provincial Administration (NPA) union.³⁶ He was imprisoned in 1987 under the State of Emergency, on the grounds that he was the source of the turmoil of KwaShange, which spread to neighbouring areas.³⁷

Mchunu was born in 1942 on a farm near New Hanover in Mshwathi.³⁸ When he was still young, he left the farm because he felt that farm life, with its enforced labour-tenancy, was stifling his ambitions. Standard five was the highest grade available in the Melville Primary farm-school. When farm dwellers’ children completed Standard five, they were expected to work full-time on the farm. Mchunu sought employment off the farm, first in Greytown and then in Pietermaritzburg. The younger Mchunu, despite being banned from the farm, nevertheless kept visiting the farm at night to see his parents and siblings. The clash between Mchunu’s father and the farmer became

³¹Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005.

See also <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=5618>, accessed on 4 February 2008.

³²Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange 14 March 2008.

³³Interview with M Ndlovu, KwaShange, 17 October 2005), See also African National Congress website: www.anc.org.za and Lou Levine ed., *Faith in Turmoil: The Seven Days War Through Stained Glass Windows*: Mr Moses Ndlovu-KwaShange (PACSA, 1999), p. 63.

³⁴For a brief history of the Mchunu family in KwaShange, see Mxolisi Mchunu, “Discipline, Respect and Ethnicity: A Study of the Changing Patterns of Fatherhood of Three Generations of Zulu Fathers and Sons in KwaShange, Inadi, Vulindlela Area of Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, from the 1930s to the 1990s”, MA thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban 2005.

³⁵Interview with Nunu Mchunu, Moses Ndlovu, Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 2005-2008.

³⁶Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008.

³⁷Interview with Nunu Mchunu, Moses Ndlovu, Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 2005-2008.

³⁸For details on the history of uMshwathi see Kenneth Bhengu, *Uphuya waseMshwathi* (Poor/Pauper man from Shwathi) (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1983).

intolerable in 1964 and in 1965 the entire Mchunu family moved to KwaShange.³⁹ Mchunu is my uncle and my own family moved from New Hanover to KwaShange. While my uncle was working in Pietermaritzburg for the NPA, he joined the workers' union and began to be politically active.⁴⁰ He remembers that he met with many "highly educated" people who had read leftist literature. These people had a great influence on him. He also read newspapers, particularly *Ilanga lase Natali*, which "broadened his mind" and politicized him. He learnt that there was a political movement (the ANC) that was opposing the bad treatment of black people by whites and he started attending these meetings:

We eventually left the farm and when we went to Pietermaritzburg, I got employment in town and I understood that there was a party that was fighting against the white men's regime. At that time, I hated white people. I began to understand politics in Pietermaritzburg and I became part of the organization that was fighting against black men's oppression. That was the ANC. I joined the African National Congress because it was fighting for black people. We used to attend meetings in Pietermaritzburg Town Hall – and police would come and harass us. I remember the day Mandela was caught by the police. We had a meeting with him in a place known today as Retief Street. We had gathered on that day to burn our passes. Police came and they asked where our passes were and they shamboked [whipped] us. I will never ever forget that day of my life.⁴¹

Mchunu had difficulty in remembering details of this period of his life: the hall he mistakenly called the City Hall was probably a ramshackle hall called 'People's Hall.' This is a place where the early ANC who worked for black liberation had their meetings. Nearby this 'People's Hall' in Retief Street there was a bookshop and restaurant where the 'highly educated' people that influenced Mchunu bought 'leftist literature'. These discussions introduced Mchunu to politics.

³⁹Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008.

⁴⁰Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008.

⁴¹Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 11 March 2008.

Mchunu recalls names of people who attended these meetings and who were prominent: Moses Mabhida, Harry Gwala, Agrippa Ngcobo, 'Mfenendala' Xaba, Mtimkulu, Nhlangulela and Sithole (from Snathingi in Edendale), who was a well-known teacher in the Natal Midlands.⁴² Mchunu recalls that sometimes the South African Police would come and beat them during these meetings. As the situation intensified, some left the country into exile, but others remained.

Both Moses Ndlovu and Mchunu attended these meetings; they knew each other because they came from the same area, but they were not close. Both alluded to the fact that discussions at the 'People's Hall' were mainly about mobilizing people in their local areas and educating them about the struggle against the Nationalist Government.⁴³ There were meetings where they had to appoint leaders for the ANC. They recalled that sometimes there was infighting and battles for positions. These did not include Mchunu and Ndlovu.

Both Mchunu and Ndlovu recalled that in their meetings at the 'People's Hall', the emphasis of discussions was on the significance of a national movement, to take part in the organization that was engaged in the class struggle, and the trade unions which were more concerned with shop-floor programmes. They acquired a clearer idea of what was really happening on a political level and joined the trade union movement.⁴⁴

Moses Ndlovu and Nunu Mchunu came from the same school of thought; I believe that they were amongst those whom Harry Gwala, who taught communism, called 'vanished friends'. They were never to be as prominent as other leaders in the ANC. In the 1960s, both Mchunu and Ndlovu recalled a meeting addressed by Mandela in Pietermaritzburg, the last meeting Mandela had before his capture: he was caught by the South African Police near Howick. The Nationalist regime was harsh on people who participated in these kinds of gatherings and in 1960 the ANC, PAC and SACP

⁴²Listening to Nunu Mchunu, I realised that Mr Sithole played a crucial role in his political life and career. My attempt to trace who this Sithole was, was a failure. Jabulani Sithole, lecturer in History at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg, assumes that this could be the Sithole who was a teacher in Edendale.

⁴³ Interview with Nunu Mchunu, 14 March 2008. Interview with Moses Ndlovu, August 2005.

⁴⁴Interview with Nunu Mchunu (11 March 2008) and Ndlovu (26 October 2005). See also Tony Karon, *An Interview with Harry Gwala*, Pietermaritzburg, Dambuza (1 August 1989). (www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/webpages/DC/...043.../int19890108.043.049.pd accessed on 11 April 2009).

were banned. Mchunu recalls that many people he knew, who used to attend meetings at the 'People's Hall', disappeared, perhaps jailed or exiled. "This was the most difficult time. I then realized that life was difficult, I decided to withdraw my participation. Many people who had been recruited to the ANC just disappeared."⁴⁵

To the question "Why did you then join the Inkatha movement?" Mchunu answered:

Many people who were members of the ANC faced a difficult time. Many went into exile in places like Mozambique, Lusaka, Angola and Swaziland, because the state police were looking for them. The government had decided to ban organizations that challenged the state. Many people I met and got to know when I first arrived in Pietermaritzburg went into exile. I contemplated escaping the country but it was still difficult for me. I had a farm mentality. I feared for my life, I decided to withdraw myself and not associate with political groups.⁴⁶

Some of those who remained in the country heard that there was another organization that was going to be an 'internal wing' of the ANC. Mchunu recalls that Sithole and Nhlangulela came to him and told him about 'the movement that *'umntwana wakwa Phindangene'* (Buthelezi, often called 'the prince of *Phindangene'*) had started and it was going to fight for black people's rights like the ANC. In other words, Inkatha was going to be 'the internal wing of the ANC' and it was going to negotiate with the Nationalist government. "The Inkatha National Cultural Liberation Movement did not claim to be the sole and authentic representative of the Black people of South Africa."⁴⁷ It claimed that its aim was to use a multi-strategy approach for a united non-racial democratic country. Its formation was a result of a need for a black democratic force to come to pick up the gauntlet of the black liberation struggle.⁴⁸ From the first State of Emergency, and the bannings after Sharpeville in the 1960s, there had been no significant organized black political activity.

⁴⁵Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 11 March 2008.

⁴⁶Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 11 March 2008.

⁴⁷Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 11 March 2008.

⁴⁸ <http://www.ifp.org.za/History/history.htm>; see also Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and the Politics of Loyal Resistance*. (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987).

Wave after wave of repression by the South African Government had, by 1975, left black politics in disarray. At the time of Inkatha's launch in 1975 the names of ANC leaders Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govern Mbeki, Moses Mabhida and others including PAC leader Robert Sobukwe were being whispered in quiet corners. Dr Buthelezi, from the beginning, spoke of them in his speeches and even quoted them, which was a punishable offence. He raised questions of their release and made their release conditional to any dialogue with the white racist Nationalist Party regime.⁴⁹

This was the Inkatha Movement under Mangosuthu Buthelezi. Mchunu attended Inkatha meetings in Ulundi with some men from Pietermaritzburg and, when they met, they were told to encourage people in their home areas to publicize Inkatha. Mchunu declared:

That is how I became a member and leader of Inkatha in KwaShange. I visited people door-to-door telling them about this movement. Some liked it while others did not care much because they were apolitical. I began to mobilize, not only in KwaShange, but in other areas as well.⁵⁰

Mchunu joined Inkatha because he knew that it had been the ANC's suggestion that Chief Buthelezi start the movement. To him it was the kind of movement that he sought, because he did not want to go into exile or to prison. Some men that he had recruited for the ANC in KwaShange were already in prison because of the State of emergency, like Kubheka, known as 'Ibh'lamani', who later became an Inkatha 'warlord' in KwaShange. When Khubeka was freed from prison, Mchunu persuaded him to join Inkatha and to assist him to mobilize members of the community to join. In 1975 Buthelezi set up the Inkatha National Cultural Liberation Movement after receiving the consent of the ANC in exile.

⁴⁹ <http://www.ifp.org.za/History/history.htm>; see also Mzala, *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Agenda* (London: Zeb Books).

⁵⁰ Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 11 March 2008.

Inkatha was formed at a time that allowed the organization to articulate its mission through the language of Black Consciousness⁵¹ and black identity, in such a way that it avoided open conflict with the Nationalist Government, which had rejected non-racialism.⁵² Inkatha challenged the government in a less radical manner than more radical parties. Buthelezi claimed:

I wanted democratic forces emerging in South Africa to accept a multi-strategic approach and offer to work in harmony with the ANC Mission in Exile. In 1974, when I set about gathering leaders together to establish Inkatha in 1975, I set about doing so with the clear intention NOT of subverting the ANC Mission in Exile – but of proving to them that democratic opposition to apartheid and non-violent tactics and strategies were still possible.⁵³

Aitchison noted that Inkatha legitimised itself as an authentic expression of the (largely ANC) tradition of inclusive Black nationalism through negotiations carried out with the ANC and the Zambian President, Kenneth Kaunda, as well as through Buthelezi's connections with the ANC and Mandela. Its language of non-violence was aimed at business interests and foreign powers intent on constructive engagement.

Black Consciousness, in spite of its positive, identity-building character that did much for psychological liberation, contained within it a wellspring of resentment that later was to develop within Inkatha into a distrust of leftist white, Indian and any black radicals associating with them in either group. Cultural liberation as a means of raising political awareness within a repressive apartheid environment lost its discrimination once Inkatha and its leader Chief Buthelezi had established its strong identify as 'at one' with the

⁵¹Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and the Politics of Loyal Resistance* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), 230.

⁵²John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War and KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization*, (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47. See also Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and the Politics of Loyal Resistance* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987) (1997).

⁵³<http://www.ifp.org.za/History/history.htm>

traditional tribal chiefdoms long used by the apartheid regimes ‘divide and rule’ policies.⁵⁴

Mchunu, Nhlangulela, Sithole (from Edendale) and Kubheka became staunch Inkatha members and attended meetings in Ulundi. To the question of what Inkatha leaders discussed in Ulundi, Mchunu answered:

In Ulundi we discussed nothing but how to strengthen the struggle in the country and to ensure that those who were in exile be allowed to come back. We called these people by names: Mandela, Mbeki, Sobukwe, Oliver Tambo, Mabhida and others. All of what was discussed was that Chief Buthelezi should talk and reason with the white government of the time to treat black people with respect. We discussed that we needed to embark on a constructive and passive struggle for freedom and we would encourage each other to mobilize support in our areas so that the government could see that all black people were concerned and not just a few people who were in leadership.

Mchunu confirmed that Buthelezi refused to negotiate with the Nationalist government and to accept homeland ‘independence’.

I can tell you, we discussed nothing but how to get the government of the Nationalists to listen to the majority of people of South Africa and release ANC leaders who had been jailed and to un-ban the organizations that were banned. That is why Mangosuthu Buthelezi refused to enter into talks with the Nationalist government unless the political prisoners were released. Later as there was tension between Buthelezi and ANC leaders in exile, we [as Inkatha] were then attacked in our areas [by UDF, the new ‘internal wing’]. It became the subject of our discussions; all leaders including myself reported that we were being attacked either verbally or physically by young people in particular and those who believed that Buthelezi had betrayed the African National

⁵⁴Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi’s Inkatha and South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987); see also John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War” and “KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72.

Congress. We agreed that we are not going to ‘fold our arms’ but we were going to defend ourselves from the attacks. That is how this violence problem started in many areas, including this one of KwaShange.⁵⁵

Mchunu mentioned that he attended Inkatha meetings in Ulundi before the relationship between Buthelezi and the ANC in exile became bitter. He was annoyed by what the ANC in exile were doing to promote the struggle, and more so by proposed sanctions. He agreed to strengthen the Inkatha Movement in KwaShange in preparation for complete independence from the ANC and the UDF. He had connections with Inkatha leaders in other areas, who met frequently in Ulundi.⁵⁶

Some people recruited by the ANC, and who had participated in the meetings at the ‘People’s Hall’, did not go into exile but there are no records that they joined Inkatha. I asked Mchunu why they did not join. He replied that some people decided not to get themselves involved in politics because their lives were in danger. They believed that the government would turn against Inkatha as the ANC was already banned.⁵⁷

Ndlovu’s responsibilities, however, at the time of the formation of Inkatha, suggest that he had either been conscientised to the leftist view of the armed struggle or had no time to actively participate in Inkatha activities because he was tasked to do underground work for the ANC. He had been given the responsibility of identifying young people within the trade union who could be recruited and sent abroad for armed force training. Soon after the formation of Inkatha, in 1977, he was banned.⁵⁸ Clearly, however, there was no tension between Ndlovu and Mchunu at that time.

5.2.4 Chris Hlengwa

Chris Hlengwa was a KwaShange policeman in 1987. He was born in Estcourt on a white-owned farm, but his parents left because of the terrible conditions they were living under. The Hlengwa family came to KwaShange when there were still few

⁵⁵Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 11 March 2008.

⁵⁶Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 11 March 2008.

⁵⁷Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 11 March 2008.

⁵⁸Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 26 October 2005.

residents in the area. Hlengwa grew up in KwaShange, went to school nearby in KwaMpande. Later he went to Mzimba School, named after the Zondi chief, where he completed standard eight. He was then employed by the South African Railways Police. In the mid-1980s, these police were incorporated into the South African Police (SAP). Shortly after the violence started in KwaShange, Hlengwa played an important role in preventing the violence from escalating. He said:

As police, we were called to many areas in Vulindlela and other parts of the Natal Midlands to mediate between UDF and Inkatha people who were fighting. I used to get disconcerted by Inkatha members who mercilessly killed UDF supporters. I used to be annoyed by some of my white colleagues but more so by black police who killed black people in townships like Hammersdale and Imbali.⁵⁹

Some UDF people such as Moses Ndlovu and Harry Gwala knew Hlengwa's feelings about the situation; his relationship with them became stronger and he took it upon himself to defend the UDF from Inkatha assault, in conjunction with the SAP. Hlengwa's anger towards Inkatha was noticed by Chief Shayabantu Zondi of Vulindlela, an Inkatha leader. Later in 1987, Hlengwa and about 11 other men in KwaShange were found guilty of killing 13 Inkatha members who were 'planning to attack UDF supporting families.' I shall go into more details concerning this incident in the next chapter.

5.2.5 Phillip Thabethe, commonly known as 'Makhekhe'

This interview, "Black vs. Black in South Africa," took place between Thabethe and the *Times* newspaper in 1988.

One man with a bitter grievance against the UDF is Phillip Thabethe, a 40-year-old driver for the bus company that serves many of the 300,000 blacks living in the Edendale region. The UDF militants mounted an all-out assault on Thabethe and his family after he began organizing at the bus depot on

⁵⁹Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 12 March 2008.

behalf of the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA). The union was an Inkatha affiliate that was rival to the more powerful labour affiliated Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

Thabethe claimed he was on his bus in September 1987 when a man in the line at the door opened fire on him. To the monitors of the violence he showed scars on his chest of eight bullets from a Soviet-made Tokarev automatic pistol. His driver's licence, in his shirt pocket at the time, had four holes where bullets had passed through. Thabethe underwent weeks of surgery before going home to KwaShange. While he was recuperating, 10 days before Christmas 1987, gunmen killed his twenty-year-old son as he walked to a local store. Six days later, while Thabethe was at the hospital, about 50 youths surrounded his home and set it on fire. His wife, his mother and another son were killed.⁶⁰

However, at the offices of the Pietermaritzburg Association for Christian Social Awareness, which aimed to alleviate suffering in the townships, a Black welfare worker described the bus driver, Thabethe, as “one of the top Inkatha killers” and said he had been involved in many slayings of people with UDF affiliations, but when the accusation was repeated to Thabethe by Monitors he claimed: “I cannot be a killer. I do not have a gun.”

Inkatha's chief representative in the region, Vusumuzi Mvelase, produced a sheaf of affidavits that the Movement's members had presented in court, seeking injunctions against further attacks from the UDF. The applications dealt with fire-bombings and shootings directed at Inkatha officials in the Pietermaritzburg and Durban areas, attacks that Mvelase said arose from attempts by the UDF, dating from 1985, to supplant Inkatha as Natal's pre-eminent black group.⁶¹

⁶⁰John F. Burns, “Black versus Black in South Africa”, *The New York Times*, 21 January, 1988, 5-7. http://www.nytimes.com/1988/01/21/world/black-vs-black-in-south-africa_p5. Access on 23 March 2009.

⁶¹John F. Burns, “Black versus Black in South Africa”, *The New York Times*, 21 January, 1988, 5-7. <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/01/21/world/black-vs-black-in-south-africa>. Access on 23 March 2009.

5.3 “*Izinkunzi Ezimbili Esibayeni Esisodwa*” (“Two bulls in one kraal”)⁶²: The Breach between Mchunu and Ndlovu

Mchunu was one of Chief Zondi’s councillors from 1980 and was responsible for peace and order. Smoking on public transport was not allowed, but some people would ignore the rule and smoke. It was Mchunu’s responsibility to call those people to order. He instilled discipline mainly in young people who were ‘disrespectful’ in their behaviour within the community.⁶³

As much as I was doing my job – assigned to me by the community, there were people who hated me for working for the community. Some would deliberately do things which were really out of order in my presence – because they wanted to provoke me; they knew that I would not keep quiet. But from 1983, I was undermined and it looked as though there was a campaign to challenge my authority. One of the people who were causing me trouble was Moses Ndlovu and many young people who were in one way or the other connected to him.⁶⁴

During our interview in 2005, Ndlovu commented on Mchunu as a community leader:

Mchunu was using his authority as a community leader to campaign for a political movement. He was very cruel to those people he deemed were not interested in his movement. Mchunu and I were in a war, so, I was not ashamed to tell people not to take him seriously. It would have been better if he did justice, but he was biased.⁶⁵

Mchunu was one of the leaders in a large community Zionist church, which had members who came from neighbouring areas of KwaVulindlela. He was not really a

⁶²This is a Zulu saying that was used by some of my interviewees in KwaShange, who observed tension that was going on between Mchunu and Ndlovu. They were regarded as peers who were equally intelligent, strong and influential. They were likened to two bulls in one kraal (kraal being KwaShange area) and traditionally, it is not done; you do not put two bulls in one kraal because they fight. One elderly woman felt that it was not right for Mchunu and Ndlovu to be residents of KwaShange, both of them- she felt that one should have been elsewhere.

⁶³Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 15 March 2008.

⁶⁴Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 15 March 2008.

⁶⁵Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 26 October 2005.

church person, but he wanted to influence people and many people who belonged to the Zionist church were members of Inkatha.⁶⁶ Ndlovu followed suit: he took a senior position in the Presbyterian Church in KwaShange.⁶⁷

As I said, there was a war between myself and Mchunu. This was triggered by the fact that Inkatha leadership and supporters in other areas were treating UDF supporters unfairly; in fact our members were being brutally killed in Johannesburg, in Transvaal and many other areas. Arrogance and attitude displayed by Inkatha leadership nationally compelled us to prevent Inkatha from spreading to every corner of our society. In our UDF and COSATU meetings it was agreed that we needed to stop Inkatha's influence and do anything that would counteract them [...]. Can you imagine if I allowed him [Mchunu] to do as he pleased? This area would not be what it is today.⁶⁸

In 1984, KwaShange built the first secondary school (Mtholangqondo School). For years there had been no secondary school in the area. KwaShange had a lower primary school and a higher primary school. In 1982, the latter school introduced standard six and this was the foundation of the first KwaShange secondary school. But because they had no school buildings, they used the higher primary school premises until 1985, when standards six, seven and eight moved to a newly built secondary school named Mtholangqondo Junior Secondary. Mchunu was appointed the first chairman of the school committee. Some people were unhappy about this appointment, but his influence was irresistible in the community.⁶⁹

In 1987, school children, influenced by Ndlovu's canvassing amongst the youth in the UDF, began to be ill-disciplined, being insolent to teachers. There was tension amongst the learners themselves: some wanted Mchunu to be on the school committee, while others wanted him removed because he was an Inkatha leader as

⁶⁶Interview with MaZamisa Shange, KwaShange, 11 April 2010.

⁶⁷Interview with MaZamisa Shange, KwaShange, 11 April 2010.

⁶⁸Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 26 October 2005.

⁶⁹Interview with Moses Ndlovu, and Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 2005-2008.

well as a community leader.⁷⁰ This was also because Mchunu was known to be very harsh on undisciplined youths.⁷¹ Ndlovu said:

That was the only strategy we could use to stop Mchunu. He was very influential in the community. I, together with my team, mobilized a few boys and told them to cause chaos and make sure that they made school ungovernable. By that time Mchunu had won many teachers in all our local schools to join Inkatha.⁷²

This created tension between school children, so that teaching and learning had to stop. One day in 1987 there was a serious fight in school, where children from UDF-supporting homes fought with children whose families were Inkatha supporters. The latter were chased away and told to go home and tell their parents to pack their possessions and leave KwaShange. The UDF learners refused to attend classes and the school principal, Clement Mathonsi, sent some children to call the Chairman of the school, Mchunu, to address students.

I refused. I said they must tell the principal that I am not coming; I feared that the children were going to kill me. I had heard that the plan was to kill me. Because one of my daughters was a learner in the same school, she heard from friends of hers that it was the day to kill me. Instead, I went to KwaZondi store (where there was public telephone) and I phoned the police.⁷³

Ndlovu commented:

I was not at home that day, I was at work, but one of my boys [UDF supporters] phoned me at work and he told me that a police helicopter came to the school and it was the first time in our area a helicopter landed. Nobody knew who had informed the police – but we suspected that Mchunu had called the police. It was a shock because we had hoped that he was going to go to the

⁷⁰Interview with MaZamisa Shange, KwaShange 11 April 2010.

⁷¹Interview with MaZamisa Shange, KwaShange 11 April 2010.

⁷²Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008; Interview with Moses Ndlovu, 26 October 2005.

⁷³Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008.

school to talk. Mchunu was a person who never feared anyone – he had unbelievable bravery. We were sure that he would go to school and try to stop the chaos and my boys would ‘deal’ with him then.⁷⁴

Not surprisingly, on 25 September 1987, 13 youths of KwaShange, mainly learners from the Inkatha- supporting families, were attacked by UDF supporters and killed. They were buried in a mass grave in the school yard. In 1988, Mchunu resigned from the chairmanship of the school and Ndlovu succeeded him.

Philippe Denis, drawing on his personal collection of recorded interviews, in his submission to International Amnesty, noted that the local spark for conflict between the two camps was the strike at the BTR SARMCOL factory in Howick, which started on 30 April 1985. There had been an earlier stoppage in March over management’s prolonged delays in recognising the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU). In contrast, after its formation in May 1986, UWUSA was recognized immediately at the same factory. In retaliation for the strike of 1985, the entire African workforce was dismissed. The factory management started to recruit ‘scab’ labour soon after the strike started. This inevitably led to conflict. A successful Pietermaritzburg stay-away on 18 July 1985, endorsed by FOSATU and the UDF, was called on behalf of the strikers and was followed by a consumer boycott of white-owned shops. By the end of August a survey conducted by the Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce showed an average fall-off in black trade of between 60 and 70 per cent, some of it brought about by young UDF comrades.⁷⁵ The boycott was denounced by the Inkatha-supporting Inyanda Chamber of Commerce. On 12 January 1986 Buthelezi instructed all Inkatha members and supporters to be prepared to mobilize workers against the newly formed COSATU. Because of this, Mchunu and Makhekhe made public announcements, in KwaShange and neighbouring areas that people should dissociate themselves from COSATU, since it was bringing confusion into society.

⁷⁴Interview with Moses Ndlovu, 26 October 2005.

⁷⁵John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War” and “KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72.

A 200-strong Inkatha group was bussed into Mpophomeni Township (the home of the SARMCOL strikers) on the evening of 5th December 1986. Some KwaShange Inkatha leaders were amongst them. Mchunu recalled this incident, but never admitted that some KwaShange Inkatha leaders were part of the group. They abducted four COSATU officials and members in Mpophomeni, assaulted them and executed three; one managed to escape. The Inkatha group was then escorted out of the township by the police. Within a day or two at least three of the perpetrators were arrested, after an investigation by the Howick police. They were ordered by a high-ranking police officer to release the accused. The inquest in March 1988 found that nine Inkatha members (against whom there have as yet been no prosecutions) were responsible for the murders. One of those named was Vela Mchunu who, together with about 200 other Inkatha men, had received SADF Special Forces military training.⁷⁶ Vela Mchunu was arrested in the early 1990s and tried under another name for a taxi-related double murder, but was acquitted. The Attorney-General of Natal, Tim McNally, refused to bring him to court for the Mpophomeni killings.⁷⁷

Police were present throughout Mpophomeni and KwaShange, searching for guns, but they went to the homes of known UDF supporters. Hlengwa's, Ndaba's and Zondi's homes were searched. The police would take any weapon they found in these households; the next day Inkatha supporters could then attack easily. During the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in Pietermaritzburg in 1996, the Nationalist government's Secret Police's Eugene De Kock indicated some of what was happening in the Natal Midlands and the role the police played in exacerbating the situation. They were to be known as the "Third Force".⁷⁸

⁷⁶Interview with four KwaShange former policemen who followed and observed what was happening in Howick/Mpophomeni. C. Hlengwa, S. Zondi, M. Goge and N. Msane, KwaShange, 25 September 2008) See also J. Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72.

⁷⁷John Aitchison, "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 73.

⁷⁸John Aitchison's testimony during the Truth and Reconciliation Hearing in Pietermaritzburg, see www.doj.go.za/trc/hrvpmb/pmb.

5.4 August 1987: The Day for Moses Ndlovu

In August 1987 there was a meeting at KwaShange Higher Primary School and everybody, including children as young as ten years old in KwaShange was forced to join Inkatha. At this meeting, Chief Shayabantu Zondi was the chairperson; on stage were local top Inkatha leadership: Guvaza Khanyile (the local induna), Nunu Mchunu, P. Thabethe, Kubheka and Mlungisi Ngubane (a youth activist). Ndlovu had been forced to come to the meeting. He was asked to explain his actions since 1979; why had he acted as a ‘traitor’ and been ‘disrespectful’ to Chief Buthelezi and the KwaZulu Government.

Despite the pressure, Ndlovu did not answer the questions: not only was he being bullied, but in other school halls community members were being forced to pay R5 (five rands) for Inkatha membership cards. This forced membership of Inkatha in KwaShange was a result of an instruction from Inkatha that everybody in Vulindlela must be a registered member of Inkatha. Aitchison writes:

[...] there were now daily reports of a heavy Inkatha recruitment drive backed by threats and coercion. Apparently in many Vulindlela areas a final date of 4 October was proclaimed, by which time everyone had to have joined Inkatha. Conventionally, it is here that the Midlands war can be said to have begun.⁷⁹

In retrospect, I have found that this was the day that Inkatha had planned to kill Ndlovu publicly.⁸⁰ They wanted to show the community members that were reluctant to join Inkatha what was ‘coming to them.’ Ndlovu was questioned why he associated himself with COSATU, that had treated Chief Buthelezi with contempt and he was instructed to resign.

Ndlovu said he was an employee of COSATU and could not quit because he would not know how to support his family. Inkatha leader and induna Guvaza Khanyile told

⁷⁹John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War and KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 59.

⁸⁰Interview with anonymous former leader of Inkatha in KwaShange, 17 February 2009.

Moses Ndlovu that Inkatha would see to it that his family did not suffer because of that. Hlengwa's account of the meeting is as follows:

I arrived late to that meeting because I had been working night shift. I remember well that day; it had been raining the day before (Saturday) so it was muddy. The school hall was packed and the road to the school was full, almost every community member was there, it was indeed a sad day. People were scared. We were all terrified. When I arrived at the school hall, Moses Ndlovu was standing in the front (*Kwakungadlalwa*) the man was crying literally. Moses Ndlovu had been forced by a group of men to attend the meeting. And he was being forced to 'lead by example' and take membership of Inkatha. And there was a heated debate where many were questioning Chief Zondi and Ngendlezi (Mchunu) as to why they were forcing them to join Inkatha and others were asking what they are going to gain by joining Inkatha. Phakathi, senior man of KwaShange, upon my arrival, raised a hand and asked me 'as a policeman – a person who understands law' to answer some of their questions. The question was: is it correct for Nkosi Zondi and Ngedlezi Mchunu to compel them to join Inkatha? What does the law say? My answer was 'No, nobody should be forced to join any organization.'⁸¹

Chief Zondi and Chris Hlengwa became arch enemies from that day. The following day, Chief Zondi saw Hlengwa walking by the road in KwaShange and threatened him. He tried to beat him but Hlengwa took out his gun and Chief Zondi ran away. By that time Hlengwa requested protection from the police, which he received for about a month. When the white station manager heard that Hlengwa was UDF, he withdrew the police that were looking after Hlengwa's home and children.

State police started harassing UDF supporters in KwaShange: some UDF supporters were taken away by the SAP for a number of days and beaten. Police in plain clothes used to come with a white taxi, with the sign 'DAMBUZA'. Some white police would wear brown make-up so as not to be recognised by people in KwaShange. In the same year Inkatha youth started recruiting, 'toyi toying' in KwaShange, forcing people to

⁸¹Interview with C. Hlengwa, KwaShange, 11 March 2008.

join Inkatha and going to surrounding areas like Vulisaka. These youths frequently met in the Senior Primary in KwaShange and in one instance they met at Mzamweni High School, across the Msunduzi River. That day in August 1987 they were planning one of their attacks. The UDF leaders in KwaShange were aware of this meeting and organized themselves. With the assistance of Harry Gwala, they managed to get a Mkhonto we Sizwe (MK) soldier to come to defend homes that were going to be attacked.

We realized that waiting for them would make it difficult for us to prevent them. The best thing was to corner them where they met because we were sure that they had some weapons. Inkatha-trained police were going to accompany them, so we decided to go to the school and we shot them.⁸²

Aitchison's version of the story is that the COSATU leader, Alfred Ndlovu, borrowed an AK 47 from an MK member and attacked an Inkatha group in Vulindlela and wounded several people.⁸³ Seven youths were permanently paralyzed because of this attack. Others were killed later because of the same political violence.

The Daily News report about the KwaShange incident of August 1987 stated:

About 12 complainants and potential court witnesses had been killed, or their houses burned down, in the past year in KwaShange, Pietermaritzburg, the regional court was told yesterday. The witness, Captain A. Upton, of the Unrest Unit here, said that intimidation was so bad that even bereaved people were scared to be seen near the police. Other potential witnesses who had made a statement to lawyers later denied having made it. This fear of reprisal made it very difficult to prosecute perpetrators of political crimes here. Captain Upton was testifying at the regional court trial of Mr. Alfred Ndlovu (38), second national vice-president of the Transport and General Workers' Union and regional chairman of COSATU. He faces charges of terrorism and two attempted murders, one arising out of the wounding of 13 youths aged

⁸²Interview with anonymous, KwaShange, 11 March 2008.

⁸³Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 12 March 2008. See also John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 58.

from 10 to 17, and a 22-year-old man, at Vulisaka [KwaShange] in August last year.⁸⁴

Many people I interviewed in KwaShange remembered this incident and say it was the first time they had heard the sound of a gunshot. The MK soldier used an AK 47 and left many KwaShange youth wounded.

I have argued elsewhere that ‘the so-called black-on-black violence did not start in the streets, in streams and forests of our country, but it was engineered in state offices.’⁸⁵ The Nationalist government was guilty of aggravating and even engineering the confrontation between black people: The rupture that developed between the ANC and the Inkatha Movement in 1979 provided a useful occasion for government to aggravate the conflict. Much publicity was given to what was described by the government, and portrayed by the State media, as ‘black on black violence.’⁸⁶ One of the established strategies of the regime was to use divisions to maintain their rule. Inkatha was seen as relatively pro-Nationalist, with Buthelezi opposing sanctions and receiving funding for military and police training.⁸⁷ The UDF was formed in 1983 to oppose the tricameral system imposed on South Africa.⁸⁸ It identified all participants in a Nationalist government structure as an enemy.

Through 1986 the UDF, as the ANC internal wing, had started boycotts of businesses and used intimidation to compel unwilling black participants to observe them. Municipal transport in Pietermaritzburg was targeted. Strikes and labour actions were used to increase pressure on the Nationalist government. In his interview, Ndlovu said, “we were instrumental in organizing the strikes; many young men from my area [KwaShange] would participate in the strikes, but when we came back, we would face

⁸⁴*Daily News*, 23 August 1988.

⁸⁵Speech by May Mashego-Mkhize presented at the conference: Remembering Political violence in KZN 1987-1990, conference hosted by Msunduzi/Voortrekker Museum, 25-26 March 2010.

⁸⁶John F. Burns, Special to the *New York Times*, Published: Thursday, 21 January 1988, 3.

⁸⁷John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War” and “KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94. See also Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi’s Inkatha and the Politics of Loyal Resistance* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), Mzala, *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Agenda* (London: Zed Books, 1988).

⁸⁸Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi’s Inkatha and the Politics of Loyal Resistance* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987). See also John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War and KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003).

challenges, anger, hatred from our neighbours who were anti- UDF and COSATU.”⁸⁹ Chief Zondi and the Inkatha leaders in KwaShange, Mchunu and Kubheka, when they attended Inkatha meetings in Ulundi, reported that Moses Ndlovu and his supporters were a bad influence in Vulindlela.⁹⁰ Throughout 1984 and 1985 the spectre of the ‘necklace killing’ came into its own. Many people identified as being in the opposition camp or informers were killed by means of this ‘necklace’: a car tyre was placed around the neck of a victim, petrol dowsed on it and the victim set alight. The intention was to terrorize those who supported the Nationalist government. Particular areas were targeted to be used to test the ‘necklacing system’. It was agreed at a meeting that took place in Durban that KwaShange was one of the places that was going to be a ‘testing ground’, simply because it was the only area under a chief that had a large UDF following. All those who opposed the UDF were perceived to be informers in the area and would be targeted. Ndlovu, however, cautioned that Inkatha leaders in KwaShange were very strong and feared. The UDF/COSATU supporters could not face Inkatha leaders there, particularly not Mchunu, who had a track record of ‘slaughtering’ his opponents. The idea of testing ‘necklacing’ in KwaShange was thus not a success.⁹¹

News reached Mchunu that he was going to be killed by ‘necklacing’:

When I heard that, at first I did not believe that my neighbours would want to do such a cruel thing to me. One senior woman came to me at night and told me that I must go, because I was going to be burnt. She had heard a plan being made to attack me. I started hunting those people she mentioned. I went to Moses (Ndlovu) and I told him: *Ngizokuninyisa, ngizonibamba nonke* [a deliberate insult]; one by one. I then started looking for them, even in town in Pietermaritzburg. Every time they saw me, they would run away and I would run after them and they failed to kill me and we heard that they killed a lot of Inkatha people in Hammersdale, using a similar method.⁹²

⁸⁹Interview with Moses Ndlovu, Ashdown, 2007.

⁹⁰Interview with Moses Ndlovu, Ashdown, 2007. Nunu Mchunu confirmed this in an interview with him in 2008.

⁹¹Interview with Moses Ndlovu who attended the UDF/COSATU secret meeting in Durban in 1986, where the national leadership of UDF and COSATU recognised KwaShange as their base in rural Vulindlela and agreed to offer all support needed to sabotage rivals, Inkatha in particular and the state.

⁹²Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 11 March 2008.

The regional government structures in Natal were the Natal Provincial Administration and the KwaZulu Homeland Government. The South African government imposed order in the Provincial Administration section of Natal through the SAP force, but left the maintenance of law and order in the homeland of KwaZulu to Buthelezi, who was then Chief Minister and Minister of Police. The uprising that took place in 1985 and 1986 in the Cape, the Free State and the Transvaal was easily identified as an attempted UDF or ANC in exile revolution; this was termed ‘the armed struggle’. In Natal and KwaZulu, the police force, in which Inkatha was influential, was the legitimate authority. It is clear from the interviewees who supported Inkatha in KwaShange and other areas in Natal and KwaZulu that the UDF uprising was interpreted as an insurgency against the authority of KwaZulu, and the person of Mangosuthu Buthelezi, and not a struggle against the South African Government Regime, with all its oppressive apartheid laws. Ndlovu commented (and Hlengwa concurred with him):

What confused us as members of the UDF is that Inkatha members saw UDF as their enemies, but in fact our struggle was directed towards the Nationalist government. We had no intention to fight with our fellow blacks.⁹³

Aitchison alluded to this when saying that the UDF and the ANC were depicted as ‘terrorists’ and communists rather than the freedom fighters they were later to be seen as.⁹⁴ Mchunu said:

The terrorism activities of the UDF and ANC supporters, especially in areas in northern Zululand, where they used to cross the borders and come to put some bombs and kill people, we [Inkatha] realized that we had to wage a war against these people. In fact we saw this as contempt towards *umntwana wakwaPhindangeni*. It would have been a cowardly act to remain silent whilst ‘terrorists’ undermined our leader. At that time, my people and I were crazy; I hated a smell of *iqabane* [comrades]. I used to kill them; to me killing became my daily activity in KwaShange. I could not control what was happening in

⁹³Interview with Moses Ndlovu, 2005

⁹⁴John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War” and “KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003).

other areas but it angered me to hear about our people [Inkatha supporters] in other areas being killed by the terrorists [UDF/ANC] and I made it my mission to avenge in KwaShange.⁹⁵

In all these attacks police would come into KwaShange, but instead of taking Inkatha supporters to prison, they would enter UDF-supporting homes, take all weapons that were available and send all strong males to jail for no apparent reason. This would open doors for Inkatha supporters to attack UDF people.⁹⁶ Aitchison claims that:

The Nationalists thus evidently engineered a state of ‘low intensity warfare’, which intention was to keep atmosphere between the UDF and Inkatha tense, but at the same time they were concerned about the economy of the region and the country as a whole. It was not intense enough to destroy the economy of the region.⁹⁷

From 1987 until 1990 this ‘low intensity warfare’ was maintained. The leadership of the UDF and Inkatha was drawn into this divide-and-rule strategy.⁹⁸ The followers, on the whole, were unaware that they were being used as pawns in the political struggle for power.⁹⁹ Allegations of a “Third Force” proliferated; John Aitchison argues that there were three “Third Forces”:

The government had its police and military, which operated clandestinely to undermine its opponents and the de Kock and Malan trials have exposed these elements. The second of the three forces was the ANC in exile, with its training camps inside and outside the country, and their public proclamation to make the country ungovernable. The third of the three forces was that of the

⁹⁵ Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008.

⁹⁶ Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 15 March 2008; Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005. See also John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War” and “KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003).

⁹⁷ John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War” and “KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003).

⁹⁸ Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005.

⁹⁹ In retrospect, Moses Ndlovu, Nunu Mchunu and Chris Hlengwa agreed that supporters of the UDF and Inkatha at the grassroot level knew very little about violence. Leaders of the movements were fighting for power using their followers. Interviews with Moses Ndlovu, Chris Hlengwa and Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 2005-2008.

Inkatha Freedom Party, where camps were established inside the country and on the borders. Here, with the collusion of the South African Defence Force, their members were trained in insurgency and counter-insurgency. All three of these third forces were well armed and trained to destabilize, kill and destroy their opponents. The South African Police, especially in Pietermaritzburg, particularly the Riot Unit, under the command of Major Terreblanche, who was then in charge, were used as a tool to implement the National Party's policy of divide-and-rule.¹⁰⁰

Needless to say, police measures were primarily intended to undermine the UDF, as it was a front for the ANC. Government powers under the State of Emergency, from 1986 to 1990, legalized murder and abuses. Detention without trial was used widely against UDF members, whereas only a few Inkatha members were imprisoned.¹⁰¹

5.5 Summary of events in KwaShange leading up to the 1987 violence¹⁰² (See Appendix Three)

¹⁰⁰Interviews with Moses Ndlovu, Chris Hlengwa and Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange 2005-2008.

¹⁰¹Personal Communication with John Aitchison, (UKZN, 2009), Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 2008, Christ Hlengwa, KwaShange, 2008 and Moses Ndlovu, Ashdown, 2005 see also, Gerhard Maré, *Ethnicity and Politics in South Africa* (London: Zed Books, 1993) and Mzala, *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Agenda* (London: Zed Books. 1988).

¹⁰²There is an important literature on the struggle against apartheid, covering the period from the 1960s to the 1980s, see, for instance, Anthea Jeffery, *The Natal Story: Sixteen Years of Conflict* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1997), 1-2. Mzala, *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Agenda* (London: Zed Books, 1988). Both these authors' works are biased towards their political movements' views, Jeffery's views are pro-Inkatha, whereas Mzala's views are pro-ANC in exile, but their works add value and are of vital importance in the history of the struggle against the apartheid regime from the 1950s to the 1980s. See also John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94; Jeremy Seekings, *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa, 1983-1991* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2000), Robert Morrell, John Wright and Sheila Meintjies, "Colonialism and the Establishment of White Domination, 1840-1890", in R. Morrell ed., *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives* (Durban: Indicator Press, 1996), 33-63; Gerhard Maré, *Ethnicity and Politics in South Africa* (London: Zed Books, 1993). Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and the Politics of Loyal Resistance* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987); Tim Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983).

5.5 1987, A turning point: events leading to the “Seven Days War” of 1990

Political analysts reviewing the political violence in Natal and Zululand accept that 1987 was a turning point in the struggle for liberation. Writing about this period, Aitchison states that the beginning of 1987 saw a hardening of the confrontation between Inkatha vigilantes and UDF youth organisations.¹⁰³ In this section I list crucial happenings of 1987. I will mention only the events that were particularly referred to by interviewees, or noted in secondary sources such as newspapers and books. A former Inkatha leader in KwaShange (who wishes to remain anonymous) still has a notebook in which his daughter recorded much of what was discussed in meetings, especially in 1987. I was privileged to get some specific dates of some instances from these notes. KwaShange was once a very dangerous area; even journalists were fearful of reporting what was happening there. Police themselves were scared because KwaShange had a number of community members who were policemen and who fought to defend their area. This fact made other policemen fear for their lives. There were many instances where police were called to mediate in KwaShange, but failed to respond for fear of going into the area.

January 1987

Mchunu and Dlamini, as Inkatha leaders in KwaShange, called a general meeting of Inkatha members in the area. Members had to bring their children with them. Mchunu also invited Chief Shayabantu Zondi, explaining in an interview, “Our intention was to show the Chief that we had recruited a lot of people in the area.”¹⁰⁴ The Chief gave Mchunu and Dlamini a goat from his kraal, thanking them for “a job well done” and encouraged them to work harder to get everybody in the area to join the movement.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratisation* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 57.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 August 2008.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with group of informants in KwaShange, this information was confirmed by Nunu Mchunu, 12 March 2010.

February 1987

There was a meeting for Inkatha leadership in Vulindlela at Henley Combined School in KwaShange. This “was well attended by leaders from all structures of Inkatha; it was agreed that before the end of the year everybody (from the age of seven upwards) in KwaVulindlela must have joined Inkatha – we set a date that before the end the year everybody would be expected to have been a card carrying member of the movement.”¹⁰⁶ Aitchison records that there was a final date set of 4 October in many Vulindlela sub-areas, by which time everyone had to have joined Inkatha. The date of 4 October vies with 25 September as the start of the Midlands civil war.¹⁰⁷

KwaShange was the first area in Vulindlela to launch the recruitment campaign.¹⁰⁸ Every Friday after school KwaShange youths met at the Henley Combined School hall and discussed Inkatha issues, encouraging each other to recruit family members. They used to march in KwaShange, chanting Inkatha slogans and singing struggle songs and force everybody they met to join them. About 52 youths who refused to join were severely beaten.¹⁰⁹ When I interviewed some of those who were injured and hospitalised, all mentioned the harsh treatment they received at Edendale Hospital. They were told by nurses that if they continued ‘rejecting’ Inkatha, they would not be helped at Edendale hospital.¹¹⁰

February 1987

Inkatha youths began a door-to-door recruiting campaign. They began beating those who refused to join Inkatha. Taking an Inkatha membership card became

¹⁰⁶Interview with Tana Zuma and Mzi Zuma, KwaShange, 13 October 2008. See also M. Mchunu, Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 August 2008.

¹⁰⁷ John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratisation* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 58-59.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Moses Ndlovu and Nunu Mchunu. See also John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratisation* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003).

¹⁰⁹These figures were given by informants who admitted to have forgotten some events; some caution is advised in the interpretation.

¹¹⁰See transcribed interview with a group of informants in KwaShange. See also Bhekithemba Mbanjwa’s, Sizwe Ndlovu’s, So Ndlovu’s, Themba Maphumulo’s, Nkilili Ndlovu’s testimonies. Dr May-Mashego Mkhize confirmed that staff in Edendale hospital swore that they would not ‘undermine umntwana wakwa Phindangene (chief Buthelezi)’, but Dr Mashego-Mkhize refused to take that oath when she started working in Edendale as a doctor.

mandatory¹¹¹ and the Inkatha motto was “if you are not for us or with us you are our enemy.”¹¹² A significant number of homesteads were identified by Inkatha youth members as needing attention from Inkatha to enforce membership. Amongst these were the Hlengwa family, the Mchunu family (relatives of Mchunu, who was the Inkatha leader in the area) and the Ndlovu family.¹¹³

Towards the end of April 1987

Inkatha youth openly killed Latu Ngubane, a young man considered to be brilliant at school. He was doing Standard 8 at Mzamweni High School and was killed because he declined the position of Inkatha Youth Brigade secretary. When he arrived home and mentioned that he had been forced to accept the position, he was reprimanded, and his parents declined the appointment. He was stabbed in front of his parents and killed.¹¹⁴

The Hlengwa family members were most wanted by Inkatha warlords. To get protection, Chris Hlengwa, a policeman, asked for police protection. In April his homestead was put under police protection.¹¹⁵ He explained, “I asked for protection, when they asked me why, I said I am a member of Inkatha and UDF youths are threatening to attack my family [...]”¹¹⁶ Hlengwa had to ‘protect the truth’ (that he was in fact a member of the UDF) because he knew that if he mentioned that he was associated with the UDF, they would not give him a police guard.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹Taken from Nsizwa Makhaye’s notes, Chief Shayabantu Zondi told Inkatha leaders in Vulindlela that it was not optional to be a member of Inkatha for people living under his leadership. Chief Zondi said this repeatedly even in compulsory Inkatha meetings in KwaShange; see Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 14 August 2008.

¹¹²This was confirmed by Nduduzo Ndlovu, who was a member of Youth Brigade but later became a member of the UDF in KwaShange.

¹¹³Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 14 August 2008. This was also confirmed by group of informants I interviewed in KwaShange, 12 March 2010. Ndoda Ndlovu was part of Inkatha Youth Brigade that listed these homesteads that had to be attacked. He later went to spy on Inkatha and mentioned that Inkatha was preparing itself to attack these homestead.

¹¹⁴Interview with Khonzi Ngubane, Donda Ngubane, KwaShange, 12 March 2010 this was confirmed by Nunu Mchunu and group of informants in KwaShange, 12 March 2010.

¹¹⁵Interview with Chris Hlengwa, Bhekithemba Mbanjwa, Mancinza Zondi, Sizwe Ndlovu, KwaShange, 12 March 2010.

¹¹⁶Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 14 August 2008.

¹¹⁷There is an important body of literature on state police colluding with Inkatha; below I discuss instances where police openly sided with Inkatha against UDF supporters.

May 1987

A Sizanani MaZulu Transport bus driver was shot when he came to collect other bus drivers in KwaShange to report for work. The gunshot was heard at 4h00 but nobody knew what was happening because the sound of shooting was common in the area. At about 9h30, the bus was seen at a bus stop; the engine was still running and from the doors of the bus blood was dripping. Children seeing this ran to report to their parents and it was discovered that the bus driver had been shot.¹¹⁸ Killing bus drivers was an Inkatha campaign that took place all over Vulindlela.¹¹⁹ Aitchison associated these killings with the Pietermaritzburg workers' stay-away called by COSATU and UDF in 1987 to protest against the whites-only elections. Many people heeded the call from COSATU and the UDF and did not go to work. That was to be a considerable defeat for Inkatha and Chief Buthelezi, who had urged his supporters to campaign against a stay-away. Inkatha blamed the success of the stayaway on the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), whose striking bus drivers effectively made it impossible for many workers to get to work, even if they wanted to. It may have been a consequence of this that many bus drivers, including the one who died in KwaShange, were killed.¹²⁰

Also in May, Chief Shayabantu Zondi noticed that the Hlengwa homestead was under police protection. He went to the police station in Plesseslaer where Hlengwa worked and challenged the police decision to protect Hlengwa's homestead, stating that Hlengwa had lied when he said he was a member of Inkatha and threatened by the UDF. Thus on 15 May police protection was withdrawn from the Hlengwa family. Also on 15 May, Chris Hlengwa threatened to kill a youth activist, who had come

¹¹⁸Interview with Bhekithemba Mbanjwa (2010), Moses Ndlovu (2005) and Nunu Mchunu (2008). It was alleged that Mlungisi Ngubane and 'Makhekhe' Thabethe, who was a bus driver himself, were behind this killing. It is important to mention that as much as they were never found guilty of this because there was not enough evidence to link them to the incident. During those days, if the public alleged you to have committed a crime, they did not care whether there is evidence or not, they killed you. That was the case with Mlungisi and Thabethe; they were most wanted after this incident by their rivals.

¹¹⁹For details see Matthew Krentz, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), 35-40. Krentz recorded in detail the tension among bus drivers in Pietermaritzburg.

¹²⁰John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratisation* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 57-58.

with Chief Shayabantu Zondi to tell the policeman who was on duty guarding Hlengwa's homestead to leave.

By the end of May, Chris Hlengwa was attacked by Chief Shayabantu Zondi and his bodyguards, namely the Zulu Police (ZP), in full uniform. Hlengwa was walking on the road when the Chief's car passed him. When he realised that it was Hlengwa; he reversed the car, got out and threatened him so that Hlengwa drew the official gun he was carrying. On this occasion, Shayabantu Zondi ran back to his car and drove away.

6 June 1987

On this day, an important meeting in KwaShange took place at Henley Combined School. The meeting started at 9h00 and lasted until after 18h00. It was a very cold, rainy day and every person from the age of 10 upwards, including the elderly, who were sick and in wheelchairs, were ordered by Chief Shayabantu Zondi to attend the meeting. The Chief threatened that anyone who did not come to the meeting would be forced to leave the area of KwaShange. Children would be beaten and the families' houses burnt.¹²¹

Moses Ndlovu was instructed to come to the meeting, as he was a member of the KwaShange community. He was present when Chris Hlengwa arrived at the meeting; Inkatha leaders were questioning him as to why he was working for COSATU. Seated on the stage of the hall were Shayabantu Zondi, Guvaza Khanyile (Headman), Nunu Mchunu, Dlamini, 'Makhekhe' Thabethe and Kubheka. Ndlovu was in tears as the leaders were trying to force him to resign from COSATU. He refused, saying COSATU was paying him; if he resigned how would he support his family? The Chief and his Inkatha men promised Ndlovu that if he resigned Inkatha would support his family. He asked about his other benefits, such as his pension. The Chief stood up and said he must resign no matter what and all these other needs would be taken care of by Inkatha.¹²²

¹²¹Interview with a group of informants in KwaShange, 12 March 2010, this was confirmed by Nunu Mchunu and Chris Hlengwa respectively.

¹²²Interview with Chris Hlengwa (2008), Nunu Mchunu (2008) and Moses Ndlovu (2005).

A KwaShange senior man by the name of Phakathi asked Chris Hlengwa as a policeman to explain to the delegates if it was legal for Chief Shayabantu Zondi to compel people to join Inkatha. Chris Hlengwa said “legally speaking, people should not be coerced to join any political movements, but it should be a choice of individuals.”¹²³ Phakathi stood up and lifted up his stick and said “if my son was still alive, we’d start fighting now.”¹²⁴ He then left the meeting, along with many other people, including Chris Hlengwa and Chairman Madlala.¹²⁵

August 1987

In August 1987 there was a report that Inkatha youths were on a recruitment campaign in KwaShange and other neighbouring areas, campaigning for Inkatha. They were mandated by Chief Shayabantu Zondi and the KwaShange leader, Nunu Mchunu.¹²⁶ This KwaShange Inkatha Youth Brigade went across the river to meet in a school (Mzamweni High).¹²⁷ UDF supporters in KwaShange were “fed-up with this nonsense” and organised “somebody to sort Inkatha youth that were troublesome in the area.”¹²⁸ The Inkatha Youth Brigade was attacked at Mzamweni School. Aitchison recorded that on the same occasion, a COSATU leader, Alfred Ndlovu, borrowed an AK47 from an *Umkhonto we Sizwe* member and attacked an Inkatha group in Vulindlela, wounding several people. He was later arrested and convicted for the offence.¹²⁹ The *Daily News* reported: “Man fired AK47 at singing children”.

The report continued:

¹²³Interview with C. Hlengwa, Zama Phakathi and a group of informants in KwaShange, 13 March 2010.

¹²⁴Interview with C. Hlengwa, Zama Phakathi and a group of informants in KwaShange, 13 March 2010.

¹²⁵Interview with C. Hlengwa, Zama Phakathi and a group of informants in KwaShange, 13 March 2010.

¹²⁶Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, (2008).

¹²⁷Interview with Nunu Mchunu (2008) and Chris Hlengwa (2008). Many other informants in KwaShange remembered this event. It still exists in many people’s minds because it was the first emotionally and psychologically disturbing major incident that left a number of youth in KwaShange permanently paralysed.

¹²⁸Interview with group of informants in KwaShange, 12 March 2010.

¹²⁹John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratisation* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 58.

A man had fired short bursts with an AK47 rifle into a group of singing school children, it was said in a witness's statement handed into court yesterday. The children began screaming and running in all directions, the statement said. The gunman had told the witness that he had "come here to help supporters of the United Democratic Front in the fight against Inkatha". The statement, made to a policeman by a witness, was handed in during the Regional Court trial of Mr Alfred Ndlovu (38), second national vice-president of the Transport and General Workers' Union and regional chairperson of COSATU. Ndlovu is charged with the attempted murder of the children, and attempted murder of a bus driver colleague.¹³⁰ He had pleaded not guilty to all the charges. The witness said in a statement that Mr Ndlovu had driven a gunman and two others to and from the Emzaweni School where the shooting occurred, to shoot Mr Joseph Mabaso, an Inkatha Youth organiser, and others who were having an Inkatha meeting at the school.¹³¹

This event led to a number of attacks. One informant said, "The KwaShange I had known for many decades came to an end [with this attack]."¹³² There were many killings of people who were suspected Inkatha supporters and who might be witnesses in court. In August, more than 50 homesteads or families aligned to Inkatha "packed and left the area at night; they came back accompanied by police to demolish their mud-built houses; most families who fled were descendents of the Zondi clan who had originally been sent to 'oversee' KwaShange area in the early 1900s."¹³³ I quote further from the *Daily News* concerning the court-case findings:

About 12 complainants and potential court witnesses had been killed, or their houses had been burned in the past year in Pietermaritzburg police district, the regional court was told. The witness, Captain A. Upton, of the Unrest Unit [in Pietermaritzburg], said intimidation was so bad that even bereaved people were scared to be seen near the police. Other potential witnesses who had

¹³⁰See Chapter Five, Makhekhe Thabethe's profile: John F. Burns, Special to *The New York Times* (Thursday 21 January 1988), 3.

¹³¹The *Daily News*, 16 April 1988. The newspaper only reported the court case but not the event; as I mentioned earlier, KwaShange was not a 'user-friendly' area for journalists, police and researchers.

¹³²An informant who wanted to remain anonymous because she still fears for her life even today, 20 years after the violence.

¹³³Interview with Manciza Zondi, Chris Hlengwa and group informants in KwaShange, 10 March 2009.

made a statement to lawyers later denied having made it. This fear of reprisal made it very difficult to prosecute perpetrators of political crimes [...] Captain Upton was testifying at the regional court trial of Mr Alfred Muntu Ndlovu (38), second national vice-president of Transport and General Workers' Union and regional chairman of COSATU. He faces a charge of terrorism and two of attempted murder, one arising out of wounding 13 youths aged from 10 to 17, and a 22-year-old man, at KwaVulisaka (KwaShange) in [August 1987].¹³⁴

In this case many families from KwaShange whose children attended the school that was attacked were present at the court case and some were witnesses, but because of the tension in KwaShange they feared for their lives, because UDF supporters had already started killing all potential witnesses. The situation was so bad that every day at least one person would be killed. Captain Upton was testifying in support of an application made by State counsel, Mr Peter Blomkamp, that a witness should be allowed to give evidence in camera. The witness, number 3, said he wanted to give evidence in camera because the "UDF and COSATU have said that if one of us betrays another he will be killed. By betray I understand any person who informs or testifies in a case.... If one of a group is arrested he must not testify. If people know I am testifying my family will be placed in danger."¹³⁵

03 September 1987

On this day the Mbanjwa family was targeted by Inkatha vigilantes. Mbanjwa was working in Johannesburg, seldom coming home. The family used to sell basic foodstuff, including sorghum and other types of beer to supplement Mbanjwa's salary; many KwaShange men used to gather in this family home to drink. One of the Inkatha warlords, Mlungisi Ngubane, who was a close relative of the Mbanjwa family, visited the family and asked two sons to join Inkatha. They refused, on the basis that they did not understand what Inkatha was going to do for them, and were scared that their parents would punish them if they participated in political activities. After a week, Mlungisi Ngubane went back and demanded that Mbanjwa's family home fly the Inkatha flag; Mbanjwa's sons would be responsible for unfurling the flag

¹³⁴*Daily News*, April 16, 1988.

¹³⁵*Daily News*, April 16, 1988.

every morning and taking it down at night. He told them that if they did not do this it would mean that they were UDF supporters. The Mbanjwa family refused to do as Ngubane had instructed them.¹³⁶ On 18 September, at about 23h30, the Mbanjwa family was attacked by Inkatha vigilantes, who burnt the house and shot Bhekithemba Mbanjwa in the leg.¹³⁷

Also on 18 September, the Zibula family was attacked and a six-month-old baby¹³⁸ was stabbed, while the father of the baby survived but with burn wounds.¹³⁹

19 September

Some of those involved in the attacks were caught by UDF supporters. They took them to headman Makhathini and instructed him to take them to the police station. They also gave evidence to the headman, that the young men had been involved in the attack. The headman took the instruction from the UDF supporters and the attackers were kept in custody for one night.

20 September

The Inkatha youths were released from the Plessislaer police station. UDF leaders in KwaShange went to the police station and enquired as to why the youths were released. They claimed that they did not receive an answer. They vowed in front of the police that they were going to take the law into their own hands.

¹³⁶This family harassment was quoted by all men who were involved in the 25 September KwaShange Massacre as one of the reasons why they were very upset with Inkatha.

¹³⁷Interview with Bhekithemba Mbanjwa, 12 March 2010, Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 13 August 2008, Chris. Hlengwa, KwaShange, 14 August 2008.

¹³⁸Winnie Zibula survived the violence, but she has permanent scars on her body from burning and stabbing that took place when she was only six months old. She is not in a position to talk about what she feels about it now. She has a lot of 'emotional scars', as well, because of this event.

¹³⁹Chris Hlengwa had come home late from work. As he was walking from the bus stop, two kilometres away; he saw flames and as he went closer heard that there were people crying. He rushed home to alert the group of men from KwaShange, he had organised himself to look after his homestead after the withdrawal of police protection. He asked these men to accompany him to where there were burning houses and screaming voices. When he arrived, the Zibula and Mbanjwa homes were burning. The attackers were still on the scene. Hlengwa shot with one bullet. The attackers ran away but Hlengwa and his team were able to catch one of the attackers. He named all of those who had been there burning the Mbanjwa and Zibula houses.

22 September 1987

On 22 September, the Thusi family was attacked by Inkatha vigilantes, who burnt their house and injured the children. The reason why the family was attacked was that this homestead was close to the bus stop and most Sizanani MaZulu Transport (SMT) bus drivers used to have lunch in this house.

25 September 1987

The date 25 September is listed on the world-wide web as a day of historic importance to South Africa. It is recorded as the KwaShange Massacre Day. Overall, September was the most stressful month in Natal and KwaZulu in 1987 and even more so in KwaShange: The whole month of September is associated in the minds of my KwaShange interviewees with Cyclone Démonia¹⁴⁰. These floods were seen as a sign of the beginning of the period of crisis. Researchers on the political violence in the Midlands have associated the feuding in the Midlands with these floods; Aitchison says the exact relationship of the floods to the violence in Vulindlela and Edendale that followed is a matter of considerable debate.

These floods damaged houses in Vulindlela and Edendale. Allegations made by Ndlovu, which Mchunu denied, were that Inkatha were making offers of relief and assistance to flood victims conditionally on their joining the movement. Matthew Kentridge says that even the mayor of Pietermaritzburg, Mark Cornell, criticised Inkatha for making political capital out of the floods. The flood relief was probably subverted to the recruitment drive for the D-day of 4 October, when all inhabitants had to either join Inkatha or leave the area. The UDF reported the recruitment drive was encountering strong resistance. For confirmation of these contentions one needs to refer to interviews with Mchunu, Chris Hlengwa, Ndlovu, Aitchison and Kentridge:

It was in the Pietermaritzburg region that the many early tussles between the Inkatha movement and the rising power of the United Democratic Front

¹⁴⁰Torrential rains which caused floods that left a number of families in Natal and KwaZulu without homes: their houses, bridges and roads were washed away and a significant number of people lost their lives.

(UDF) and the Congress of South African Trade Union (COSATU) took place and where open warfare broke out in September 1987. It was also in this region that some of the subterranean activities of agents and surrogates of the South African state came to their most deadly fruition as they attempted to reverse or neutralise the democratisation of South Africa.¹⁴¹

In his book, Kentridge claimed that the KwaShange massacre took place on 16 September 1987 and that the youths were ambushed.¹⁴² The fact of the matter is that the youths died on 25 September 1987. For details I refer to my interviews with Mchunu and Chris Hlengwa, who lost relatives during the attack.

24 September

Hlengwa's niece, Nobuhle Ngubane, a card-carrying member of the Inkatha Youth Brigade in KwaShange, visited her uncle Chris Hlengwa and told him of the meeting of the Inkatha Youth Brigade in one of the homesteads in KwaShange, in which a plan for attacking his homestead (and three other prominent community members' homesteads) was mentioned. His house was to be burnt and everybody in the house to burn inside. She warned him to run for his life with his family and pleaded with him not to mention that she had disclosed this information to him. However, Hlengwa did not run, but prepared himself for a fight. He organised some older men to camp at his home.

25 September 1987¹⁴³

At approximately 22h00, another well-known member of the Inkatha Youth Brigade in KwaShange, Ndoda Ndlovu, went to Hlengwa's homestead. He went to tell him that he had just left a meeting where The Youth Brigade was planning to attack

¹⁴¹Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), 35-40.

John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratisation* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 57-58.

¹⁴²Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

¹⁴³Information provided by a number of informants in KwaShange, including, Chris Hlengwa (2008), Nunu Mchunu (2008) and Moses Ndlovu (2005).

Hlengwa's home and other targeted homes that day. He told Hlengwa and the group of men camping in Hlengwa's place that *induna* Guvaza Khanyile and other prominent Inkatha leaders in the area were part of the plan to attack the homesteads, but he (Guvaza Khanyile) had just left to get more guns and reinforcements from Bhobhonono and Sweetwater. He warned them not to sleep in the house that night.

Hlengwa's men decided that they were not going to wait for Inkatha to attack because they realised that they might not be able to protect themselves or retaliate because Inkatha had powerful machine guns. They decided to attack Inkatha first. Hlengwa's men divided into three groups: two groups went with Ndoda Ndlovu to the homestead where the Inkatha youths had gathered and one group remained in Hlengwa's homestead to protect Hlengwa's family and many others that had been identified by the Inkatha youth. At 23h00 Hlengwa's men arrived at the Ngubane homestead, where the Inkatha youths had gathered. The youths had put on a gas cylinder for light, because there was no electricity in KwaShange in the 1980s. One of Hlengwa's men standing outside locked the door of the house in which the Inkatha Youth Brigade had gathered and started shooting and throwing stones. One of the bullets hit the gas cylinder and it exploded.

Just after 12h00, Mchunu arrived at the scene when the house was still burning and he describes what he saw:

I will never forget what I saw that night, I arrived at the scene, many were already dead, but one was hanging out the window of a burning house, he had been shot, the bottom part of his body was burning and he was crying. Phetha, his father, who was a policeman, arrived just after me. I asked him to help me to help his son but Phetha refused, asking what was he doing there at night because he was supposed to be home? That boy died before he reached hospital! [Mchunu was in tears as he recalled the incident in the interview].¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Nunu Mchunu KwaShange, 14 March 2009.

The Citizen reported:

The house was encircled by Hlengwa's men and stones were thrown, breaking windows. Shots were fired and a door smashed in. When the youth[s] tried to barricade the doorway a fire was started. More shots were fired into the house.' Those who sought to escape from the blazing house were struck down one by one. The screaming of those that remained in the house ceased only when a gas bottle exploded, 'producing the final holocaust'. Five of the youths died from severe burns, six [died of] burn and stab wounds, one of pneumonia associated with burns, and one of head and stab wounds. Most of the bodies were unrecognizably scorched, with shin bones and skulls showing through their skin.¹⁴⁵

26 September 1987

The next day, a number of SAP vehicles went to the scene where the killing had taken place. Bullets that had been shot there were identified as being from a gun issued to Hlengwa as a policeman. Hlengwa's homestead was surrounded by more than 100 policemen, mainly white, all fully armed and with guns cocked to fire. Police arrested Hlengwa and went to look for other people who were suspects, like Sakha Ndaba and Babayi Ndlovu.

In the case of Sakha Ndaba, when police arrived in the morning, they requested him to get his assegai and shield and he brought it, still blood-stained from use at the massacre of the night before. This was enough evidence to indicate that he was indeed involved in the attack. This was a shock to his wife, who later (2008) said "When he arrived home around 2h00 that night, he never mentioned a thing to me. He just joined me and slept as if nothing had happened. I only knew what had happened when police came to fetch him in the morning."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵*The Citizen* 28 September 1987.

¹⁴⁶Interview with MaSibisi Ndaba, KwaShange, 13 June 2009.

28 September 1987

On 28 September, Nunu Mchunu was taken into prison by police under the State of Emergency Act. He had been found with a gun in his home and was accused of being the instigator of violence in KwaShange that had affected many other areas in Vulindlela. He was put in the same cell as his UDF and trade unionist arch enemies from KwaShange.

I remember how they insulted me that night, 11 people against me. They showed me a very sharp, glittering knife and they said that night was my last night; they were going to kill me. [...] I said to them I was not going to die alone, at least one of them was going to die with me. They waited for me to go to sleep but I refused. I stayed awake until morning when the police came to check us. The policeman was shocked to see that I was put in the same cell with UDF people. He took me to another cell with AZAPO prisoners.¹⁴⁷

28 September 1987

On this day, 'Makhekhe' Thabethe, a member of UWUSA (an Inkatha-affiliated union), and bus driver, was shot (allegedly by another KwaShange bus driver who belonged to COSATU). The *New York Times* reported:

Thabethe, an Inkatha loyalist, claimed he was on his bus in September 1987 when a man in the line at the door opened fire on him. To the monitors of the violence he showed scars on his chest of eight bullets from a Soviet-made Tokarev automatic pistol. His driver's license, in his shirt pocket at the time, had four holes where the bullets passed through.¹⁴⁸

2 October 1987

On 2 October the funeral of the thirteen Inkatha Youth Brigade members killed in the massacre of 25 September took place at the youths' school, the Mtholangqondo

¹⁴⁷Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 2008.

¹⁴⁸See Chapter Five, Makhekhe Thabethe's profile, for details.

Secondary School. Chief Buthelezi, Velaphi Ndlovu and many other leaders of Inkatha were present.

The local Inkatha leadership invited every KwaShange community member to take part in the funeral. They said everybody should come to the funeral whether they belonged to UDF or Inkatha. The provincial Inkatha leadership (including Sichizo Zuma, the Chairman of the Harewood branch of the Inkatha Youth Brigade, and Jerome Mncwabe and Abdula Owetha, both Inkatha town-councillors in Imbali) claimed that they wanted to discuss ‘peace and how to prevent similar deaths in the future.’ They mentioned that the national leadership of the movement would be present. Many people who were known UDF supporters had gone into hiding for that weekend, but a significant number of people who were not Inkatha members, but sympathised with the bereaved families, attended the funeral.

After the funeral, some Inkatha leaders in KwaShange called community members aside, as if they were going to have a separate meeting. Inkatha started encircling all these members, particularly those that had not joined Inkatha; ¹⁴⁹ a voice was heard shouting “*baphakathi*” as when Dingane killed Boers: when the first trekkers arrived in the territory of the Zulu King Dingane, he invited them to his headquarters in Umgungundlovu and called upon his amabutho (warriors) to kill them, crying ‘*Babulaleni abathakathi*’ (‘Kill the witches’). The UDF leadership in the Midlands had warned its members in KwaShange and Vulindlela in general to leave the area during the funeral weekend: those who had no plans to flee had to remain vigilant that Inkatha ‘must not invite us to the funeral to smash us.’ Luckily, on this occasion police intervened and nobody was hurt inside the school premises.’¹⁵⁰ Outside the school premises, Inkatha waited for the police to leave and then attacked UDF supporters. More Inkatha attacks and burning of houses in KwaShange followed, especially houses of those people who were known to have taken part in the attack that led to the death of the youths.

Ndlovu’s house was burnt and all KwaShange people who had attended the funeral, but who had not joined Inkatha, were beaten; some were stabbed in the presence of

¹⁴⁹Bearing in mind that the Inkatha motto at that time was: ‘If you are not for us, you are against us.’

¹⁵⁰Interview with survivors (some of whom insisted that they remain anonymous) of this incident in KwaShange, 14 June 2009.

the Inkatha national leadership. Among those who received gunshot wounds were Babayi Ndlovu and S'thayi Ndlovu.¹⁵¹

03 October 1987

The next day, the UDF leadership in KwaShange had a secret meeting which started at 21h00. They met at Makhura's Tuck-shop, which had been closed from Friday, 1 October. The following issues were discussed:

- How to support those who had been taken to jail for killing the 13 Inkatha Youth Brigade members.
- How to protect and financially support families, wives and children; all these men were bread-winners in their families.
- How to 'clean-up' KwaShange (by chasing away all Inkatha-supporting families).
- A list of all the Inkatha 'ring leaders' that were to be killed in the next four weeks was drawn up. On top of the list were Nunu Mchunu, Dlamini, 'Makhekhe' Thabethe, Chief Shayabantu Zondi and Guvaza Khanyile.

Present at the meeting were Mathi Ngcobo, Cija Ngcobo, Ntaksi Ngcobo, Khabza Ngcobo, Thulani Ndlovu, Sayi Zondi (policeman), Shosa Zondi and three 'comrades' sent by Mhlabunzima Maphumulo from Table Mountain, and three representatives from Nxamalala and Mthoqotho. Three MK soldiers from Angola were supplied to KwaShange and could be expected to be on the UDF side. Harry Gwala had requested MK soldiers from the ANC in order to counter-attack state police who supported Inkatha attacks on UDF people.¹⁵²

October 1987

In October, fighting intensified in KwaShange and after the resolution taken at the UDF meeting Inkatha supporters were being 'forcibly removed', meaning that they

¹⁵¹Interview with survivors (some of whom insisted that they remain anonymous) of this incident in KwaShange, 14 June 2009.

¹⁵²Interview with Thulani Lushozi and two anonymous members of the KwaShange community and ex- MK soldiers, 14 March 2008.

were forced to leave within 48 hours. Others were given a maximum of three hours to pack and leave the area. About 80 Inkatha-supporting homesteads left the area of KwaShange in two days. Those who tried to resist were killed. Sworn revenge for the imprisonment of Chris Hlengwa and other UDF men, because of their part in the massacre of 25 September, meant that the KwaShange UDF began to attack not only the immediate Inkatha supporters but those in neighbouring areas which had given refuge to those who had been forced to leave KwaShange: thus the areas of Mpande, Upper Gezibuso, Mvundlweni, Bhobhonono, Elandskop and Mpumuza were under attack. UDF militants tried to convert youths in these areas to UDF. The whole area of Vulindlela was affected. As a result, people from KwaShange became the arch-enemies of all those in surrounding areas.¹⁵³

Talking about this month in 1987, Matthew Ketrtridge said:

Vulindlela, UDF supporters and Inkatha members were being killed at a rate of 2 to 1. Defence committees staffed and run by comrades and activists began to operate in Vulindlela. Inkatha was reported to be losing support in many areas. Attention turned from urban areas to rural chieftaincies – traditional Inkatha strongholds. But even there Inkatha support was no longer guaranteed. The pattern continued throughout November and December.¹⁵⁴

According to Moses Ndlovu, the leader of COSATU in KwaShange and the Midlands, these attacks in all of KwaShange's neighbouring Inkatha-aligned areas, prompted the UDF and COSATU to form a *de facto* alliance. The two groups consulted one another as regards policy and strategy, but maintained separate organisational structures. This alliance co-ordinated a 'peace talks' strategy, contacting the Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce, which offered to play the role of 'honest broker'. Ndlovu admitted that it was just pretence; "we wanted peace during the day but used machine guns at night."¹⁵⁵ Ketrtridge recorded that Inkatha contacted the Chamber with a similar request. The Chamber tried to set up a meeting

¹⁵³Interview with So Ndlovu and Thulani Lushozi (former MK soldiers and KwaShange community members), See also appendix: interview with group of informants in KwaShange.

¹⁵⁴Matthew Ketrtridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), appendix.

¹⁵⁵Interview with Moses Ndlovu, 2005.

with both parties. COSATU, meanwhile, sent a legal team to Pietermaritzburg to investigate complaints against the Inkatha warlords for assault, intimidation and murder.¹⁵⁶

Dlamini ‘iBhlamani’ was attacked and stoned to death at approximately 16h30 on a Monday. A group of 15 young men were sent to ambush him. When he was just about to enter his homestead, they started throwing stones. One of my UDF interviewees who wished to remain anonymous, explained:

We knew that he had a gun and there was no way we could have killed him by stabbing or shooting because he was known to be using *muthi*. Many attempts had been made before [to kill him] but all failed because he would just disappear. We send strong young men who were prepared to lose their lives. It took them about 10 minutes to knock him down, and then they finished him when he had fallen. They had to cut his throat just to make sure that he was dead because anything could happen [in regard to dealing] with him – because of the kind of *muthi* he used, he could rise and kill us!¹⁵⁷

Late October 1987

Local informants reported that in late October 1987 a white Nissan E20 kombi with the name “DAMBUZA” emblazoned on it was seen around KwaShange. This kombi was full of white passengers and was seen to watch Dlamini’s and Nunu Mchunu’s homesteads. In the following days, weeks and months the same kombi came back to arrest people who were regarded as strong UDF supporters (and, for the most part, those who were known to have been involved in killing Dlamini). The kombi became known as DAMBUZA: the men in the kombi arrested many men and women (the latter for interrogation). Later it became clear that these were plain-clothes policemen, known to be killing UDF supporters. Late in October, during the day, these police shot and killed Khabza Ngcobo. On that occasion, they were reported to have come in

¹⁵⁶Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), appendix. See also John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratisation* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 57-58. Moses Ndlovu confirmed this, the legal team went to KwaShange in a ‘fact-finding mission.’

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Zethule Dlamuka, KwaShange, 24 August 2009.

a private car with darkened windows. It is believed that there was someone (presumably an Inkatha supporter) in the car who knew Ngcobo and asked the policemen to shoot him.¹⁵⁸

The situation in Vulindlela and Edendale had compelled the Nationalist Government to send the SAP there in order to ‘bring about peace.’ Pretoria-based riot policemen were despatched to Pietermaritzburg and stationed at Oribi. Brigadier Kotze, Divisional Commander of the SAP, said, “There is no need to worry [...] the situation is normal and under control.” This was the response of the Government to the numbers of refugees who began fleeing from rural areas into urban townships and ‘white’ Pietermaritzburg.¹⁵⁹

November 1987



KwaShange comrades carrying coffin to the victim’s family cemetery¹⁶⁰

More than a hundred policemen (black and white) were present to monitor the situation and see that there was no violence at Khabza’s funeral in 1987. Chief Shayabantu Zondi arrived at the funeral with his body-guards. UDF supporters at the

¹⁵⁸Interview with group of informants in KwaShange, 24 August 2009.

¹⁵⁹Interview with group of informants in KwaShange, 2009. See also John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratisation* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 57-58, the role of the state police interfering and defending Inkatha is generally known and recorded in history books that cover this period in the Midlands.

¹⁶⁰ Photo taken by Cedric Nunn, courtesy of KwaZulu-Natal Museum

funeral attempted to grab him. The intention was to kill him with bare hands like in a traditional cattle killing. For *muthi* use, people had to be killed by hand, not with a gun or knife. The SAP protected the Chief. The crowd started insulting him, telling him that he was thin and extremely dark in complexion, because they were no longer giving him their monies. They told him that he was banned from KwaShange.¹⁶¹ Chief Shayabantu Zondi and Nunu Mchunu were taken by police to jail for inciting violence in Vulindlela, but after two days they were released from prison.

The KwaShange UDF leaders attended prayers for peace in Pietermaritzburg and tried to find a means of ending violence in the Vulindlela area. Speakers at the service emphasised that there was no need for black people to fight one another and stressed that they should be fighting against the real enemy, namely the racist regime. The Inkatha leaders were not present at the service.¹⁶²

Inkatha warlords from Imbali were seen in KwaShange with David Ntombela and Chief Shayabantu Zondi, accompanied by some of the Inkatha Youth Brigade. They severely beat learners at Mtholangqondo Secondary School in KwaShange. Moses Ndlovu, through the COSATU legal team, launched a strategy aimed at forcing the police to investigate complaints against Inkatha warlords.¹⁶³ Kentridge records that on 2 November papers were served relating to three applications for Restraining Interdicts against Inkatha warlords, including David Ntombela, induna and chairman of the Vulindlela Inkatha branch, Sichizo Zuma, chairman of the Harewood branch of the Inkatha Youth Brigade and Jerome Mncwabe and Abdula Owetha, both Inkatha town-councillors in Imbali. All of these denied the allegations against them. Interim Interdicts were granted and the cases referred for oral evidence.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹Interview with Mduduzi Mchunu, Mabhengwane Bhengu and Zibuse Madlala, who were present at the funeral, KwaShange, 2 February 2009.

¹⁶²Interview with Moses Ndlovu 2005. See also Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), appendix and John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratisation* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 57-58.

¹⁶³Interview with Nelly Ngcobo, Siphon Khanyile confirming Moses Ndlovu's testimony.

¹⁶⁴See Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990) and John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratisation* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 57-58. These 'warlords' were troublesome everywhere even in KwaShange they came to cause chaos.

December 1987

In December a bus carrying KwaShange people from a peace rally held at Edendale's Wadley Stadium was stoned in Mvundlweni and two people were killed. Moses Ndlovu had been tasked to report back on peace talks that were supposedly taking place between the UDF and Inkatha in KwaShange, amongst other peace-talks around the Midlands aimed at normalising relations between the UDF and Inkatha.

It was reported that about 10 000 people attended the rally at Wadley Stadium convened by the UDF and COSATU. Activists reported back on peace talks and called on supporters to stop fighting. The corresponding Inkatha rally in KwaMkhulu (Chief Shayabantu's homestead) was poorly attended. KwaShange UDF members were blamed, even by Chief Buthelezi, for having intimidated and blocked roads leading to Chief Shayabantu's place. The second round of peace talks was held, but Inkatha refused to proceed unless UDF and COSATU repudiated an article calling for the destruction of Inkatha which appeared in *Inqaba Yabasebenzi*, the official journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency. David Ntombela claimed that KwaShange COSATU leader, Moses Ndlovu, was behind the article, and therefore implicated provincial COSATU leaders. The UDF and COSATU protested that they had nothing to do with the article and also distanced themselves from the article. Inkatha refused to accept this and peace talks broke down. This was the reason that, in KwaShange and other UDF-supporting areas in Vulindlela, traditional leaders lost what little respect they still possessed.

In KwaShange, UDF supporters appeared to have gained the upper hand, as a significant number of their members had had military training with the ANC in exile. Ties between KwaShange and Nxamalala, a neighbouring area, were very strong at this stage and the residents there began to support the UDF. Inkatha supporters and leaders who were driven out of KwaShange fled into neighbouring areas like Mpande, Bhobhonono, Mvundlweni, Elandskop and Mpumuza.

At about the same period, Kentridge reports, in the rural areas of Vulindlela, the authority of the chiefs was undermined and Inkatha was forced onto the defensive. This signalled a reversal of traditional patterns of political control in the area. The

police deployed a squad of 150 *Kitskonstables* in the area.¹⁶⁵ Two further Interdict Applications were brought by COSATU against Inkatha. Aitchison's figures for the year show that in 1987 altogether 397 people died, of whom 126 were known to be UDF supporters and 62 were known to be Inkatha supporters. There were 895 occurrences of political unrest in Edendale and Vulindlela, although the death rate was also high in Imbali, Slangspruit, Ashdown and Mpumalanga. An informant who wished to remain anonymous recalled:

'Makhekhe' Thabethe's homestead was attacked at about 10h00. The intention was to capture Thabethe himself, because he had been on night-shift (as a bus driver), so we believed that he would be home sleeping, but we missed him; he had just left with Mchunu.

In this attack about six people, including Thabethe's wife and children, were burnt to death in their house. Of this attack, the *New York Times* reported:

Thabethe underwent weeks of surgery before going home to KwaShange to recover. While he was recuperating, ten days before Christmas 1987, gunmen killed his twenty-year-old son as he walked to a local store. Six days later, while Thabethe was at the hospital, about fifty youths surrounded his home and set it on fire. His wife, his mother and another son, were killed.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵The TRC report goes into detail concerning the collusion between state police and specially trained 'police' and the Inkatha attacks on UDF/ANC supporters. See also Anthony Minnaar, "The 'Third Force': In Retrospect", in C. Schutte, I. Liebenberg and A. Minnaar eds., *The Hidden Hand: Covert Operations in South Africa* (Pretoria: Human Science Research Council, 1998), 58. Piers Pigou, "The state and violence: What has the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Found?", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 222-253. See Testimony and public submission by General Magnus Malan before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 7 May 1997. See also testimonies of SANDF members at Armed Forces Hearings in October 1997. Steyn's investigation was initiated by De Klerk, following the discovery of documentation at DCC headquarters after a raid in November 1992 by investigators from the Goldstone Commission.

¹⁶⁶See Chapter Five, Thabethe's profile for details.

January 1988

On 31 January Inkatha had a prayer rally at Mbangweni, Chief Shayabantu's homestead, which is opposite and three kilometres from KwaShange. This meeting was called by the Chief himself, who reported how distressed he was about the fact that "some of his people had turned against him." He said that KwaShange was the first area to "complain about him" and they had tried several times to kill him, often showing no respect for him. He claimed this included the Inkatha leader, Chief Buthelezi. On this day provincial Inkatha launched 'Operation Clean-Up.' Here local Inkatha leaders were pressured to drive non-Inkatha members out of KwaShange or kill them. After the rally, vigilantes, escorted by the police, attacked KwaShange and killed two people; UDF with the help of Harry Gwala's Edendale supporters, managed to fight back; Inkatha and the SAP gave way. Their attempt to 'clean up' KwaShange was thus a failure.¹⁶⁷

After this event there were reports of police collusion with Inkatha against the KwaShange UDF-COSATU. Moses Ndlovu himself and his two sons escaped when they were attacked in day-light by uniformed police, escorted by Inkatha warlords. This police collusion with Inkatha was reported in other areas: Nxamalala, Tafuleni and Gezubuso. Commenting on this, Kentridge says that police were authorised by the Nationalist Government Minister of Law and Order, Adrian Vlok, who said, "Police will face the future with moderates and fight against radical groups." The Inkatha Institute, a sociological research unit based in Durban, released a report which claimed that unemployment, rather than political antagonism, was the real cause of the conflict. The report was endorsed by Chief Buthelezi, who blamed the violence on apartheid.¹⁶⁸ This KwaShange attack prompted the president of the UDF, Archie Gumede, to again call for peace. Chief Buthelezi responded by saying Gumede supported the ANC and that peace talks would therefore be futile. Buthelezi also declared that he wanted talks to be held between national, rather than local, leaders.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷Interviews with groups of informants in KwaShange and Inkatha aligned informants in Mvundlweni.

¹⁶⁸Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), appendix.

¹⁶⁹Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), appendix.

February 1988

In February 1988, a group of Inkatha people, led by Mlungisi Ngubane, who had been displaced from KwaShange,¹⁷⁰ attacked and injured KwaShange people at a bus stop in Retief Street in downtown Pietermaritzburg. They were arrested and charged with public violence. This was later altered to the lesser charge of constituting an illegal gathering. They received light and suspended sentences. Further Interdict Applications were brought against Inkatha warlords, but these were hampered by the murder of some of the applicants and witnesses on the eve of the hearing of the applications. Interim Interdicts were granted and the cases deferred until August 1988 for oral evidence to be heard. Supreme Court judges became concerned about the situation and called in the Attorney-General, demanding to know what was being done about prosecuting the perpetrators of violence. Other judges complained that the Interdict Applications were wasting the court's time. David Ntombela, an Inkatha warlord cited as one of the respondents in several of the interdict applications, threatened to shoot the COSATU official, Moses Ndlovu, after a court hearing; Ntombela received a warning concerning his threats, from Mr. Justice Booysen.¹⁷¹

A delegation of women from KwaShange, Mnyandu, Vulisaka and Nxamalala joined another group of women from Greater Edendale and visited the offices of the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) in Pietermaritzburg to complain about police involvement in an attack on 31 January. After further allegations of police collusion with Inkatha, a police spokesman, Brigadier Leon Mellet, said, "it is not the duty or the policy of the police to side with political groupings." The mayor of Pietermaritzburg, Mark Cornell, called on the SADF to send troops to halt the violence, but was told by the Minister of Police that the SAP was 'up to the task'.¹⁷²

According to Moses Ndlovu, the Chamber of Commerce in Pietermaritzburg was assisting in facilitating peace between Inkatha and the UDF. Because of the 31 January incident, in which police and warlords attacked KwaShange, the Chamber of

¹⁷⁰Most wanted warlord even today in KwaShange. Some families say they want him dead or alive because of hurt he caused in the 1980s.

¹⁷¹Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 2005. See also Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

¹⁷²Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

Commerce peace-facilitators were sceptical of Inkatha's commitment to peace, and told the media that Inkatha was not committed to non-violence in the Midlands, quoting what had happened in KwaShange as an example.¹⁷³

Kentridge records that Chief Buthelezi demanded an explanation from the Chamber of Commerce for remarks attributed to the managing director of the Chamber, Paul van Uytrecht, who had told a reporter on the *New York Times* that he was not convinced of Inkatha's commitment to the peace process. The Chamber repudiated these comments, but Buthelezi remained dissatisfied. The Chamber continued to push for another round of peace talks, but on 10 February, UDF activists were detained, including the UDF regional secretaries, Thami Ngwenya and Martin Wittenberg. The detentions scuppered any hopes of further talks. The police were accused of undermining the peace process and the Deputy Minister of Law and Order, Roelf Meyer, declared, "The Chamber of Commerce and church are wasting their time with peace talks."¹⁷⁴

March 1988

Severe conflicts took place between KwaShange and neighbouring areas, where people who had been displaced from KwaShange were staying. Almost every day KwaShange was attacked. A SAP mobile station was placed in KwaShange in March 1988. The attacks intensified despite the police presence in the area. Four police searches took place in March, in which police confiscated ammunition, guns and any kind of weaponry. About 150 youths were taken to prison for being found in possession of home made fire-arms, in March alone. After each search and confiscation of weapons by the SAP, Inkatha would attack the area of KwaShange the following day and the police would do nothing to prevent the activities of these Inkatha warlords. Shayabantu Zondi was seen several times openly having meetings with the SAP stationed in KwaShange.

¹⁷³Interview with Moses Ndlovu (2005) and Nunu Mchunu (2008).

¹⁷⁴Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

It is recorded that 300 *Kiskonstables* (instant-constables)¹⁷⁵ were deployed in KwaShange at the beginning of March. The men had been recruited in Natal and trained in Cape Town, but some were from KwaShange: Tana Zuma, Mlungisi Ngubane, Mzi Zuma and others. There was dismay among township residents, who said that the *Kiskonstables* were simply Inkatha vigilantes in police uniforms.

A group of women from KwaShange joined groups of women from various Pietermaritzburg areas affected by these *Kiskonstables*' activities and went to see the Attorney-General of Natal, to express fears that these men would use their newly acquired rank to exact vengeance. The Attorney-General was non-committal. The police declared that recruits were not screened as to their political affiliation, but while Inkatha members could be policemen, supporters of the UDF were unacceptable, as it was described as an "extremist organisation." Activists claimed that many of the *Kitskonstabels* were known criminals and some even had cases pending against them (like Mlungisi Ngubane, who had criminal and murder charges brought to court against him by families in KwaShange).

In mid-March, interim Interdicts were granted against Inkatha warlords, including Chief Shayabantu Zondi. At the inquiry into the severe assaults on KwaShange, UDF members who had participated in the Sarmcol strike and in the deaths of the three COSATU supporters killed in Mpophomeni in December 1986, the examining magistrate found that a number of Inkatha members were responsible for the murders. The matter was referred to the Attorney-General for prosecution. At the inquest, David Ntombela arrived armed; his firearm was confiscated during the course of the proceedings. On 21 March, the police rounded up all the UDF supporters they could find in KwaShange and in Mnyandu, Gezubuso and other UDF strongholds in Nadi, and detained them briefly. On the same day the Minister of Defence and his Deputy, as well as the Minister of Police and his Deputy, were taken on a tour of Vulindlela, including KwaShange.

¹⁷⁵These were Inkatha supporters, who were recruited by the apartheid state agent. They were untrained 'policemen' rather they were alleged to be 'hitmen' that killed UDF supporters in townships and rural areas.

April 1988

April was yet another ‘black month’ in KwaShange: the Durban Supreme Court declared two former policemen guilty of the murder of 13 Inkatha Youth Brigade members in September 1987. The judge found mitigating circumstances in the fact that the men had feared an attack by the group and had pre-empted this by attacking first. They were sentenced to twelve years’ imprisonment. Of Hlengwa’s trial it was reported:

In the KwaShange killings, a policeman worked together with UDF supporters to attack Inkatha. In the massacre that ensued, thirteen community Inkatha members were “methodically executed without a shred of mercy.”¹⁷⁶

The UDF young people recommitted themselves to fighting Inkatha. Headman Makhathini was attacked on a Friday at about 1h00. He was stoned to death and his throat cut in front his wife and mentally disabled daughter. His wife was also killed after telling his assailants that she would inform the police.

May 1988

Buthelezi met Inkatha leaders in the Midlands and instructed them to stop the violence, threatening to dismiss Inkatha members who continued with violent activities. The Inkatha Central Committee decided to suspend three KwaShange Inkatha members (Thohlo Ndlovu, Tito Nxele and Tozama Magubane) accused of using violence for political ends. This happened after Buthelezi was refused a visa by the Austrian authorities, who were concerned about his role in South African politics.¹⁷⁷

An Inkatha member, Mlungisi Shabalala, was sentenced to death for the murder of Mgayo Miya, a UDF member. Jerome Mncwabe, also Inkatha, appeared in the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court on three charges of murder. Although the victims

¹⁷⁶State v. Hlengwa and others, transcript of judgment by Mr. Justice N.S. Page, Natal Provincial Division of the Supreme Court, Pietermaritzburg, 11 April 1988, 775, 777.

¹⁷⁷Interview with Nunu Mchunu (2008) and Moses Ndlovu (2005).

were shot in the back, the judge accepted Mncwabe's claim that he acted in self-defence, and he was acquitted. His co-accused, Nkosinathi Mncwabe, was found guilty of culpable homicide and sentenced to five strokes and one year's imprisonment, suspended for four years. UDF supporters who attended the court case were furious and fought with Inkatha members. Two KwaShange Inkatha members were killed in Pietermaritzburg at the East Street bus rank.

June 1988

Two stay-aways were called by COSATU; KwaShange, Mnyandu and Vulisaka UDF supporters marched to Edendale, but were attacked by Inkatha supporters who were accompanied by police in Mvundlweni. Nevertheless, both these strikes were well supported by workers. KwaShange youths, together with Edendale youth, waited near Georgetown for buses transporting Inkatha commuters and stoned the buses. The Progressive Federal Party (PFP) called on the police to prohibit a rally in Sweetwaters organised by the Inkatha Youth Brigade, alleging that Inkatha youth intended to attack Nxamalala, Mthoqotho and KwaShange. Inkatha claimed it was merely a meeting to discuss strategy and dismissed residents' fears that anyone who failed to attend would have to 'face the consequences'. There was intense fighting in Slangspruit and KwaShange and Nxamalala UDF members were called to assist there.

July 1988

A number of school children at Mzamweni and Mtholangqondo Schools in KwaShange were shot and injured by *Kitskonstables*. The pupils had protested against the presence of the police on the school grounds. These school protests were taking place in many schools in Edendale and Ashdown: *Kitskonstables* had been deployed in a number of schools. A delegation of women went to the PFP offices to ask for a meeting to be set up with the police. Subsequently the *Kitskonstables* were almost entirely withdrawn from KwaShange schools.

The police released a number of detainees from Vulindlela; a number of these had been taken from KwaShange, allegedly for causing violence. Many of them had severe restrictions placed on them, designed to prevent them from engaging in any

further political activity. In Vulisaka and Gezubuso, residents fled from their homes to KwaShange to escape fresh outbreaks of violence in the areas.

August 1988

The violence in Vulindlela intensified. Brigadier Buchner attributed this to the re-infiltration of the area by youths and activists who had previously been kept in custody by police. Moses Ndlovu, the KwaShange Cosatu leader, ascribed the upsurge of violence to another forced recruitment drive by Inkatha in Vulindlela. Five people were killed and a bus carrying KwaShange UDF supporters was burnt at a funeral in Mpumalanga, after an attack by an army of 300 Inkatha vigilantes.

September 1988

Fifteen KwaShange women who had been victims of Inkatha warlords' attacks participated in the hearings of oral evidence against Inkatha in Pietermaritzburg. Amongst these women were Ntongo Thusi, Nana Thusi, Sibongile Mdlalose, Thulisile Khanyile and Nomaswazi Ngubane. A Complaints Board, under the presidency of a retired judge, was established to monitor the situation. All those found responsible for acts of violence by the Board would be referred back to their organisation (the UDF or Inkatha) for discipline. Moses Ndlovu says that before the process of hearing oral evidence against Inkatha warlords could be completed, COSATU and Inkatha signed a Peace Accord. The Accord led to tension between COSATU and UDF comrades in the Midlands, as the latter were not signatories of the agreement because of the restrictions placed on the UDF by the government in February. UDF comrades also complained that they had not been consulted by COSATU before signing.

October 1988

In October there were reports of over 20 000 refugees in the Greater Pietermaritzburg Area alone. There were also reports of fighting in and around Retief Street in Pietermaritzburg, where KwaShange commuters were fighting with Elandskop

Inkatha members. The majority of deaths were caused by fighting in Mpumalanga Township in the Midlands.¹⁷⁸

November 1988

Three young men, Mathi Ngcobo, Thulani Zondo and Duka Makhathini, UDF supporters, were wanted by Chief Shayabantu Zondi and Inkatha warlords. They announced that they wanted them dead because they had attacked and killed Inkatha members in Ezibomvini and attempted to kill the chief's headman, Guvaza Khanyile. The young men were given refuge by Chief Mhlabunzima Maphumulo of Maqongqo. Late in November, Chief Maphumulo was summoned to Ulundi to answer an inquiry into the administration of his area, following complaints from Inkatha members that Maphumulo's policy of non-alignment in the war meant that UDF refugees were settling in the Table Mountain area and living together with Inkatha members. They also claimed that he had sent people to support the UDF in KwaShange in Vulindlela.¹⁷⁹ Maphumulo refused to attend the inquiry, as he claimed that the directive he had received was vague and ambiguous. There were reports that Inkatha had embarked on a new forced recruitment campaign at Trust Feeds near New Hanover.

December 1988

Fighting between KwaShange UDF supporters and Inkatha at Retief, East Street and West Street bus stops in Pietermaritzburg intensified after 15 people were killed at a vigil in a house at Trust Feeds, New Hanover. The UDF accused Inkatha members at Trust Feeds of this killing and of attempting to kill two young men from KwaShange, who had been sent to assist the UDF at Trust Feeds. Chief Buthelezi threatened to sue anyone, particularly Moses Ndlovu, who suggested that Inkatha members were responsible for the murders. He claimed that the dead people were in fact Inkatha members, although survivors and relations of the dead people denied this.

¹⁷⁸Matthew Krentz, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990) See also Debby Bonnin, "Legacies of Political Violence: An examination of Political Conflict in Mpumalanga Township", *Transformation* 62 (2006), 59-83.

¹⁷⁹This was probably the reason why, in 1990, during the 'Seven Days War', Nyavu people assisted David Ntombela to attack KwaShange in particular.

Also in December, shopkeepers in Retief Street, Pietermaritzburg, complained that the continued fighting at the bus and taxi depots was bad for the Christmas trade.

January 1989

There was further fighting between residents of KwaShange and Mvundlweni. The police continued to harass KwaShange residents. A number of people were found dead in the area and police stationed in KwaShange were always suspects, but nothing was done to investigate these cases. Inkatha members attacked and killed four KwaShange women at a bus stop near Gezubuso. A deputation of KwaShange women, joined by Nxamalala, Gezubuso and Mnyandu women, went to the PFP offices to complain about police handling of the incidents.

February-March 1989

Clashes occurred between UDF and Inkatha vigilantes under the command of different warlords throughout Vulindlela. The regional director of the PFP in Pietermaritzburg, Radley Keys, accused an Inkatha warlord of having murdered up to 25 people between February and March. The Zulu Police (a Zululand government force) in KwaShange and Inkatha denied this. The police released a number of detainees, including UDF secretary, Skhumbuzo Ngwenya, following a hunger strike. The regional secretary of the Transport and General Worker's Union, Alfred Ndlovu, was, however, found guilty of terrorism and sentenced to eight year's imprisonment for killing KwaShange Inkatha youth in 1988.

April-May 1989

Winnie Mandela visited KwaShange at the behest of Moses Ndlovu and Harry Gwala. This was a secret visit, never publicised: she told young men who had been camping never to allow traitors and government agents and spies to use KwaShange as their 'playground'.

Later in the month, Nelson Mandela sent a cordial letter from the Victor Verster Prison, near Paarl, to Chief Buthelezi. Mandela called for national unity in the

struggle and peace in Vulindlela and in the Pietermaritzburg townships. Chief Maphumulo, a strong ally of the KwaShange UDF, also called for peace and petitioned the State President to appoint a judicial commission of inquiry into the causes of violence. Chief Buthelezi condemned the petition and opposed the idea of a judicial commission. The Minister of Law and Order, Vlok, also dismissed the call.¹⁸⁰

Towards the end of April, 30 people were killed in one weekend in the Vulindlela areas of KwaShange, Ezibomvini, Elandskop, Bhobhonono, Mthoqotho and other districts. The escalation of the rate of killings galvanised the conflicting parties into making fresh calls for peace. COSATU and the UDF said that they shared a “common view and commitment to a mass movement for peace” with Inkatha and called for a peace conference to be convened by church and community leaders.¹⁸¹ Chief Buthelezi proposed a peace plan involving a massive media campaign in the townships. Vlok reiterated his view that UDF and COSATU were responsible for all the violence in the region and announced an increase in police personnel and equipment, a move that had been discussed with Chief Buthelezi during a recent visit to Ulundi.

The peace talks were bogged down before they could begin, since Chief Buthelezi demanded that the talks be held at Ulundi, while COSATU and the UDF wanted a neutral venue, such as Durban. Although Chief Buthelezi had said to Archbishop Hurley (Roman Catholic Church leader) that he would be prepared to “go to the ends of the earth if needs be” to stop the violence, he now declared he had no intention of going to Durban or anywhere other than Ulundi to hold peace talks.¹⁸²

June-July 1989

A number of UDF and COSATU high-ranking officials in the Midlands and Vulindlela, including the president, Archie Gumede and Moses Ndlovu of

¹⁸⁰Matthew Krentz, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

¹⁸¹Lindiwe Ngcobo worked for UDF offices; this was also mentioned by Moses Ndlovu of COSATU. See also Matthew Krentz, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

¹⁸²Matthew Krentz, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

KwaShange, were under virtual house arrest, thereby making it almost impossible for them to attend the talks. This undermined the planned peace talks.

August-September 1989

The peace negotiators agreed on an agenda for a top-level peace conference to be held at some overseas venue and attended by the presidents of Inkatha, the UDF, COSATU and the ANC. The plan was endorsed by all parties, but did not get off the ground as Inkatha accused the ANC of ‘dragging its feet’ over the proposals.¹⁸³

A ‘hit squad’ consisting of police members and operating from a red Husky mini-van was seen in many UDF aligned areas, Nxamalala, KwaShange, Mthoqotho and Edendale, assaulting and abducting UDF comrades. In KwaShange they abducted three boys between 18 and 21 years of age, shot them and threw their bodies into the nearby Msunduzi River. In September-October peace talks between Inkatha and the UDF and COSATU in the Midlands failed.

October –November 1989

An interim interdict was granted to KwaShange activists, restraining the members of the police ‘hit squad’ from further assaulting or abducting them. On the same day, one of the activists, Thulani Ngcamu, was briefly detained by the squad and interrogated. In November there was sporadic violence in KwaShange, as small groups of UDF comrades and Inkatha supporters clashed with each other. However, the worst of the fighting occurred in Mpumalanga and Hammarsdale.

5.7 Precipitating causes of the ‘Seven Days War’

The Zulu king, Goodwill Zwelithini, convened a meeting of the nation at King’s Park Stadium in Durban. The convention was attended by 70 000 people. The king complained that he, Chief Buthelezi and the Zulu nation had been spurned by the recently released leaders of the ANC, because they had been excluded from

¹⁸³Matthew Krentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

homecoming celebrations. Later, Walter Sisulu responded by saying that all were welcome and the celebrations were open to anyone who wished to attend. He also accepted an invitation to hold talks with the Inkatha leadership on the question of peace and reconciliation between rival organisations in the Natal Midlands and the surrounding areas.

December 1989

Two unofficial commissions of inquiry into the Pietermaritzburg violence were convened: one under the auspices of Chief Maphumulo and the other under the auspices of local church groups. A number of people, some from KwaShange, gave testimony to the commissions. The most significant feature of December was the intensity of fighting in the squatter camps of Inanda near Durban, giving rise to the (temporary) impression that the focus of the war had shifted from the Midlands to the coast.

January 1990

Violence between KwaShange people and Mpande Inkatha warlords continued. These attacks were worsened by the massacre of 10 people at Wartburg, where a number of Inkatha warlords were among those killed. Inkatha supporters from Mpande then began to attack Nxamalala and KwaShange communities, probably to show solidarity with their Wartburg counterparts.

February 1990

In his speech at the opening of parliament, the State President, F.W. de Klerk, unbanned the ANC; a few days later, Nelson Mandela was released after 27 years in prison. The ANC stated that the resolution of the conflict in Natal was a priority for all parties. Walter Sisulu, leader of the internal wing of the ANC, toured Pietermaritzburg towards the end of the month and met the Inkatha secretary-general, Oscar Dhlomo. On 25 February Mandela addressed a rally of 125 000 people at King's Park Stadium in Durban and made conciliatory remarks about Inkatha and Chief Buthelezi, praising their opposition to apartheid over the years. Mandela also

called on his followers to throw their weapons into the sea. “Close down the death factories now,” he said.

There was an immediate upsurge in violence between the UDF in KwaShange and Inkatha in neighbouring areas. Towards the end of the month, the focus was on Vulindlela and Chief Maphumulo’s chieftaincy, Table Mountain; UDF authority was slipping and Inkatha was becoming increasingly powerful in the area. Many refugees, including some KwaShange youths who had fled to Table Mountain in the early months of the war, moved out again to seek refuge elsewhere.

March 1990

March 1990 was the high-water point of the war in terms of deaths, surpassing January 1988, with its death tally of 162. Violence escalated around Pietermaritzburg, despite Mandela’s call for peace. In contrast to the reconciliatory tone of Mandela’s speech, Chief Buthelezi in his opening speech to the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly verbally attacked the ANC and the UDF, explicitly blaming the latter for starting the war and keeping it going over the years. Inkatha held a rally on 25 March at King’s Park Stadium, attended by 8 000 people. A few days later, Inkatha launched a sustained attack in the Pietermaritzburg region, which amounted to a full-scale invasion of UDF strongholds in Edendale and Vulindlela. A feature of the attack was the very large size of the armies (up to 3 000 *impi*, or regiments were reported) and a large number of guns were in evidence. Fatalities were high, with 35 people killed in a single day and over 80 in a week.

Within days 11 500 refugees were being accommodated in makeshift camps in Pietermaritzburg. Eyewitnesses claimed that David Ntombela was pivotal in coordinating the Inkatha offensive.

This upsurge in violence dominated local media for over two weeks and received much coverage overseas. Chief Buthelezi repeated his claim that the instigators of violence were the UDF, COSATU and the ANC. Inkatha also claimed that the current attack was in retaliation for the stoning of Inkatha buses by UDF comrades. The UDF responded by saying that the retaliation was out of proportion to the stoning and that

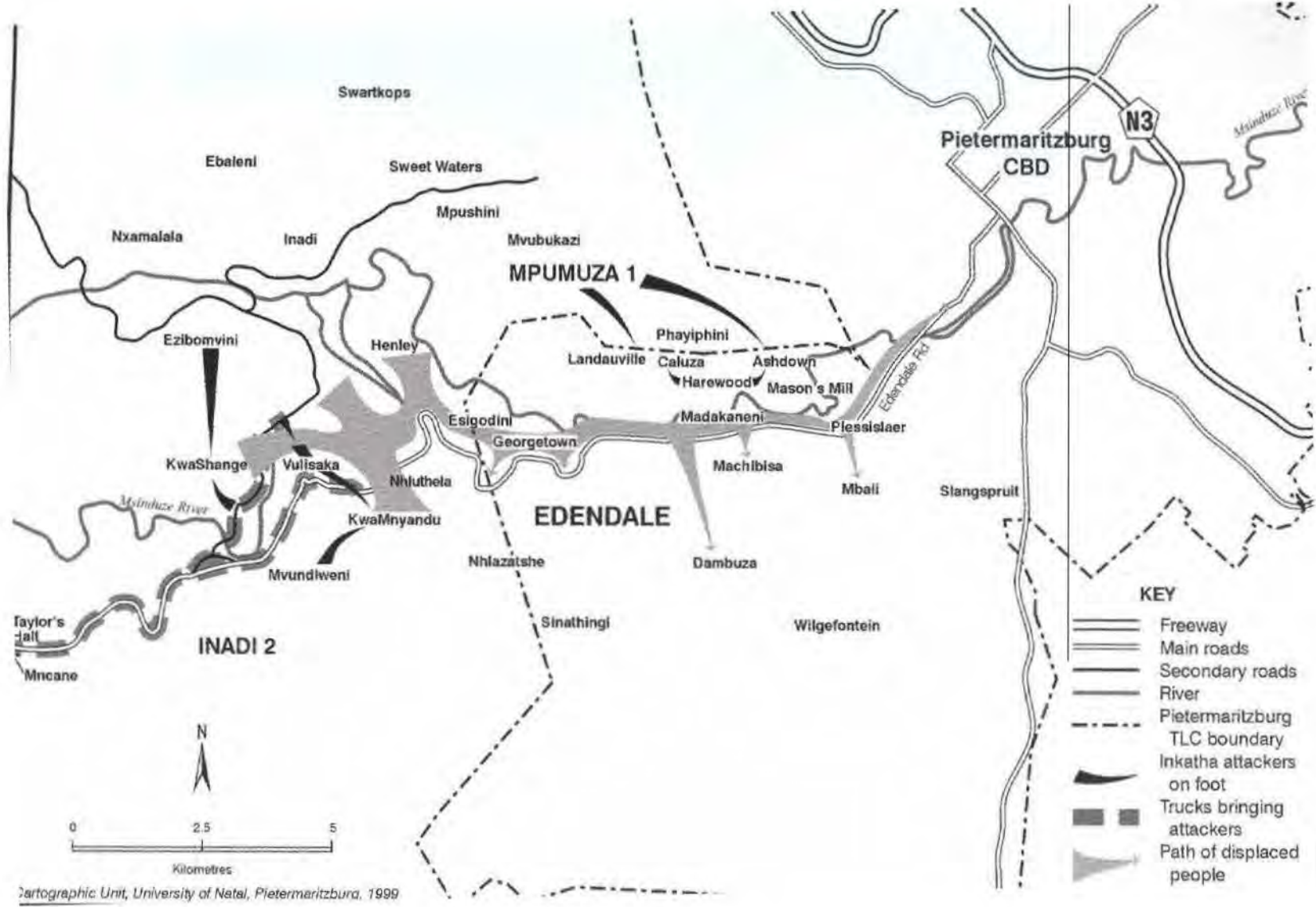
the scale of the invasion was so large that it must have been prepared well in advance. There were many reports of the SAP colluding with the Inkatha attackers and police dispersed a peaceful march of unarmed women on the Plessislaer police station in protest at police involvement in the attacks. At the height of the fighting, Chief Buthelezi announced that he and Nelson Mandela would address a joint rally in Taylor's Halt, the heart of the war zone. Mandela then withdrew from the rally, saying that he had never given his agreement and arguing that a joint rally at such a time could lead to a bloodbath in the stadium.

The Black Sash called for the deployment of troops in the Natal townships, saying that the police had lost all credibility and that only the army could restore control.

These circumstances led to the 'Seven Days' War' of 25 to 31 March 1990.¹⁸⁴ I have given the details of the escalating violence of this protracted civil war between the UDF/ANC and their trade union allies and Inkatha and their allies, the SAP and the forces of the Nationalist Government, to demonstrate the complexity of antagonisms on both sides. The balance of the war kept changing in favour of one side or the other and ordinary people were caught up in it, not being allowed to stay neutral.

¹⁸⁴For details on the 'Seven Days War' see Lou Levine ed., *Faith in Turmoil: The Seven Days War Through Stained Glass Windows* (PACSA, 1999); Anthea Jeffery, *The Natal Story: 16 Years of Conflict* (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2007) and Matthew Kentridge, *An Unofficial War: Inside the Conflict in Pietermaritzburg* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

Map¹⁸⁵ showing "Seven Days War", Vulindlela, 25-31 March 1990



¹⁸⁵ Designed by Cartographic Unit, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1999, see Lou Levine ed., *Faith in Turmoil: The Seven Days War* (PMB: PACSA, 1999).

Chapter Six

THE NATIONAL POLITICS AND IT EFFECTS ON KWASHANGE

6.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to understand the broader politics that stood behind the conflicts of the 1980s-1990s in Natal and Zululand.¹ It will explain how provincial (and national) developments, in particular the emerging tension between Inkatha and the ANC at the national level of leadership, changed the climate in KwaShange and fuelled violence. This is necessary to understand the pivotal role of an area such as KwaShange in the political struggle, because evidence reveals that what took place there was invariably connected to what was happening in other localities of the province and in the liberation struggle nationally. For example, the KwaShange violence cannot be discussed without reference to the 30 April 1985 trade union strike at the BTR Sarmcol factory in Howick. Moses Ndlovu lived in KwaShange and was deeply involved in union activities at Sarmcol.² On 5 December 1986, the KwaShange

¹Authors agree that what was at play in Natal and Zululand was related to the national struggle for black liberation. This is covered in Anthea Jeffery, *The Natal Story: 16 Years of Conflict* (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2007). See also John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72.

²Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 March 2005; Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008. Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 15 March 2008. The Sarmcol strike of 1986 was seen as one of the major events marking the beginning of confrontation between the UDF and its allies COSATU and Inkatha; see also John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War and KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72. Debby Bonnin, "Class Consciousness and Conflict in the Natal Midlands, 1940-1987: The Case of the BRT Sarmcol Workers", MSocSc thesis (University of Natal, 1987), 164-165; Jeremy Baskin, *Striking Back: A History of COSATU* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1991), 14; International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 'Repression and Resistance', *Apartheid: The Facts* (London: IDAF, 1991), 102; Personal communication with Philippe Denis, Scottsville, 27 March 2010. Personal communication with Jabulani Sithole, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 17 June 2010. For details on the history of workers and struggle against oppression see T. Karis, C. Carter and G. M. Gerhart eds., *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964*, 3, (Stanford: Hoover International Press, 1977), 358-364; Tom Lodge, *Black Politics since 1945* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1983), 196; D. McShane, M. Plaunt and D. Ward, *Power! Black Workers, Their Unions and the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1984), 32; Sibongiseni Mkhize, "Contexts, Resistance Crowds and Mass Mobilisation: A Comparative Analysis of Anti-Apartheid Politics in Pietermaritzburg during 1950s and the 1980s", MA thesis (University of Natal, 1998).

Inkatha leaders, Mchunu, Kubheka and Thabethe, accused the Mpophomeni union members of disrespect and lack of discipline. They went to these workers' homes, forcing them to join Inkatha and to respect the KwaZulu government laws against participating in strikes. They forced them to stop associating with Moses Ndlovu.³ The Inkatha leaders complained that the Sarmcol workers introduced outside influences of unions linked to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) into the KwaShange community.⁴ I offer this example to argue that KwaShange's political violence cannot be explored in isolation from the political rivalries in Natal, Zululand and South Africa in general.

6.2 Broader political tensions and its effects on KwaShange

In this section I discuss the national and provincial tension that led to regional tension, so as to give an understanding of the genesis of violence in KwaShange and why it was to start in KwaShange, specifically.

Many authors have written about the political violence in Natal and Zululand in the 1980s and 1990s and its effects on local communities in the province.⁵ Some of these works contain material which was recorded concurrently with the violence, while other works were written from hindsight. Most of these authors agree that the violence

³Interview with Bheki Mbanjwa, KwaShange, 26 October 2008; interview with a group of seven men who preferred to remain anonymous and who participated in the attack on Sarmcol strikers, KwaShange, 26 October 2008.

⁴Nunu Mchunu, admitted that he and other members of Inkatha wanted to instil discipline into KwaShange youth (KwaShange, 14 March 2008). For details on how issues of discipline contributed to violence in KwaShange, see Mchunu, M. "Discipline, Respect and Ethnicity: A Study of the Changing Patterns of Fatherhood of Three Generations of Zulu Fathers and Sons in KwaShange, Inadi, Vulindlela Area of Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal from the 1930s to the 1990s", MA thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban 2005; Mxolisi Mchunu, "Cultural Change, Zulu Masculinity and Intergenerational Conflict in the Context of Civil War in Pietermaritzburg (1987-1991)", in T. Shefer, K Ratele, A. Strelbel N. Shabalala and R. Buikema eds., *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2007).

⁵ See John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; S. Stavrou, "Underdevelopment: Natal's Formula for Conflict", *Indicator SA* 7/3 (Autumn 1990), 52-56. Anthony Minnaar, *Conflict and Violence in Natal/KwaZulu: Historical Perspectives* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1990); R. Taylor and M. Shaw, "The Natal Conflict", in John Brewer ed., *Restructuring South Africa* (London: St. Martin Press, 1994), 35-52; A. Johnston, "Politics and Violence in KwaZulu-Natal", in W. Gutteridge and J. Spence eds., *Violence in Southern Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 78-107. Anthea Jeffery, *The Natal Story: Sixteen Years of Conflict* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1997).

started in 1987.⁶ In my oral interviews I was able to attain specifics like dates of the incidents from the journal interviews of two interviewees, Moses Ndlovu and Nunu Mchunu. I regard them, as first-hand witnesses, as more reliable than the memories of bystanders.

When Mchunu and Ndlovu and other members of the ANC attended meetings at the 'People's Hall', they were all instructed to recruit and mobilize their community members to 'resist white supremacy' and the abuse of black people. Ndlovu and Mchunu recruited members of the KwaShange community. This continued until 1975, when Inkatha was formed. After many meetings in Ulundi, Mchunu and other men who had remained in the country were encouraged to continue recruiting people to join Inkatha, as it was the 'ANC internal wing'.

Beside the long relationship between the ANC and Inkatha, there were other elements in common between the two movements: Both these movements were formed as a response to white colonial power and the exclusion of the indigenous African majority.

In 1975, Inkatha, founded in 1923, was revived by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, but the ANC in exile suggested that he revive its internal wing; Thabo Mbeki drafted the first constitution of Inkatha, saying he was "not worried about what the movement was to be called, as long as there was this movement that was going to mobilize people inside the country."⁷ Many people, like Mchunu, who had been active in the ANC, felt it was still appropriate that they mobilize people to join Inkatha, as it was the 'ANC in disguise anyway.'

Some ANC members did not participate in Inkatha activities and meetings. Moses Ndlovu and others were deeply engaged with the ANC in exile. It is questionable why

⁶For historical background on provincial and national politics, this chapter will depend on the works of Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and the Politics of Loyal Resistance* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987) and Mzala, *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Agenda* (London: Zed Books, 1988).

⁷Personal communication with Mwelele Cele, Manager of Killie Campbell Africana Library, 14 August 2008; see also Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986).

Moses Ndlovu was not involved in the Inkatha revival in 1975. At this time, Mchunu was recruiting people in KwaShange to join Inkatha. Mchunu and Ndlovu's agendas were not opposed: both movements shared the same constituency.

What disrupted this working relationship and common understanding between the ANC and Inkatha and how did it affect KwaShange? There were many factors, but the first shock to many Inkatha people took place during Robert Sobukwe's funeral, where *Umntwana wakwa Phindangene* (Mangosuthu Buthelezi) was ill-treated by people who were at the funeral.⁸

Mchunu referred to this incident at Graaff-Reinet on 11 March 1978. Buthelezi attributed his ill-treatment to "some misguided youths who did not understand the respect and camaraderie between all those fighting in the liberation struggle (and) did not think that I should have attended the funeral."⁹ It is clear that there were already differences between struggle leaders in exile (ANC and PAC) and Inkatha within the country. Buthelezi defined 1978 as a period of "political uncertainty and confusion."¹⁰

Moses Ndlovu inferred that many people, particularly the youth, felt that Buthelezi's participation in the KwaZulu Government as its Chief Minister was hindering the struggle against apartheid. Even a well-known struggle veteran, and the most influential church leader at the time, Desmond Tutu, called those that had chased Buthelezi away from the funeral, "a new breed of young people with iron in their soul." This was contrary to what Buthelezi had said about these youths, characterizing them as "thugs."¹¹

On that day, their blindly fervent and violent attacks threatened my life, forcing me to leave our brother Mangaliso's funeral. I have always regretted that and have carried a very heavy burden in my heart. By being made to leave, I never had the opportunity to deliver my condolences and offer my

⁸Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 12 March 2008.

⁹Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, "Robert Sobukwe's Memorial Lecture/Commemoration", March, 1997 (20 years after his death).

¹⁰Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, "Robert Sobukwe's Memorial Lecture/Commemoration", March, 1997 (20 years after his death).

¹¹Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, "Robert Sobukwe's Memorial Lecture/Commemoration", March, 1997 (20 years after his death).

tribute to a man whose life rang true to the meaning of his name: “man of wonders.”¹²

This created confusion amongst the Inkatha leaders who frequently met in Ulundi. Mchunu mentions that they did not know who the enemy was, any longer. One day in 1978, after one of these Ulundi meetings, Mchunu met with Ndlovu in KwaShange. He recalled, “I went to ask him to join hands with me and explain to our people that Inkatha is working for people; it is not an enemy to our leaders in exile.” Mchunu’s fear was that what had started in Graaff-Reinet would spread and they would fail to control it. Ndlovu refused, without giving his reasons to Mchunu, and continued doing what the ANC in exile had requested him to do: recruiting young men and women. This refusal created confusion, as Mchunu did not know whether they “were still pulling together or they were pulling in different directions.”

It is agreed that political violence in KwaZulu-Natal started in 1987, but my informants in KwaShange believe that there was tension before public conflict and harassment occurred within KwaShange in 1979.¹³

In 1979 the top leadership of Inkatha, particularly Chief Buthelezi, became estranged from the leader of the ANC in exile, Oliver Tambo.¹⁴ In their interviews, both

¹²Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, “Robert Sobukwe’s Memorial Lecture/Commemoration”, March, 1997 (20 years after his death).

¹³Interview with Moses Ndlovu, Nunu Mchunu, Chris Hlengwa, former combatants in KwaShange, KwaShange, 2005-2008. See also Fr. Tim Smith, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Victim Hearings, Pietermaritzburg, 19 November 1996, quoted from http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/hrvpmb/pmb7_11.htm. Smith was a Roman Catholic Priest in Elandskop, Vulindlela, he testified in the TRC that from 1984 he started helping UDF members to escape as they were fearing for their lives; see also Philippe Denis, Radikobo Ntsimane and Thomas Cannell, *Indians versus Russians: An Oral History of Political Violence in Nxamalala 1987-1993* (Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications, 2010), 33; Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA) recorded testimonies of political survivors in the Natal Midlands. The testimonies show that violence started long before 1987 in KwaShange, see for instance Moses Ndlovu’s testimony in Lou Levine ed., *Faith in Turmoil: The Seven Days War, Through Stained Glass Windows*: Moses Ndlovu- KwaShange (PACSA, 1999), 63.

¹⁴This tension between Inkatha and the ANC in exile has been explored in a number of studies, notably; Anthea Jeffery, *The Natal Story: 16 Years of Conflict* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 2007); Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi’s Inkatha and South Africa*; Mzala, *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Agenda*; see also C. McCaul, “Towards an Understanding of Inkatha Yesizwe. Dissertation Series, Number 2. Johannesburg: South African Research Service/Development Studies Group, 1983) University of Witwatersrand; Nkosinathi Gwala and Blade Nzimande, “Class Alliances in the Struggle Against Inkatha”, *South African Labour Bulletin* 13, 3 March 1988; R. W. Johnson, interview with Walter Felgate, *Focus*, (9 January 1998), 20 quoted from Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratization*,

Mchunu and Ndlovu told me that 1979 was a year during which difficulties between Inkatha and the ANC emerged. There had been a series of meetings between Buthelezi and the ANC in exile, aimed at ironing out a relationship which was ‘steadily but surely’ going sour. After four years of sending emissaries abroad, the time seemed ripe in 1979 for a top-level meeting between Inkatha and the ANC. The first such meeting took place in Stockholm in the early part of that year. This meeting was used to establish a summit conference between Inkatha and the ANC Mission in Exile, which took place in October 1979. Tambo attended the meeting, which was chaired by Dr A. H. Zulu, the Speaker of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly.¹⁵ Buthelezi later reflected on why he went to London:

I went to London determined to seek reconciliation and determined to bring about a working relationship between the ANC Mission in Exile and Inkatha. I was aware of the fact that Mr. Oliver Tambo was having difficulties with some elements of his organization. Those with a firm commitment to violence did not want any evidence that non-violent strategies were viable in South Africa.¹⁶

This probably was the reason why Ndlovu in KwaShange never got himself involved in Inkatha activities. In all his discussions with the ANC Mission in Exile, Buthelezi insisted that Inkatha should remain Inkatha; and that it should remain committed to black popular will, which expressed itself in Inkatha’s massive membership, which had doubled in 1977 and doubled again in 1978. Inkatha interpreted this huge increase

(Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 260, Felgate describes Buthelezi as being “quite thrilled” that he had obtained meeting [with Oliver Tambo Buthelezi’s objective was to break the myth of the heroic exiles]. “He took tapes of his own meeting in Jabulani so they could hear applause and he tried to show them [ANC leaders in exile] by these means that he had mass support inside the country. See also John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War and KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratization*, (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 49.

¹⁵ <http://www.ifp.org.za/History/history.htm>. Gerhard Maré, *Ethnicity and Politics in South Africa* (London: Zed Books, 1993); Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi’s Inkatha and Politics of Loyal Resistance* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987); Mzala, *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Agenda* (London: Zed Books, 1988); Anthea Jeffery, *The Natal Story: 16 Years of Conflict* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 2007).

¹⁶ <http://www.ifp.org.za/History/history.htm>.

in membership as a vote of confidence in the movement and a rejection by black South Africans of the armed struggle.¹⁷

By the time the 1979 London meeting between Inkatha and the ANC Mission in Exile took place the militant elements in the ANC could no longer be controlled by Oliver Tambo. After the London meeting, for the first time in his career, Mr. Tambo began criticizing Buthelezi and Inkatha publicly. He had sided with those in his ranks who saw Inkatha as a threat ... the London meeting would prove to be a pivotal point in the relationship between the two organizations.¹⁸

As these ANC-Inkatha meetings were happening, regional leaders of both the ANC and Inkatha were briefed. Mchunu agreed that in their frequent meetings in Ulundi, Inkatha lower level leaders were briefed on all the latest developments.¹⁹ The ANC in exile, as well the ANC members in South Africa, knew about their discussions.²⁰

Mchunu recalls 1979 as the year in which Ndlovu started mobilizing people against Inkatha. "He went to all families and school teachers and youths I had recruited to join Inkatha and he told them that Inkatha was not the ANC and it was not fighting for Black people but Inkatha was 'selling' Black people to the whites."²¹ Mchunu believes that there are no other known reasons that could have led to Ndlovu's campaign against Inkatha, except the disagreement between Buthelezi and the top

¹⁷ John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War and KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization*, (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 49.

¹⁷ <http://www.ifp.org.za/History/history.htm>. Gerhard Maré, *Ethnicity and Politics in South Africa* (London: Zed Books, 1993); Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and Politics of Loyal Resistance* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987).

¹⁸ John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72.

¹⁹ Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008.

²⁰ Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005. Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange 15 March 2008. For details on these accounts, see John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; Anthea Jeffery, *The Natal Story: 16 Years of Conflict* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 2007).

²¹ Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008.

ANC leadership in exile.²² Clearly, the tension between the ANC in exile and the Inkatha leadership reached the lower levels of leadership. The clashes between the ‘ring-leaders’ and the escalating violence in KwaShange was a reflection of what was happening nationally and provincially. When Inkatha met in Ulundi, these matters were on the agenda, but the leadership encouraged regional leaders to be ‘calm but not to stop recruiting for Inkatha.’ Hostility between Mchunu and Ndlovu commenced when they started to campaign against each other in one small area. This divided the community, as many people believed Inkatha to be the internal wing of the ANC. Ndlovu told me that “Mchunu was a strategist and very good at recruiting; he had enough time to campaign for Inkatha because he was not playing a leading role in a labour union and he was not sought after by police of the state.”²³ But Mchunu denies this, saying that he was in fear of the police because Inkatha was “indeed a threat to the state [...]. It is not true that I had time to mobilize because I had no other responsibilities, I was a leader of more than 3 000 workers in the NPA.”²⁴

Amongst those who were recruited by Mchunu was Philippe ‘Makhekhe’ Thabethe, Kubheka, who had been in the ANC, and many others. Chief Shayabantu Zondi also joined Inkatha and used to attend Inkatha meetings in Ulundi along with Mchunu.²⁵ Ndlovu meanwhile recruited Chris Hlengwa (who had been Mchunu’s family friend), Sayi Zondi, Ngudla Msane and Mathuba Goge, all of whom were members of the SAP living in KwaShange and were all implicated in the “KwaShange Massacre of 1987”, during which Inkatha-aligned youth were burnt to death in an ‘ill-fated’ disciplinary court conducted by UDF men.²⁶

The ill-treatment of Buthelezi at Robert Sobukwe’s funeral in 1978, and the breach between Buthelezi and Tambo in exile, made Inkatha regional leaders realize that

²²Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008.

²³Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005.

²⁴Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008.

²⁵Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008.

²⁶Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005; Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange 14 March 2008; Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 15 March 2005.

things were not normal. They deduced from this situation that they were all going to be treated with disrespect.²⁷

By the early 1980s Buthelezi was clearly less concerned with being seen to be supportive of his former liberation movement allies in exile. A final break is often identified as coinciding with the 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 being unreasonable and Inkatha claiming that their leader refused to be a pawn of the ANC.²⁸

Throughout this period there were signals that Buthelezi was taking an increasingly hard-line towards any black radicals who contradicted him and there were by then many adherents of the Black Consciousness Movement coming out of universities.²⁹

The behaviour of unionists also tended to give offence to Buthelezi, who did not like being manipulated by some of the intellectuals³⁰ leading the independent union movement in Durban, who had ideas regarding Buthelezi's political role which they sought to impose on him.³¹ In contrast with the working class black unionists, he got on well with white business leaders. This coincided with the formation of the UDF in 1983, in an atmosphere saturated by suspicion between Inkatha and the left.³² Ndlovu recalled that there were rumours that Archie Gumede, the national and Natal UDF

²⁷Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 15 March 2008. See also John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; Anthea Jeffery, *The Natal Story: 16 Years of Conflict* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 2007).

²⁸John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72.

²⁹See interview between Felgate and R. W. Johnson (Focus, January 1998), 20, in *Buthelezi: A Biography* (South Africa: JB Publishers, 2003).

³⁰John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72.

³¹John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War and KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange 11 August 2005.

³²Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005; John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War and KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72.

leader, would arrange meetings with Buthelezi to come to an understanding. But political conditions made such mediation impossible and the attempt was abandoned. In the interim Inkatha was concentrating its activities in Natal and Zululand.³³

Mchunu's campaign in KwaShange started after the Sobukwe incident. He recalls that this event made him start manufacturing home-made guns, an activity for which he was later to be jailed. He distributed these firearms to Inkatha followers in KwaShange and neighbouring areas.³⁴

I remember one night, very late, I heard a knock on my door, I did not open the door, I thought it was UDF guys who had come to kill me. I just kept quiet and waited for them to push the door by force. I had already prepared myself that I was going to kill all of them. The knock continued but I did not open. After a long time I heard voices, it was not UDF people but it was whites' voices, when they came back and knocked again, I opened the door; it was police looking for guns. They had been told that I am the one who made and distributed guns in the area. The police searched my house for more than an hour, they couldn't find anything. They cornered me with questions, coercing me to show them my guns and I refused, saying that I had no gun. When they were just about to give up, one Boer (Afrikaner) policeman kicked my small '*isigqiki*' (headrest), I had made my *isigqiki* and put a small hole underneath and that is where I kept the guns and many others were buried outside in my yard. The police kicked the *isigqiki* and heard that there was something in it, and that is how they got my gun and they took me (into custody). They drove with me the whole night looking for all other people who were suspected to have guns.³⁵

By 1980, in KwaShange there was hostility between Mchunu and his supporters and Ndlovu and his. This hostility was not yet obvious because few people were

³³Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005.

³⁴Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 15 March 2008; Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 14 March 2008; Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005.

³⁵Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008.

politically minded, but Ndlovu and Mchunu were aware of what would be the results of these tensions at the top leadership level.

Another factor that contributed to the tension between Inkatha and those who opposed it was that in 1983 Ulundi was made the capital of KwaZulu and all people under traditional leadership of chiefs had to contribute financially toward the building of Ulundi. Only KwaShange refused, as far as I can see, to pay the requested contribution toward the building of Ulundi. There, some people objected to the building of Ulundi and rejected Inkatha itself; “how is Inkatha going help us”? They asked. “Why should we pay for a building miles and miles away from us?” Chief Shayabantu Zondi was tasked with collecting the funds in areas under his jurisdiction in Vulindlela, but the community of KwaShange refused to pay. Ndlovu was singled out for leading the campaign to refuse.

Tensions grew between those who paid the contribution and those who did not. This is the time when Chief Shayabantu Zondi “lost his dignity” amongst other members of the KwaShange community and this was confirmed by Ndlovu and Mchunu. Mchunu and Inkatha, in general, were annoyed by this action, because they felt “this was disrespect to *Mntwana wakwaPhindangene* (Buthelezi) himself”, a man who was “the hope of the blacks in South Africa” At that date Natal and KwaZulu were, as today, essentially a black province and it is likely that some, both Blacks and whites, genuinely thought that a multiracial region, free of apartheid, was a possibility.³⁶

6.3 The history of liberation struggles in Natal and Zululand

I cite the following incidents of violence in Natal and Zululand and attempts to bring about peace, and the struggle throughout the Province, because in the following chapters I will refer to them frequently.

³⁶Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange 14 March 2008. See also Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and Politics of Loyal Resistance* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987).

Mchunu (Inkatha) and Ndlovu (UDF) state that since the 1960s, when many ANC leaders went into exile and others were imprisoned, South Africa has never been the same, particularly in Natal and KwaZulu. John Aitchison expressed similar sentiments about the period from the 1960s, when Nelson Mandela had a meeting in Pietermaritzburg and was caught by police officers in Howick. Aitchison feels that the violence which engulfed the state was always associated with the province of Natal and Zululand, of which Pietermaritzburg was the centre.³⁷ KwaShange was the first rural area to strongly oppose Inkatha and the UDF in the area took up arms against the Movement. Later they were followed by Chief Mhlabunzima Maphumulo's people eMkhambathini. This was the start of the civil war of the 1980s-1990s.

Natal and Zululand, from 1996 unified as KwaZulu-Natal, had long been associated with African liberation struggles. Battles took place in the province between the Zulu and the British in the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. The earlier Battle of Income (Blood River), between the Voortrekkers and the Zulu, took place in 1838. During the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906 Zulu people rose against the colonial Natal government. In 2006, former president Thabo Mbeki described Chief Bhambatha as a leader who fought for liberation and tried to change people's lives for the better.³⁸ The current president of the ANC and the Republic of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, has several times referred to *umlando wezimpi zakwaZulu*, [the history of Zulu wars], particularly the Bhambatha Rebellion, as events that inspired him to join politics.³⁹ The first president of the democratic South Africa, Nelson Mandela, described KwaZulu-Natal as a place where the struggle for liberation originated; hence he chose to cast his vote in 1994 in KwaZulu-Natal, at Ohlange Mission School, established by John Langalibalele Dube, who became the first president of the ANC. In the 1960s, when the ANC was banned, it was led by a Zulu, Chief Albert Luthuli.

³⁷Personal communication with Nunu Mchunu and Moses Ndlovu. See also John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003).

³⁸Thabo Mbeki, "Isikhumbuzo senkosi Bhambatha", Greytown (Ngome), 12 June 2006.

³⁹ See also SABC documentary on Jacob Zuma, 'from rural Inkandla to Union Buildings' shown on SABC 2, on 10 May 2009.

In northern Zululand, black political resistance was, to some extent, less confrontational. This can be attributed to the fact that there were two significant political movements: Inkatha, under the leadership of Buthelezi, and the independent black trade union movement. *Umntwana wakwaPhindangene*, as he was affectionately known, Chief Buthelezi was the hereditary chief of the Buthelezi clan and had opposed the imposition of Bantustan independence for the scattered areas of tribally owned land that officially made up the Zulu homeland.⁴⁰ He had in the 1970s gained control of the KwaZulu legislative assembly and had avoided any serious confrontation with the Nationalist government.

A number of Nationalist government security officials and agents, however, saw controlling Buthelezi's activities as very important. Some black government supporters were within Inkatha's ranks, for example M. Z. Khumalo, a government Department of Information agent, who became Chief Buthelezi's personal secretary and the go-between with the police and the army. In the mid-1960s it was clear that the security police distrusted Buthelezi, as he had been an ANC supporter and Mandela had visited him when 'on the run.' According to Racaza, there was anecdotal evidence that there was a plan to assassinate Buthelezi. Nevertheless, by the early 1980s, it was obvious that government agents who had formerly maligned him had revised their opinions and were using his strengths and weaknesses to their own advantage. During the late 1970s, Buthelezi and Inkatha gathered considerable support in the province.⁴¹ It was hoped that this would keep the region stable in the aftermath of the Soweto Riots of 1976 and inhibit the growth of radical oppositional politics.⁴² This was never the case: the ANC in exile had already called for an armed struggle. The UDF was already successfully mobilizing the youth and the spiral into civil strife was accelerating.⁴³ Inkatha had been unprepared for the revival of the anti-

⁴⁰Scholars generally agree that Chief Buthelezi resisted the introduction of the Bantustan, see also Buthelezi: A Biography. Mzala, in *Gatsha Buthelezi, Chief with a Double Agenda* (London: Zed Books, 1988), came with a contrary argument, saying that Buthelezi, by virtue of serving under the National Party government, was accepting this Bantustan policy of the then government.

⁴¹R. Racaza, *A Global Perspective on Low Intensity Conflict: Total War at the Grassroots Level*. (Quezon City: Philippine Graphic Arts, Inc 1987), 18.

⁴²John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003).

⁴³Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange 11 August 2005.

apartheid mobilization that occurred in 1983 with the formation of the UDF.⁴⁴ A brutal attack on students by Inkatha at the University of Zululand in October 1983 was an indication of already deteriorating relationships. The 1980s saw a consequential decline in support for Buthelezi at national level.⁴⁵ This exposed what had always been an ambiguity between Buthelezi and his Inkatha Movement, who were in essence Zulu, and the ANC, which was multi-ethnic. Inkatha's emphasis on Zulu ethnic identity showed that the regional stress had become the more powerful force.⁴⁶

The rise of vigilante groups associated with Inkatha, conflict between the UDF and the Black Consciousness Movement, conflict between Inkatha and the trade union movements, and the lack of tolerance of any opposition by the KwaZulu/Inkatha authorities, led to conflict in the region.⁴⁷

Conflicts engendered by these factors led to skirmishes between Inkatha and the UDF-supporting youth. COSATU members took part in rent and bus boycotts, as did members of civic associations. In October 1983, at the opening rally of the UDF in Edendale, a wounded and bandaged student from the Ngoye campus of the University of Zululand told of the attack on hostels by Inkatha supporters in which five people were killed and many assaulted and wounded. Conflict in Natal escalated in the Durban region, where skirmishes, in which Inkatha supporters and UDF and COSATU supporters attacked each other, increased from 1983 to 1985. This was, in part, a result of the attempts to incorporate the townships of Hambanathi, Lamontville, KwaMashu and Umlazi into KwaZulu, as well as resistance to rent and

⁴⁴Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2008.

⁴⁵John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War and KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), see also Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and the Politics of Loyal Resistance* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), Mzala, *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Agenda* (London: Zed Books, 1988).

⁴⁶John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94; Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and the Politics of Loyal Resistance* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987); Mzala, *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Agenda* (London: Zed Books, 1988).

⁴⁷John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94; Interview with Moses Ndlovu and Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange.

transport fare increases and school boycotts.⁴⁸ During the same period, prominent self-appointed squatter settlement leaders in the areas to the north of Durban, particularly in Lindelani and Inanda, became overtly pro-Inkatha and were involved in violent attacks against UDF supporters in both squatter areas and more established townships.⁴⁹

In 1983 and 1984 a number of youth organizations affiliated to the UDF in Pietermaritzburg and Hammarsdale areas were involved in fights between Inkatha and the UDF.⁵⁰ In November 1983 there was a major clash in Imbali involving nearly a thousand people and in Mpumalanga, in which Inkatha Youth Brigade members clashed with UDF supporters and set a bus ablaze.⁵¹ In mid-1985, the pro-UDF civic association in Imbali was intimidated by aggressive threats from Inkatha.⁵² The extent of growing Inkatha antagonism towards the UDF can be seen in Buthelezi's announcement in December 1985 that the UDF was a front for the ANC and that any UDF members in the KwaZulu civil service would be fired. On Christmas Eve 1985, many UDF-aligned township dwellers around Pietermaritzburg turned off their electricity and in rural areas such as KwaShange adults did not go to work and school children did not go to school in protest against the State of Emergency' This was a clear sign that Inkatha did not have unanimous support in the townships and some rural areas.⁵³

⁴⁸Paulus Zulu, "Durban Hostels and Political Violence: Case Studies in KwaMashu and Umlazi", *Transformation* 21 (1993), 1-23.

⁴⁹Douglas Booth and Mlandu Biyela, "Exploring the Spatial Dimension of Black Resistance and Political Violence in South Africa: The Case of Durban", *Urban Geography* 9/6 (1988), 629-53; Doug Hindson, Mark Beverley and Mike Morris, "From Violence to Reconstruction: The Making, Disintegration and Remaking of an Apartheid City", *Antipode* 26/4 (1994), 323-50.

⁵⁰Debby Bonnin, "Claiming Spaces, Changing Places: Political Violence and Women's Protests in KwaZulu-Natal", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26/2 (June 2002), 301-316; "Legacies of Political Violence: An Examination of Political Conflict in Mpumalanga Township", *Transformation* 62 (2006), 59-83.

⁵¹John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94. See also Debby Bonnin, "Claiming Spaces, Changing Places: Political Violence and Women's Protests in KwaZulu-Natal", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26/2 (June 2002), 301-316.

⁵²Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005.

⁵³Interview with Christ Hlengwa, Moses Ndlovu and Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 2005-2008. See also John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94.

The 1980s were characterized by black school-goers identifying themselves as a site of struggle against apartheid and there were many school boycotts. Inkatha moved repressively against such school-based activism in the Pietermaritzburg region in 1980 and this alienated many young pupils from the movement. In 1983 a number of school-based demonstrations and boycotts took place in the Pietermaritzburg and Hammarsdale areas and were met with police repression.⁵⁴

Students were also the victims of Inkatha vigilante groups, set up in the Midlands townships with the blessing of local sympathizing councillors and the police, ostensibly to halt crime and gangsterism. In 1985, student leaders in the Sobantu and Imbali townships of Pietermaritzburg were assaulted and even killed by vigilantes. There were retaliatory youth attacks on vigilantes.⁵⁵

Conflict in itself does not result in fissure, nor does political tension inevitably lead to killing.⁵⁶ What transpired in the court indictment in November 1995 against Magnus Malan and others, and evidence led during the trial in 1996, show that what had long been assumed as a hidden hand behind the Natal conflict was indeed true.⁵⁷

According to the indictment, Buthelezi approached the South African military in 1985 for help with information, protection and military capacity. He needed it because the supporters of the ANC planned to neutralize him (though this threat seems to have been discovered by the security services and may well have been largely disinformation). General Tienie Groenewaldt, chief director

⁵⁴John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94. See also Debby Bonnin, "Claiming Spaces, Changing Places: Political Violence and Women's Protests in KwaZulu-Natal", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26/2 (June 2002), 301-316.

⁵⁵Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 15 March 2008. Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 2005. See also John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94.

⁵⁶John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94. See also Debby Bonnin, "Claiming Spaces, Changing Places: Political Violence and Women's Protests in KwaZulu-Natal", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26/2 (June 2002), 301-316.

⁵⁷John Aitchison, "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 73-94.

of military intelligence, allegedly gave Buthelezi's shopping list at a meeting on 25 November 1985 to General Malan and it was eventually agreed that the SADF would provide him with a contra-mobilisation capability, an offensive capability and an intelligence capability.⁵⁸

Some 200 Inkatha soldiers were secretly trained in the Caprivi Strip. One of their first actions was the murder of four trade unionists in Mpophomeni.⁵⁹ Another, a month later, was the KwaMakutha massacre, when 13 women and children at a prayer meeting in a UDF official's house were murdered by a kombi load of AK47-wielding Caprivi 'graduates' who, allegedly, had demanded a chance to practise their new skills.⁶⁰ Alongside increasing Inkatha's military capacity was the development of an even more secret network of bases, from which the security police would go out to abduct and then torture, cross-examine and put to death or co-opt ANC underground operatives.⁶¹ It was only in March 1997 that TRC investigators, on the basis of evidence from amnesty applicants, began to unearth the bodies of executed victims on farms rented by the police near Pietermaritzburg, Camperdown, Verulam and a number of other sites. The Vlakplaas base of Eugene de Kock in the Transvaal was not unusual, but part of a wider security infrastructure for the elimination of the government's political enemies. The founder of Vlakplaas was Brigadier Jack Buchner, who arrived in Pietermaritzburg to head the security police in 1987. In 1989 he was appointed Commissioner of the KwaZulu Police and moved to Ulundi until his departure in late 1992.⁶²

⁵⁸John Aitchison, "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ren Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 73-94.

⁵⁹Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange. Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange.

⁶⁰John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94; Douglas Booth and Mlandu Biyela, "Exploring the Spatial dimension of Black Resistance and Political Violence in South Africa: The Case of Durban", *Urban Geography* 9/6 (1988), 629-53; Doug Hindson, Mark Beverley and Mike Morris, "From Violence to Reconstruction: The Making, Disintegration and Remaking of an Apartheid City", *Antipode* 26/4 (1994), 323-50.

⁶¹Malan's evidence quoted in John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE 2003), 73-94.

⁶²See John Aitchison's, testimony in the TRC.

The beginning of 1987 saw a hardening of the confrontation between the Inkatha vigilantes and the UDF youth organisations, particularly in the KwaShange area of Vulindlela, Imbali Township in Pietermaritzburg, and in Mpumalanga, an industrial township at Hammarsdale, halfway between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Vigilantes invaded schools and armed groups were often bussed into areas in recruitment drives. From March to August the death toll began to rise in the Pietermaritzburg region.⁶³ On 5 and 6 May 1987 90 per cent of Pietermaritzburg workers responded to the call from COSATU and the UDF for a stay-away, in protest against the whites-only elections. That seemed to be a defeat for Inkatha and Chief Buthelezi, who had urged his supporters to campaign against a stay-away. Inkatha blamed the success of the stay-away on the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), whose striking bus drivers effectively made it impossible for many workers to get to work even if they had wanted to.⁶⁴

Other factors increased the manifestations of this national conflict in KwaShange. In September 1987 there were devastating floods that destroyed hundreds of houses in KwaShange, Vulindlela and greater Edendale. The relationship of these floods to the violence that followed is a matter of considerable conjecture. It was popularly believed that people in the Umsunduzi River Valley were so frustrated by the damage caused by the floods that when Inkatha launched a coercive recruiting drive, it was the last straw and they fought back. Another suggestion is that corruption in the distribution of flood relief aid led to anger directed at Inkatha and KwaZulu structures and, in turn, led to resistance to recruitment.

By the end of October Inkatha had lost control of much of Edendale and the centre of conflict moved to Vulindlela, where UDF comrades were making gains. By the end of December there was heavy fighting in Vulindlela and tribal leadership was in disarray.⁶⁵ There was large-scale detention of UDF youth (nearly 400 in December) and a growing number of reports about Inkatha leaders (dubbed ‘warlords’ by their

⁶³Interviews in KwaShange with unnamed informants.

⁶⁴Interview with Nunu Mchunu and Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange.

⁶⁵John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War” and “KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 73-94.

critics), who were alleged to have engaged in acts of violence with impunity from arrest and prosecution.⁶⁶ The only public attempts to halt their activities were the interdicts brought against them by the legal firm Cheadle, Thompson and Hamson, acting for COSATU. At the end of 1987, many young UDF comrades felt a flush of victory at having beaten Inkatha. The next year was to disappoint them. It was impossible for them to take on both Inkatha and the state, locally personified in the figures of David Ntombela, a KwaZulu Legislative Assembly member from Vulindlela, and Jack Buchner.⁶⁷

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 was seriously affected. Some 79 people were killed in the area in January. The extent of the disruption and fear in the region can be seen in the fact that at one stage there were no children in the pediatric section of Edendale Hospital, as parents were too scared to leave their children there. Large numbers of refugees sought refuge in safer areas or were accommodated in domestic servants' quarters in white Pietermaritzburg.⁶⁸

An Inkatha counter-attack named "Operation Doom", or "Operation Cleanup", had started. The UDF were disabled by the massive detentions and savage police reaction to any gathering. Police provided what in effect was back-up to Inkatha forces, so that they could move and fight with impunity. With this support, Inkatha was able to restore much of its control in the Vulindlela area. There are reports of police handing over captured comrades to Inkatha or tribal authorities, who then killed them (as in the well-documented case of 13-year-old Makithiza Ndlovu, killed on 1 January 1988). Inkatha also seemed to be increasingly well-armed. January ended with an Inkatha invasion of Ashdown, allegedly facilitated by the security forces, who

⁶⁶Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 11 August 2005. See also John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94.

⁶⁷John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94. Interview with Moses Ndlovu and Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange.

⁶⁸John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94.

allowed an enormous meeting of 15 000 Inkatha supporters to take place nearby, at which the crowd was allegedly incited to attack the UDF and COSATU.⁶⁹

The police established bases in the Edendale and Vulindlela areas, complaining about the difficult terrain of the areas, especially at night, but believing they could now contain the unrest.⁷⁰ Heavy police reinforcements, including KwaZulu police, in Vulindlela and 150 ‘kitskonstabels’⁷¹ were deployed to the ‘hot-spots’. Many of them were Inkatha supporters with records of involvement in previous acts of violence.⁷²

As the civil war worsened, the number of refugees moving into towns and other areas increased. As many women, like my mother, were domestic workers in Pietermaritzburg, they moved with their children to stay with their employers. Schooling was disrupted by the resignation of many teachers, Mtholangqondo, for example, the high school of KwaShange, was heavily affected by this, because almost all teachers who taught there were from outside the area of KwaShange and “were not prepared to risk their lives, because the area was boiling.”⁷³ Scholars were refused entry into schools (or were too afraid to attend), after a card system was instituted at some Department of Education and Training Schools. Many KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture schools refused to accept non-Inkatha pupils. There were reports of a large drop in enrolment in schools near Pietermaritzburg and intermittent interruptions of schooling continued in the first half of 1988. In February, the collusion between the police and Inkatha received official blessing, when the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, presenting a trophy to the Pietermaritzburg Town Hill police station, said:

Police will face the future with moderates and fight against radical groups.

Radicals, who are trying to destroy South Africa, will not be tolerated. We will

⁶⁹John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War” and “KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94.

⁷⁰Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange.

⁷¹‘Instant’, i.e. emergency trained, constables armed with-pump action shotguns.

⁷²John Aitchison, “The Origins of the Midlands War” and “KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s”, in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa’s Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94. Also interview with Hlengwa, KwaShange.

⁷³Interview with Sbhongile Madi, teacher at Mtholangqondo High School at the time of the violence, KwaShange, 2008.

fight them. We have put a foothold in that direction, and we will eventually win the Pietermaritzburg area.⁷⁴

By March 1988, Vlok's police had averted the danger of total UDF victory, with the 'kitskonstabels', massive detentions and round-up of youths, which took place, for example in Ashdown, where 259 were detained, and Sobantu with 218 detentions on 21st March.

What all this meant was that Natal in the late 1980s was divided into 'no-go' areas, under control of one or other of the contending parties. Within greater Edendale, Inkatha had lost control of the urban townships around Pietermaritzburg (except for a few small pockets), but with police support had regained control of the abutting tribal area of Vulindlela. Inkatha was also increasingly heavily armed. Although emergency rule was extremely repressive and large numbers of UDF members were detained, in June there were huge COSATU and UDF organized stay-aways in the region. The long, low-level civil wars started to impact on UDF refugee groups, mainly in schools and church halls in Edendale, and this allowed Inkatha 'warlords' a time to rally their forces. The conflict spread to more rural tribal areas, with a politicisation of what may originally have been tribal factionalism. In September 1988 there was an abortive peace mediation attempt made in the establishing of an Inkatha and COSATU Joint Complaints Adjudication Board, its jurisdiction limited to Pietermaritzburg and Vulindlela. The murder of Nicholas Kwilili Duma of Imbali, a witness to the Complaints Adjudication Board, led to COSATU's withdrawal from the Board on 8 May 1989.

This COSATU withdrawal, according to Moses Ndlovu, had negative effects. It was like pouring petrol onto a small flame of fire. It made the Vulindlela political violence worse. The situation was already bad, but after the withdrawal of COSATU, the violence escalated. Hope for peace disappeared and we knew what that meant for areas like KwaShange, Nxamalala and other areas that were UDF aligned.

⁷⁴Adriaan Vlok quoted in John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War" and "KwaZulu-Natal: The Pre-election Wars of the 1990s", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratization* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 47-72; 73-94.

Chapter Seven

DREAMS AND VISIONS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE: SIGNS OF COMING BLOODSHED

7.1 Introduction

Zulu traditions, beliefs and practices form a network of customs that are passed orally from generation to generation and are often accepted without question.¹ It is difficult to trace the origins of these beliefs, as, like many other aspects of Zulu life, they reflect an amalgamation of the belief structures of different groups. For the most part, Zulus have strong religious beliefs, traditions and customs and the area in which they are strongest is that of dreams, prophecies and visions. For instance, many Zulus believe that dreams and visions are an important part of human life and communicate messages to living people from *uNkulunkulu* or *uMvelinqangi* (God)² and the ancestors.³

Belief in dreams and visions, however, is not exclusively Zulu, but is found in all cultures. In 1925, the psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, who had toured north-east Africa, recalled a conversation he had about dreams with an African traditional healer: “I remember a medicine-man in Africa, who said to me almost with tears in his eyes: ‘We have no dreams anymore since the British are in the country.’” When Jung attempted to find out why the British colonial presence had caused Africans to stop

¹ David Chidester, *Dreaming in the Contact Zone: Zulu Dreams, Visions, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008).

²The African concept of God, *uNkulunkulu* or *uMvelinqangi*, was debated by missionaries who arrived in Natal: Anglican Bishop John William Colenso and the Anglican missionary Henry Callaway became embroiled in an argument over whether the Zulu had any indigenous understanding of a supreme being that was similar to the Christian God. Colenso found that they did, identifying two Zulu terms, *uNkulunkulu* (the “Great-Great-One”) and *uMvelinqangi* (the “First Out-Comer”), which he found equivalent to Yahweh and Elohim of the Hebrew Bible. Disagreeing, Callaway found that the Zulu had no indigenous understanding of God, arguing that *uNkulunkulu* was actually understood as the original ancestor of the Zulu people. In accounts of the Zulu religious system, this controversy persisted, with some commentators arguing for an indigenous Zulu concept of God and others arguing that a Zulu ancestral religion adopted such a concept from the Christian missions. By situating this question in the colonial context, however, we discover a range of Zulu interpretive strategies being deployed along a contested, but expanding, frontier of British influence and control. Under these conditions, people least affected by these changes tended to regard *uNkulunkulu* as the original ancestor of their political grouping, while people whose political autonomy had been destroyed interpreted *uNkulunkulu* as either the original ancestor of all humanity or the supreme being of the world. See Jennifer Weir, “Whose *uNkulunkulu*?”, *Africa: Journal of International African Institute* 75:2 (2005).

³ David Chidester, *Dreaming in the Contact Zone: Zulu Dreams, Visions, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008).

dreaming, the traditional healer replied, “The District Commissioner knows everything [...] God now speaks in dreams to the British and not to the medicine-man [...] because it is the British who have the power.” From this conversation, Jung deduced that, for Africans, “Dream activity has emigrated.”⁴ According to Jung’s biographer, Frank McLynn, the diviner’s point was that Africans were unable to dream under colonial conditions because the European colonial administrator did all the dreaming for them, since “power speaks to power.”⁵ Certainly, this inability to dream, this dream-loss, represented ‘a spiritual crisis within the most intimate interiority and personal subjectivity of people living under oppressive colonial conditions.’⁶ This dream-loss was reflected in broader social, economic and political realities within which indigenous people lived during the colonial period.

Dreams and visions are part of the common religious heritage of Christianity, Islam, Judaism and other religions.⁷ Throughout the Old Testament dreams and visions seem to possess equal spiritual authority: “If anyone among you is a prophet, I will make myself known to him in a vision, I will speak to him in a dream.”⁸ For the indigenous peoples of Africa, according to Mbiti, it was not so much a case of converting to Christianity, as of adapting the Christian message to their traditional values and religious beliefs.⁹

Dreams and visions are sometimes retold and even recorded: they are interpreted intratextually, intertextually or contextually.¹⁰ Hence, I shall argue in this chapter that researchers, through studying dreams and visions of their research subjects, gain another ‘window’ into their period of study, since dreams and visions are indicators of what the dreamer – and probably his society – had reason to fear. For instance, during

⁴Carl Jung quoted in David Chidester, *Dreaming in the Contact Zone: Zulu Dreams, Visions, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9.

⁵Frank McLynn, *Carl Gustav Jung: A Biography* (New York: St. Martin’s Press: 1997), 282. See also Burleson Blake, *Jung in Africa* (New York: Continuum, 2005), David Chidester, *Dreaming in the Contact Zone: Zulu Dreams, Visions, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008), 2.

⁶David Chidester, *Dreaming in the Contact Zone: Zulu Dreams, Visions, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9.

⁷Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in late antiquity: Studies in the imagination of a culture* (Princeton: University Press, 1994), 37.

⁸New International Version (NIV), Numbers 12:6).

⁹John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heineman, 1969), 2–3, quoted from David Chidester, *Dreaming in the Contact Zone: Zulu Dreams, Visions, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹⁰David Chidester, *Dreaming in the Contact Zone: Zulu Dreams, Visions, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008), 17.

the colonial period, dreams revealed a changing world in which indigenous people would undergo dispossession and displacement, as well as a disruption of their traditional lifestyle.¹¹

7.2 Examples of prophecies during the colonial and apartheid periods

In other communities – nineteenth century Xhosa life is an example – dreams have been powerful historical forces. Nongqawuse’s vision, which inspired and preceded the disastrous cattle killing, almost spelt disaster for the Xhosa people in the 1800s. As a young girl she claimed to have received a message from the ancestors that almost led the Xhosa people to commit suicide. She saw the faces of her ancestors appearing in a pool. They told her that they would drive all the white settlers out of the country. A huge wind would come up and blow all the settlers into the sea. But first, as an act of faith to prove their belief in the world of the spirits, the Xhosa would have to kill all their cattle and destroy all their crops. Xhosa religion taught that the ancestors appreciated a sacrifice of cattle because that was a man’s most valued possession. Those who refused would be turned into frogs, mice and ants and would be blown into the sea by a mighty whirlwind.¹²

Close to our own times, prophecies, dreams and visions have continued to provoke debates. Credo Mutwa (renowned Zulu diviner and prophet), in an exclusive interview in *Drum* magazine stated:

Nontetho, a 1930s prophetess, [...] was locked up in a Pretoria mental hospital where she eventually died, a sad, lonely old woman. She was not mad. This is the same woman who foresaw a great black leader who would rule over us a short period. She called the leader Mandla. Could she have referred to Mandela who, after 27 years in prison, led the nation for only five?¹³

¹¹David Chidester, *Dreaming in the Contact Zone: Zulu Dreams, Visions, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9.

¹²Jeff Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-57*, (Johannesburg, 1987), 31-2. See also Tlou Makhura, “Missionary and African Perspectives on the Politics of Witchcraft among the Xhosa and Zulu Communities in 19th Century Cape and Natal/Zululand”, unpublished article (WISER), 1.

¹³Exclusive Interview with Credo Mutwa, *Drum* magazine, 1 July 1999. Archived at *Drum* magazine where Mutwa made his predictions. The full story appeared in the magazine's July 1, 1999, issue.

Then there was Thokozile Magwaza, who predicted violence in Richmond, Shobashobane and many other KwaZulu-Natal trouble spots, long before it became front page news. *Drum* magazine recorded that Magwaza had warned King Cyprian, the then Zulu monarch, Zwelithini's father and predecessor, about looming violence among his subjects. "But she was ridiculed from one side of Zululand to the other."¹⁴

Mutwa says, "[...] When the sun marries the moon [an eclipse], it usually precedes some disaster or other." During one such period, he warned the apartheid architect, H. F. Verwoerd, that he saw a bayonet hanging over his head. Verwoerd dismissed the vision as nonsense, saying only blacks died by knives. Shortly afterwards he was fatally stabbed in parliament.¹⁵

In 1999, Thabo Mbeki was assuming the reins of power, but Mutwa predicted he would not see out his term in office. His prophecy was fulfilled in June 2008, when Mbeki was asked to step down by the ruling ANC. Mutwa also predicted the energy crisis and power cuts that swept through southern Africa.¹⁶

Dreams and visions have often served as warnings, guides and sometimes indications of a condition or state of anxiety of the mind. They have been great mysteries to interpret, but are also regarded as treasures, especially when taken up into religious texts such as the Bible.¹⁷ Pharaoh's prophetic dream of the seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine,¹⁸ is an excellent example of a dream that is both prophetic and reflects the anxieties of a ruler. In Zulu culture,¹⁹ dreams and visions

¹⁴Exclusive Interview with Credo Mutwa, *Drum* magazine, 1 July 1999. Archived at *Drum* magazine, where Mutwa made his predictions. The full story appeared in the magazine's July 1, 1999, issue.

¹⁵ Exclusive Interview with Credo Mutwa, *Drum* magazine, 1 July 1999. Archived at *Drum* magazine where Mutwa made his predictions. The full story appeared in the magazine's July 1, 1999, issue.

¹⁶New Zimbabwe.com has exclusive access to the archived *Drum* magazine, where Mutwa made his predictions. Here is the full story as it appeared in the magazine's July 1, 1999, issue.

¹⁷Interview with MaNgubane Ndlela, KwaShange, 14 March 2009.

¹⁸See Genesis 41, Old Testament, King James Version.

¹⁹Many authors have dealt with the subject of Zulu culture and religion: Axel-Ivan Berglund, *Zulu Thought-Patterns and Symbolism* (London, C Hurst, 1976), see also Eileen Jensen Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus* (London: Longmans Green, 1936); Preston-Whyte 1987; David Chidester, *Word and Light: Seeing, Hearing, and Religious Discourse* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 212–275); David Chidester, *Savage Systems: Colonialism and Comparative Religion in Southern Africa* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996), 116–172. Irving Hexham, *Texts on Zulu Religion: Traditional Zulu Ideas about God* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987); De Heusch, *Sacrifice in Africa: A Structuralist Approach*. O'Brien Linda, Morton Alice, (eds) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 38–64. Michael Lambert, *Ancient Greek and Zulu Sacrificial Ritual: A Comparative Analysis* (Numen, 1993), 293–318. John Lambert, *Betrayed Trust: Africans and the State in Colonial Natal* (Scottsville: University of Natal Press, 1995). Brian Du Toit, *The Isangoma: An*

have often served another purpose: they have been seen as a link to the mysterious space that separates man from *uNkulunkulu*.²⁰

Dreams and visions make up a culturally defined means of communication, between the living and the ancestors or God, and have a strong impact on their community's conceptions of reality. Even rationalists, with little or no religious belief, do not deny that anxiety dreams, for example, are part of the common experience of many people. I shall reason that dreams and visions are influenced by socio-economic and political factors in a particular society. Through dreams and visions, one can gain an additional and unique access to the period studied: dreams and visions in KwaShange affected and influenced the political history of the area. They reflect the deeper fears and hopes of the times in which the people of Vulindlela lived, before and during dispossession, displacement and trauma. The dreams which I shall discuss are those of women, relatively powerless, but aware of the signs of coming conflict and seeking influence in their group. I shall claim that these dreams were a clear reflection of the extent of the psychological *affects* this violence had on the KwaShange populace. The dreams were not symptoms of any primitive mentality. They were situated within the violent disruptions of an apartheid zone and during the time of an armed struggle.

In the case of KwaShange, individuals had dreams that affected the history of violence in the area. I shall suggest in this chapter that historians, especially those that conduct research into the lives of people who have faith in the prophetic powers of dreams, should cite dreams and visions because they are part of, and influential over, most Zulus' lives and religions. They have historically been instrumental in, for example, the naming of a child and have given direction to communities as to who should be a chief or headman. The latter are of particular note among members of the Shembe church, where there is a direct link between dreams and the elders of the

Adaptive Agent Among Urban Zulu. (*Anthropological Quarterly* 1971) 44/2, 51-65. Harriet Ngubane, *Body and Mind in Zulu Medicine: An Ethnography of Health and Diseases in Nyuswa-Zulu Thought and Practice* (London: Academic Press, 1977); Jeff Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law, and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005); Caroline Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1998); Norman Etherington, "Missionary Doctors and African Healers in Mid-Victorian South Africa", *South African Historical Journal*, 19 (1987), 77-91. Thomas McClendon, "The Man Who Would Be Inkosi: Civilising Missions in Shepstone's Early Career", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30:2 (2004), 339-358.

²⁰Interview with MaNgubane Ndlela, KwaShange, 14 March 2009.

church considering the next leader, as in the case of the appointment of Vela Shembe to the leadership.

7.3 Dreams and visions: examples from the interviewees

Memories of political violence in KwaShange abound in stories about prophetic dreams and visions that people, mainly women, experienced during the period of violence, particularly in the early period. For the period of the violence under study, there is a plethora of information shared with me by my informants in KwaShange on dreams and visions, which largely emanate from ordinary members of communities whose lives were affected by the unrest. Dreams were *influential* in the Vulindlela communities – and for that reason alone deserve attention.

I shall use the oral history contained in my interviews with residents to gain access to the period of the violence in KwaZulu-Natal of the 1980s-1990s, as it is crucial for understanding what was happening in the minds of community members during this period. The sharing and telling of these dreams and visions lead one to appreciate the reaction of community members, since such accounts contributed to the atmosphere of fear and dread, confirming that the residents were indeed living in abnormal times.

I shall discuss five dreams experienced by women in the period 1985-1990 and recorded by me in 2008-2010. The dreamers and narrators of these dreams were women in KwaShange, who claim that they had these dreams and visions before the violence started and during the violence. Only those dreams or visions for which the dreamer herself gave a meaningful interpretation, and which had previously been communicated to others, were recorded.²¹ The aim of this chapter is to analyse the content of the dreams and visions. Content analysis²² and sociological

²¹The research was conducted within a participatory paradigm. The data presented are qualitative in nature and were mainly collected in Vulindlela by means of interviews and oral histories carried out since 2009. As an insider, I have an advantage of understanding where my interviewees come from with these dreams and visions, but I am also aware of the fact that I am faced with a great disadvantage in respect of my attempts to obtain some degree of understanding of individuals' dreams and visions (they are highly sacred and personal) – especially in a world where science and technology have become the central focus of modern thinking and where traditional imaginative experiences as a source of guidance in life are greatly undervalued – and, moreover, are greatly at risk of disappearing. I used the work of David Chidester, *Dreaming in the Contact Zone: Zulu Dreams, Visions, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008) as a model.

²²Benjamin Kilborne, *On Classifying Dreams* in Barbara Tedlock (ed.), *Dreaming: Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 171-193.

approaches²³ have long been major methodological approaches to the study of dreams and visions.

These dreams were told long after the events of violence in KwaShange. As Portelli speculates, the possibility of a reconstruction of memories is real. After an event it is easy for some people to say that they dreamed about it before. Part of Chapter Ten will deal with the reconstruction of memories and focuses on relevant discourse frames and acts of recounting dreams, in other words the need to recognise ways of sharing dreams and visions. In this chapter, dreams are described without much critical analysis from the author, so as to place before the reader some of the most salient signs of anxiety and psychological *effects* this violence had on ordinary people.

I have described in earlier chapters the nature of the Vulindlela community and the fact that differences – even antagonisms – existed before open conflict broke out in 1987. It is likely that a half-conscious awareness of these produced some of the dreams which I record below. MaDlomo's dream:

I saw [in a vision] Vulindlela covered in flames of fire. A number of young and old men lying on the streets, some bodies were eaten by dogs. There were white men accompanied by multitudes of black men in traditional attire carrying shot guns and petrol bombs who were killing men and burning houses. Women and children were all pushed to the Msunduzi River; they were drowning and I heard them screaming very loudly, asking for help, but there was no one to help them.²⁴

This is a summary of a dream told by MaDlomo, a KwaShange survivor of political violence of the 1980s – 1990s. It is typical of many dreams that were narrated by women interviewees especially, who spoke about their memories of the times. MaDlomo had this dream in 1985. She believes that this was a revelation of what was about to happen in the area of Vulindlela.

²³James Kiernan, "The Social Stuff of Revelation: Pattern and Purpose in Zionist Dreams and Visions", *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 55 (3): 304-318.

²⁴Interview with MaDlomo, KwaShange, 17 April 2009.

MaDlomo describes herself as a devout Christian and her revelations, in fact, display remarkable similarities to those related in the Old Testament, e.g. in the narrative which describes how Moses received the Ten Commandments from God on Mount Sinai. Although MaDlomo strongly supported all attempts at KwaShange youth mobilization, she was not directly or actively involved in any political activities. She had, in fact, political *influence*, in the sense that leaders, including Moses Ndlovu and Nunu Mchunu, consulted her on a regular basis.²⁵ In particular, she was consulted in connection with the interpretation of dreams and her prayers were often requested for important decisions and meetings.

MaZuma Khanyile was 68 years old when I interviewed her in 2009. She was born in Vryheid. She was the second wife of the late Khanyile, who was killed in 1987 in Pietermaritzburg downtown, when KwaShange Inkatha and UDF fought each other. She recalled:

In March 1985 I heard a voice talking to me, saying I must wake up, go outside and pray. I was not dreaming but I was awake. It was a voice that came from nowhere. I did so, I went outside and prayed [...] after about 30 minutes, I opened my eyes and I looked up in the sky. The moon was red. It was strange. I was terrified. I did not go back to sleep but I went to an old lady [MaKhumalo], my neighbour; I knocked and requested her to wake up and see the moon that looked strange. MaKhumalo was a member of the Apostolic Faith Mission. She was a well-respected old lady in the community. She looked at the moon and she began to prophesy, saying that what she saw in the moon meant that there was going to be a spilling of blood. There was going to be a war but she was not able to tell where and who would be fighting. From then we began to have women's prayer meetings in the area, every Thursdays. After uManyano gatherings from our respective denominations, we would meet and pray against the evil we saw in a form of a vision.²⁶

In February 1991, MaZuma Khanyile saw a vision:

²⁵ Interview with MaDlomo, KwaShange, 17 April 2009.

²⁶ Interview with MaZuma Khanyile, KwaShange, 17 April 2009.

It was on a Sunday morning, I was feeding my two-year-old baby; I was feeding him soft porridge. Before I finished feeding my baby, in the very bowl I saw blood. The bowl was full of blood. I became so scared and I left it there ... I stood up and went to call my other two kids who were outside playing children's games. I told them to come back home and I went out to tell one community leader that I suspected that we were going to be attacked that day. I do not know where that came from, but I had a strong feeling that what I saw in the bowl was meant to warn us that there was going to be an attack. I took my children and we went into hiding. The same day, in the afternoon, indeed there was an attack in the area. Luckily, some people took my call seriously and prepared themselves for the attack I had seen in a vision. On that day about 17 of the attackers were killed in KwaShange.²⁷

Another woman, MaNdlovu Zondi, was 65 years old in 2009. She was born in Nkandla. Her eldest son was killed in 1988 by the police, as he was one of the UDF leaders in the area. Her daughter died in the same year, in a bus that was stoned in Mvundlweni, an Inkatha area opposite KwaShange (see Chapter Two). She told me:

In June 1985, I had a strange dream. I saw the whole area of KwaShange covered with water. All houses were covered with water and people were drowning. I was outside this huge dam [...] as I was standing watching people drowning. Suddenly a voice that came from nowhere said to me, why are you standing? Run [...] I ran to the bank of this huge dam full of dirty water [...] I was running very fast [...]. When I reached Zwartkop Mountain, I saw that the whole area of Inadi was full of water. It was on a Sunday night when I had this dream. The following Sunday I went to church and just before the service started, I spoke to one elderly woman. I told her about this terrible dream I had had. She advised me to share the dream with church members [...] the same old lady had a gift of prophecy; she began to interpret the dream. She said the pool of water I saw was tears – she said something horrifying was going to

²⁷Interview with MaZuma Khanyile, KwaShange, 17 March 2009. See also Chapter Six, February 1990 incident, where 17 Inkatha supporters were killed in KwaShange.

happen in the area – women and children were going to be in such a pain. There was going to be a lot of deaths.²⁸

In 1985, a 54 year old woman, MaNdlela Ngubane, lost her son, Zenzele, who was 18 years old. He was killed in KwaShange at night, but up to the present day nobody knows who killed him.

It was in 1986; I cannot remember the day this thing started, but it was just after nine at night when my husband and I went to sleep. When I entered into my bedroom, I saw bioscope playing on the wall in my bedroom. It was a big screen; I saw violence that I had never seen in my life. The bioscope showed me the area of KwaShange. I saw people that I know fighting against each other. I saw big weapons I had never seen before. I saw houses burning ... this bioscope continued for about 10 minutes – after that I fainted, I became unconscious, I was told. When I woke up ... it was almost midnight and some neighbours were in my bedroom, praying. Nobody else saw what I saw ... my husband did not see the bioscope. The same night, I saw writing on the wall. Words were written in a language that I did not understand.

This thing continued for about a month. I remember one day I was out of my house, doing some washing for my children. I heard a voice that said to me I must go my bedroom. I was terrified, but I went. When I entered, the bioscope was playing again - the same thing that I had seen was playing again. Again this played for about 10-15 minutes and it was followed by some words written on the wall. Words were written in a very strange language.

It happened for the third time: this time I had gone to town. Before I finished what I was doing in town, the voice came to me: it said I must go to my bedroom. I was terrified; instead of going home, I looked for a public phone and I phoned my aunt in Mpophomeni. When I told her about this, she told me that I am mad. I must go to a diviner.²⁹

²⁸ Interview with MaNdlovu Zondi, KwaShange, 15 March 2009.

²⁹ Interview with MaNdlela Ngubane, KwaShange, 15 March 2009.

One day, MaNdlela went to fetch some firewood from a forest not far from her house. It was during this day that she received her first revelation, on 9 August 1985, on the Ntabaskopho Mountain. She had already collected enough firewood and was ready to tie it together and depart for her home when she suddenly heard a voice calling her name. Her name was called three times; and then the voice told her that she should leave the firewood and rush home. The voice never identified itself but she recognised it as her late son's voice. MaNdlela doubted the voice, as she herself was well aware that her son was dead, but once again, it instructed her to go quickly. In addition to this instruction, the voice also told her that when she arrived home she must go straight to her bedroom. When she arrived at home, MaNdlela told her husband (who was outside the house tightening the fence) what had happened. The husband, who obviously thought that she was talking nonsense, ignored her. She decided to proceed to her bedroom as per instruction. On their arrival there, on the wall there was a 'big screen' playing a sort of 'action movie'. She saw violence she "had never seen before." This was taking place in Vulindlela and she saw some KwaShange people. Woman and children were crying, trying to escape. She told her husband at night of what she had seen but was ridiculed. The following day she went to do some washing in a nearby river called Inembe. The same voice came to her and instructed her to go to her bedroom. She did so and the same thing happened. Almost a month later, she was in Pietermaritzburg at about 10 am, when the same voice came to her and told her to go back home and go straight to her bedroom. She saw a hand, writing on a wall in a language foreign to her, not English or Afrikaans, because she could recognise those two. The movie started again, showing a house in flames of fire. It dawned on her that this was a prophetic vision. She thought that the world was coming to an end. She began to take membership of the church but was still hesitant to discuss it with church leaders because her children and husband ridiculed her and thought that she was going crazy.³⁰

These are just a few of many dreams and vision my interviewees mentioned when I asked them what they remember about this violence.

7.4 Contextualisation of empirical data and Conclusion

These accounts reveal the gender divisions in KwaShange during the times of violence. The testimonies of these women – and the absence of men's accounts of

³⁰Interview with MaNdlela Ngubane, KwaShange, 15 March 2009.

dreams – seem to imply that dreams and visions were experienced only by women, not men. One man claimed:

It is only women who had dreams and had time to see visions because they slept and they had time to relax ... we men were always alert, on guard...there was no time to relax for us to see visions, let alone sleeping for us to dream. But these miracles [dreams and visions] helped us, to know what Inkatha was planning. Our ancestors and *uNkulunkulu* were on our side, they kept us updated about what was about to happen.³¹

This speaks to issues of gender divisions: women, in this society, saw visions and had dreams, whereas men practiced rituals and these rituals and *muthi* were for males only (see Chapter Eight). In this chapter, I have dealt with phenomena outside of the violence and experienced by women, who played no direct part in the conflict in KwaShange. These dreams and visions should not be interpreted in terms of uniform criteria – different, and often subtle, forms of action and criteria come into play. Dreams and visions in KwaShange may have mobilized, alerted and revived people. The ethnographic material that has been presented in respect of the political violence in KwaShange indicates the unique role played by dreams and visions in the discourse of political violence.

These dreams and visions also reveal the abnormality of the time: times were ‘muddled’. The Zulu term for ‘muddled’—*dungeka*, *ukudunga*—is a metaphor derived from stirring up mud in water. Although it could be applied to a state of mind, signifying confusion, it could also be applied to the disturbance of a household by an *idungandhlu* [literally a house-muddler], or the disturbance of a village by an *idungamuzi* (village-muddler).³² All of these meanings, certainly, were at play in the dreams of KwaShange women, who experienced their bodies, their homes, their families and their sense of community as ‘stirred up’ and under attack by forces threatening to kill them.

In Chapter Four I have discussed the historical divisions in the community of Vulindlela between neighbours. Although it has been claimed that violence broke out

³¹Interview with Meleko Shelembe, KwaShange, 14 September 2008.

³²Absalom Vilakazi and Doke, *Zulu-English Dictionary* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1958), 175.

in this area only in 1987, there were undoubtedly symptoms that it was imminent in the years before 1987, and the three dreams that I have presented here are evidence of this. When the ANC decided to resort to an ‘armed struggle’ against the apartheid regime in the 1960, they began to plant bombs throughout the country.³³ In 1987 there were floods that destroyed communities in the Midlands that exacerbated the political violence between the UDF and Inkatha in the area. This political strife and catastrophic weather had psychological effects on Natal and Zululand residents. It was a period of great uncertainty about the future and to add to this, when violence had already erupted, families turned against each other. This conflict was unprecedented in rural areas like KwaShange.

The dreams I have reported bear traces of a changing society, in which people were undergoing attacks, dispossession, displacement and despair.³⁴ These were realities of the political violence and the effects of violence revealed through dreams. In these 1980-1990s phenomena we catch a glimpse of new subjectivities being negotiated through the medium of dreams and visions.

These dreams and visions provide evidence of the way in which non-combatants felt the violence—appropriation of cattle, control of territory, and the practice of torture—that defined the context in which they were experienced. The recounting of dreams and visions allows people their own understanding of experiences, to extract meaning from them, and to relate this meaning to their everyday lives. Two ‘dreamers’ envisage television screens on which violence is played out – evidence that their visions relate closely to the conditions of the modern world as they know them. In this way, dreams and visions provide a framework for understanding themselves and the world, offering a means for finding solutions, from thwarted desires to the highest spiritual aspirations, as well as encompassing practical problems and the inconsistencies of daily life. Thirdly, the utilisation of dreams and visions as instruments to mobilise political support was not merely a phenomenon of the period of political violence. During subjection to colonial and apartheid situations, dreams and visions played a role in the struggle against oppression and in ethnic revival

³³Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, August 2005.

³⁴David Chidester, *Dreaming in the Contact Zone: Zulu Dreams, Visions, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008).

attempts. The same can be said in respect of recent dreams connected with political violence.

In summary, it could be reasoned that these dreams and precognitive visions of the violence not only indicate the evidence of violence (i.e. trauma) and memory among survivors but indicate, firstly, the fact of a cultural continuity, in that the historical evidence shows these very responses to be native to peoples of Nguni origin—their modes of war, preparations for war and perception of war. Secondly, psycho-social reactions (both precognitively and in memory) toward such abnormal or ‘muddled’ times lead to the question if such dreams and precognitive visions can be described as either a method adopted by memories of survivors in attempts to explain such anomalies and traumatic incidents or, alternatively, if indeed there is certain ‘future knowing’ or foretelling involved. As there is no scientific empirical evidence offered the historian, as yet, to categorically claim the last, one must let it be, but nevertheless recognise that what is perhaps of more importance is that the culture allows for such in its belief system.

In terms of the dreams and visions of KwaShange’s violence, the two views hold equal weight in terms of this thesis. While Meleko Shelembe’s quote above gives insight into the function of precognitive visions, dreams and visions, particularly of women, in giving warning with an explanation of it being an act of God and ancestors on the side of who-so-ever’s community being thus warned, it is also true that the argument for such ‘ominous signs’ are the construct of memory to explain what the survivors have experienced. This lends further credence to its having at least some role to play in healing, handling and dealing with trauma. If one were to accept that any survivor needs to continue with ‘ordinary daily life’ and continue to cope, then it must also be accepted they would need a satisfactory explanation for such a horrendous disruption of the course of that normal life, that of a sign as to how out of the ordinary the experiences of war indeed was, that the normal social order does not proceed as such and, in this, one can see the need for healing (as outlined in Chapter Nine) to enable the return to normal ‘ordinary daily life’ for survivors. One also needs to realise how the onus of such re-establishment of daily life would fall on women, mothers, grandmothers, sisters and daughters, who, in bearing the children’s needs,

have a particular urgency for such explanations. Of course it is also true that precognitive visions can be as easily explained as female (if you will) intuitive awareness of the indication of bad things about to erupt, this being intuited by any of the political hegemonies and secret war preparations of men of rival groups. As regards these signs, one must not forget the fact of the 1987 floods, which were truly horrific. It has already been noted that the IFP favoured of their card-holding members in reconstruction.

Chapter Eight

LEGACIES OF THE PAST: RITUAL MURDER AND *MUTHI*¹ IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MIDLANDS VIOLENCE OF THE 1980s AND 1990s

8.1 Background

The practice of ritual killing that was widespread during the conflicts of the 1980s and 1990s still prevails in Vulindlela. Even today the communities are heavily affected by this ‘problem’.² I quote from the *Daily Sun* a recent story which is still on many people’s lips: ‘Horror find at *Sangoma*’s (witch-doctor’s) House.’³

This story was reported on the news on 31 January 2011. On this day, several newspapers in South Africa reported a gruesome discovery in Pietermaritzburg. A youngster by the name of Loyiso Jokweni (18) disappeared on Christmas day from his sister’s house. He had visited his sister and was originally from the village of Inanda,⁴ a semi-urban area outside Durban.



Image Loyiso Jokweni from *Daily Sun* 21 January 2011

¹*Muthi* refers to medicine that not only heals or destroys the physical body but helps people and leaders to usurp (political) power from rivals and kin. In the context of war, *muthi* helps to fight and defeat rivals or enemies. My interviewees generally cited any success by a rival group during attacks as evidence of the use of *muthi*. Acquisition of proper *muthi*, and the powerful doctors (*izinyanga*) who administered it, were considered essential to Vulindlela during the violence.

²Term used by informants in KwaShange to describe the *muthi* killings.

³*The Sowetan*, 01 February 2011; see also *Daily Sun*, 31 January 2011, *The Witness*, 31 January 2011, *Isolezwe* January 2011, *Ilanga*, January 2011.

⁴*The Witness*, 31 January 2011; see also *Daily Sun*, 31 January 2011.

Jokweni was allegedly killed for *muthi*. His headless body was discovered on 17 January 2011. The head of the unfortunate boy was found two weeks later, in the freezer of a witch-doctor. The South African Police Services (SAPS) have since arrested a *sangoma* and the man he had instructed to murder the boy. The intentions of the *sangoma* were to use the head, or parts of it, for *muthi*.⁵

On 29 January 2011, a local policeman from KwaShange who knew about my research on *muthi* and *muthi*-related deaths asked me to accompany him and other police officers to Mafakatini. This is the area of the homestead of the *sangoma* who is alleged to have murdered Jokweni and mutilated his body. He wanted to show me the house, inside which a grave was discovered. In neighbouring areas people were anxious to know if their dead relatives' missing body parts would also be found in this house. This included those whose relatives disappeared during the violence and who are ignorant of what happened to them. These people were hoping to reclaim the bodies for a respectful burial and to obtain closure. Some young people whose fathers had been buried with missing body parts were hoping to find some of these parts and get closure on the killings. Thulani Zulu explained, "Today I have bad luck because my father was buried without his 'manhood' (i.e. genitals)".⁶ "I am hoping that they will find my son's skull, left hand and arm, his children are troublesome in the community, and they use drugs. The youngest daughter has HIV; I think it is because of this problem."⁷ Newspapers indicated that almost a thousand people marched to the house of this traditional healer.⁸ They proceeded to burn down the structure that had housed the grisly discovery. They were disappointed that they did not find any of the relatives' body parts. The community believes that the *sangoma* sold the body parts or that they were taken away, either by the late Chief Shayabantu Zondi, or David Ntombela, who were believed to be using strong *muthi*.

⁵*Daily Sun*, 31 January 2011.

⁶Interview with Thulani Zulu, KwaShange, 29 January 2011.

⁷Interview with MaNzimande Ngubeni, KwaShange, 29 January 2011.

⁸*Daily Sun*, *The Witness* and *Echo* 31 January 2011.

The *Daily Sun* newspaper reported that the community threatened to kill the *sangoma* as soon as he is released. Police spokesperson Colonel Jay Naicker appealed to the local community to stay calm.⁹

Traditional healers use various items that have symbolic meanings for obtaining power: for example nail clippings, hair cuttings¹⁰ and faeces found in and around their environment, to make powerful *muthi*.¹¹ This *muthi* is then ritualised to enhance its efficacy by invoking the blessing of the ancestors; it is then considered ready for consumption, or to be smoked, or scattered in or around the desired location, or burnt to release the healing properties. Some kinds of *muthi* are not only used to cure disease, but can be applied to ward off evil spirits and bring good luck, mainly in business.

Many Zulu people believe that to manufacture strong medicine, body parts obtained from animals (including human beings) must be harvested when the subjects are still alive.¹² The part used for the *muthi* will retain the spirit of the animal or human, which will enhance its potency. The more difficult the problem, the more extreme the intervention and the higher up the ‘food chain’ the *sangoma* will go to obtain the part that will help to get the desired result.



A snake which was used for *muthi* in Vulindlela.¹³

⁹*Daily Sun*, 31 January 2011.

¹⁰Louise Vincent, “New Magic for New Times: Muthi Murder in Democratic South Africa”, *Tribes and Tribals, Special Volume 2* (Kamla-Rag Enterprises, 2008), 44.

¹¹Interview with Senzosenkosi Mkhize, an *Inyanganga*, Richmond, 13 June 2010.

¹²Interview with Senzosenkosi Mkhize, an *Inyanganga*, Richmond, 13 June 2010.

¹³ Image from *Daily Sun* 31 January 2011.

Sometimes *izangoma* use animals for *muthi*. By moving from the use of animals to human beings, the traditional healer has not only crossed the line between legal and illegal, but he feels strongly that nothing else will solve the patient's problem.

I include this general discussion of *muthi*, belief in witchcraft and ritual murder because these beliefs and practices were prevalent during the political violence of the 1980s in the Midlands. The accused in the story referred to above was also implicated in ritual killings of UDF supporters during the period of my study. Many of the survivors whom I interviewed claimed that this recent act is similar to those that happened in the 1980s and 1990s.

8.2 Introduction

Human body mutilation and 'necklacing'¹⁴ were practised by communities affected by the violence of the 1980s-1990s. Franklin attempted to draw a link between these rituals:

[...] the neck and the stomach area are seen as links between the three main contrasting divisions of the body. This horror of the separation of the head from the body is perhaps fairly universal, and the burning necklace could be seen as a decapitator in a sense. It is perhaps of some relevance that the 'guillotine' (another term for the necklace) portrays this same idea. The term necklace could also have an ironic association. It usually carries positive emotional associations. Necklaces are given as gifts, they are decorative and are normally seen to enhance one's appearance. Also protective medicine is sometimes worn around the neck.¹⁵

The existing literature on political violence in Natal and Zululand tends to emphasise 'necklacing', but to play down the human body mutilation and the role played by

¹⁴Necklacing was a common practice in townships in the 1980s and 1990s. UDF supporters placed a car tyre, sprinkled with petrol, around the neck of the enemy and set it alight in order to burn the person. It is not my intention in this chapter to discuss necklacing in detail. For details on the necklacing ritual, see Joanna Ball, *"The Ritual of Necklace"* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994), 1-23.

¹⁵Karl Franklin, "Kewa Ethnolinguistic Concepts of Body Parts", *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 19: 1(1963), 54-63; see also Joanna Ball, *The Ritual of Necklace* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994), 6.

izinyanga zempi (war-doctors)¹⁶ and rituals associated with war and the use of *muthi* in exacerbating the violent attacks. It is generally known in the communities of Vulindlela that Inkatha and UDF relied heavily on war-doctors to overcome their rivals. This chapter attempts to describe and analyse the centrality of the use of *muthi* in KwaShange during the period under study. I argue that war-doctors were at the core of the violence and that *muthi* played a crucial role in the rise of communities to power and the rise of individuals in Vulindlela in the late 1980s to early 1990s.¹⁷ In places where *muthi* rituals were carried out, important decisions were taken whether or not to attack rival groups.¹⁸

This chapter aims to fill in gaps left by scholars who documented incidents of political violence in the Midlands, and Natal and Zululand in general. Some downplayed African rituals and beliefs in *muthi* and labelled it as ‘false consciousnesses.’¹⁹ I believe such arguments to be irrelevant: the rival factions believed strongly in the efficacy of the *muthi* which they used, as did most of their victims.

This chapter will demonstrate the tension between Zulu people, the missionaries and the civil authorities caused, by Zulu beliefs in rituals and the use of *muthi*. This does reflect earlier history, but is also pertinent to the cultural continuity of the practice, as well as to the mainline Western historians’ reluctance to broach the issue. It is true that the use of *muthi* and the lack of traditional cleansing (handled in a subsequent chapter) prove to be the source of stress to the men who participated in these early Zulu practices. The chapter will demonstrate the extent to which Christian and indigenous approaches to the concept of *ukuthakatha* (witchcraft) opposed or concurred with one another in the mid-to-late

¹⁶Translation borrowed from Jeff Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law, and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005), 219-251.

¹⁷Moses Ndlovu, Chris Hlengwa, Nunu Mchunu, Sakha Ndaba mentioned in their respective interviews that they depended heavily on *muthi* for protection. People in KwaShange alleged that Makhekhe Thabethe and Dlamini ‘iBhlamani’ had strong *muthi*.

¹⁸*Muthi* ritual was done in different places, sometimes in a homestead of *inyanga*. Sometimes warriors had to be in a forest, bank of a river, on top of the mountain or in a ruined house. *Inyanga* gave instructions as to where a ritual should take place, depending on the kind of *muthi* they were using on that particular day.

¹⁹L. Vail, “Ethnicity in Southern African History”, in Vail L ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (London: James Curry, 1989), intro; Belinda Bozzoli and Mmantho Nkotswe, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-83* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 1991), intro. See also Tlou Makhura, “Missionary and African Perspectives on the Politics of Witchcraft among the Xhosa and Zulu Communities in the 19th Century Cape and Natal/Zululand”, (WISER, unpublished article), 1.

nineteenth and twentieth centuries. My research in Vulindlela, especially the interviews with residents, suggests that in rural areas warriors (and communities) preferred human body mutilation rituals to the necklacing rituals which were prevalent in townships. These mutilations served both as punishment for an enemy and a means of obtaining body parts for magical purposes. I shall discuss this double purpose and how these rituals are claimed to be traditional ways of punishing 'witches'. Secondly, I shall analyse testimony given by survivors of political violence in KwaShange and neighbouring areas who were affected by *muthi* murders in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The point in recording stories told by interviewees is not to assess their reliability, but to provide a window into the general perception of practices, beliefs and relationships of healers and their 'medicine' during this violent period. Finally, I shall explore how the content and circulation of these stories affected, and continues to affect, people psychologically. I argue that war-doctors or witches (as they are referred to by other interviewees) were the instigators of conflict.

8.3 Traditional healers and *muthi*: debate from the past

Muthi and associated rituals have played an important role in the lives of Zulu people for many centuries. For almost everything they did, *muthi* and rituals would be applied.²⁰

Traditional healers provided medical, ecological, social, political and military assistance to the nation. Each king had a team of healers that looked after his affairs. The kings depended on their healer or healers to help obtain and maintain political power, provide their services during times of disputes over leadership successions. They played a crucial role in the judicial system, to determine the degree of guilt for petty crimes.²¹

²⁰Karen Elizabeth Flint, *Negotiating Tradition: African Healers, Medical Competition, and Cultural Exchange in South Africa* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2008), 67.

²¹Karen Elizabeth Flint, *Negotiating Tradition: African Healers, Medical Competition, and Cultural Exchange in South Africa* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2008), 67.

Controversy around the use of *muthi* and the role of traditional healers in South Africa during the pre-colonial period is well documented.²² Wars were fought not only with weapons but with the use of *muthi*. ‘Strengthening of warriors’²³ and ‘doctoring of wars’²⁴ were regarded as more important than any weaponry. Some Zulu fictions²⁵, popular dramas²⁶ and oral histories mention the prominence of traditional healers and war-doctors.²⁷ Each clan and village had healers who were experts in *muthi* and rituals associated with battles.²⁸ For example, the role played by the use of *muthi* has been recorded in the history of the rise of King Shaka and the establishment of the Zulu kingdom.²⁹

The oral traditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries describe the rise of Shaka and the foundation of the Zulu kingdom in the late 1810s, not just as a result of Shaka’s ability to organize his army but also to the use of *muthi*. This *muthi* and the expertise displayed by Shaka’s healers and diviners is said to have contributed hugely to the rise to power of the Zulus and their dominance over other prominent clans in what later became known as Northern Natal. Even though Shaka used *muthi*, he opposed the witchcraft of others. According to Jeff Guy, the action of the sea had a strange fascination for Shaka.³⁰

²²See Karen Elizabeth Flint, *Negotiating Tradition: African Healers, Medical Competition, and Cultural Exchange in South Africa*. (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2008); A. T. Bryant, *Zulu Medicine and Medicine-Men*. Cape Town: C. Struik. J. Brownlee, “Account of Amakosa, or Southern Caffers”, Appendix 1 in, G. Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, vol. 1* (London, 1827), 446- 448.

²³In Zulu this is called *ukuqiniswa kwamabutho*.

²⁴In Zulu this is called *ukunyangwa noma ukuqiniswa kwempi*.

²⁵See, for instance, *Mageba Lazihlonza, Buzani kuMkabayi*.

²⁶See, for instance, uShaka Zulu, *Yize Uvalo, Umanqoba Isibindi*, SABC radio dramas aired in the 1980s.

²⁷Collin Webb and John Wright, *The James Stuart Archives*, vols. 1-5 (Durban, Killie Campbell Africana Library and Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1975-2001) quoted in Karen Elizabeth Flint *Negotiating Tradition: African Healers, Medical Competition, and Cultural Exchange in South Africa* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2008), 68.

²⁸Karen Elizabeth Flint, *Negotiating Tradition: African Healers, Medical Competition, and Cultural Exchange in South Africa* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2008), 68. See also A. T. Bryant, *Zulu Medicine and Medicine-Men*. (Cape Town: C. Struik).

²⁹Collin Webb and John Wright, *The James Stuart Archives*, vols. 1-5, quoted in Karen Elizabeth Flint, *Negotiating Tradition: African Healers, Medical Competition, and Cultural Exchange in South Africa* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2008), 68.

³⁰Jeff Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom: the Civil War in Zululand, 1879-1884* (London: Longman, 1979), 15.

[Any person suspected of being a witch] was required to throw his stick into the sea ... and [the stick] of a witch never returned [with the advancing and receding waters]. The owner of the stick that never returned was in consequence killed on the spot on the grounds that he was a witch.³¹

During the colonial period, the white people, and especially the missionaries, were critical of rituals, *muthi* and the witchcraft associated with it.³² There were a number of court cases that attempted to address this issue.³³ Guy, referring to a number of court cases that took place in Northern Natal where people were accused of preparing for war,³⁴ reasons that colonial officials (and the missionaries) misunderstood African ritual practices. They reduced all rituals of healing and strengthening to war-doctoring. Because the missionaries believed that *muthi* was immoral, they influenced the colonial officials, who rewrote some of the African Customary Law to have it aligned more closely with Judaeo-Christian ways. ‘Smelling out’ by sangomas was made illegal because those identified in this way were often put to death. The colonial officials tried their best to

³¹Magama Magwaza Fuze, *Abantu Abamnyama lapa ba vela ngakona*, edited and translated by A. T. Cope, as *The Black People and Whence they Came: A Zulu View*, (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter & Shooter, 1979), 62-3.

³²See Belinda Bozzoli and Peter Delius eds., “History from South Africa Special Issue” 46-7, *Radical History Review* (New York, 1990), 13-45; P. Chabal and J. P. Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*, (Oxford, 1999), 56; Peter Delius, “Witches and Missionaries in the Nineteenth Century ‘Transvaal’”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 27:3 (Sept, 2001), 429-31. L. Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, (London: James Curry, 1989), Intro.; Belinda Bozzoli and Mmantho Nkotswe, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-83*, (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1991), intro; J. V. B. Shrewsbury, *Memorials of the Rev. William J. Shrewsbury*, (London, 1869), 423. H. H. Fast ed., *The Journal and selected letters of Rev. William J. Shrewsbury, 1826-1835*, (Johannesburg, 1994), 103, 111. Stephen Kay, *Travels and Researches in Caffraria*, (London, 1833), 171, 176, 183. John Philip, *Researches in South Africa*, vol.2, (London, 1828), 116-19. W. C. Holden, *The Past and Future of Kaffer Races*, (Cape Town, 1963), 281. See also Adam Ashforth, *Madumo: A man bewitched*, (Chicago, 2000), 166-94; Ashforth, “An Epidemic of Witchcraft? The Implication of AIDS for the post-Apartheid State”, *Journal of African Studies*, 61, 1, (2002), 121-22. R. Elphick, *The Khoikhoi and the Founding of White South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Ravan 1985), 229-35; Jeffrey Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-57*, (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1987), 31-2; Harriet Ngubane, The Predicament of the Sinister Healer: Some Observations on the “Ritual Murder” and the Professional Role of the Inyanga’, in Murray Last and C. L. Chavanduka eds., *The Professionalisation of African Medicine* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).

³³Jeff Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law, and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005), 219-251; see also Collin Webb and John Wright eds., *The James Stuart Archives*, 1, 18 May 1914, 49 (Stuart emphasis). See also, *ibid* (Evidence by Mpukane: 18 March 1909, 331-2).

³⁴Jeff Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law, and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005), 231.

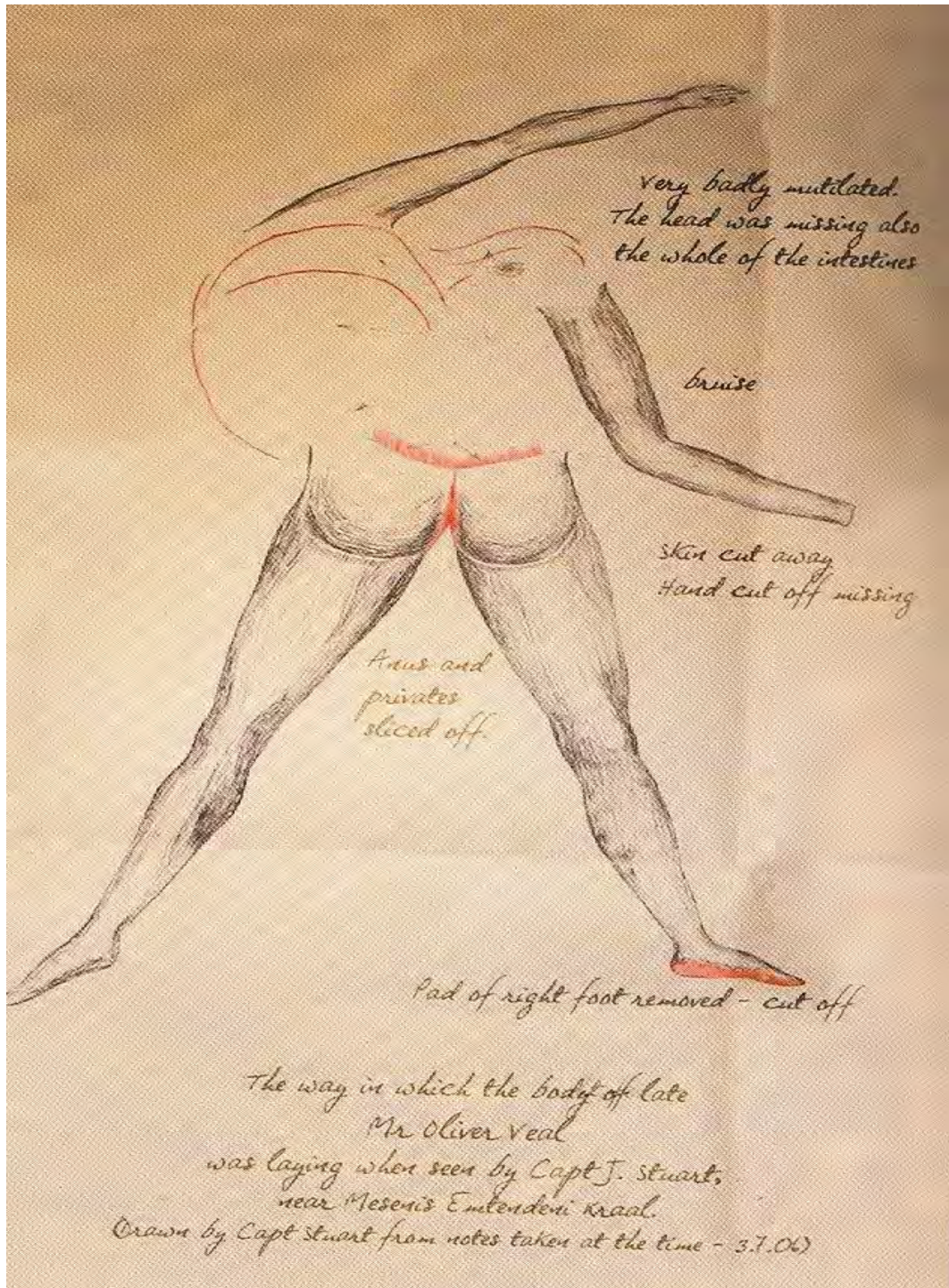
label any use of *muthi* as witchcraft. Their intention was to obviate it completely. There were many controversies and even court cases regarding the use of *muthi* and witchcraft.³⁵ Wallace Mills, however, was of the opinion that the missionaries' opposition to African traditions and rituals started to relax in the first half of the twentieth century.³⁶ In terms of war and rebellion and civil unrest, the prohibition of *muthi* and magical rituals would escalate into suppression and attack and trials, as was to be seen in the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906 and subsequent courts marshal and trials.³⁷

There are records of human body parts being used for *muthi* in the twentieth century. Warriors were strengthened or doctored to overcome their enemies. It was considered essential that liquid used for the sprinkling should contain material particles (*insila*) connected with the person of the chief whose people were about to be attacked. Secret messengers would have been sent out beforehand to obtain such substances, which could have been as powerful as some of the chiefs hair, parings of this nails, or his spittle scraped from the ground, or as innocuous as scrapings from the floors of his huts or any utensils he may have used.

³⁵Jeff Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law, and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005), 232.

³⁶See Wallace Mills, "Missionaries, Xhosa Clergy and the Suppression of Traditional Customs", in Henry Breckenkamp and Robert Ross eds., *Missions and Christianity in South African History* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995), 153-172.

³⁷Jeff Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law, and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005), 219. See also Benedict Carton, *Blood from Your Children: The Colonial Origins of Generational Conflict in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000).



“Veal’s remains: A sketch with annotations by Intelligence Officer James Stuart.”³⁸

³⁸Jeff Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion: The Zulu Uprising of 1906* (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Press, 2006), 46.

During the Bhambatha Uprising *muthi* was used.³⁹ Guy dedicates a whole chapter to court cases against people who he argues were ‘falsely accused of having performed ritual killings’ and used human body parts for *muthi*. He felt that in most cases these were not true and that colonial officials and Zulu headmen who had a grudge, or were rivals for the power of the accused, falsely blamed them for the deaths and mutilation of human bodies for *muthi*. During the Bhambatha Uprising in 1906, a force of Natal Police, under Lt. Colonel G. Mansel, marched from Greytown along the Keate’s Drift road and set up camp at Burrups. They passed through the Mpanza valley to Keate’s Drift and returned that evening along the same road. Bhambatha’s men were ready for them. They had been doctored for war by the war-doctor Malaza, whose medicine was designed to make them impervious to the white man’s bullets.⁴⁰ Chakijana had posted them in three groups: one above a prominent rock near the road, one below it and one in a drainage ditch.⁴¹

At around 7pm the police group approached along the road, unable to manoeuvre effectively as it was fenced on both sides. The advance guard, under Inspector O. Dimmock, bore the brunt of the attack. Four of his men were wounded and four (Sgt Brown, L. Sgt Harrison and Troopers Aston and Greenwood) were killed. Three bodies were retrieved (Sgt Brown’s body was found later, severely mutilated) and the wounded men were placed in the carriage [...] Although two or three of Bhambatha’s men were wounded, it was claimed that Malaza’s medicine had saved them from death. Dinuzulu’s men witnessed this and they were no doubt impressed.⁴²

The stories told by my interviewees document popular memories and beliefs in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The primary motives for using *muthi* were blood feuds and

³⁹Thenjiwe Magwaza, Yonah Seleti and Mpilo Pearl Sithole eds, *Freedom Sown in Blood: Memories of the Impi Yamakhanda: An Indigenous Knowledge Systems Perspective* (Thihoyandou: Ditlou Publishers, 2006), 188. See also, Jeff Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion: the Zulu Uprising of 1906* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2006), 197.

⁴⁰Interview with Nelson Zondi, Ngome, near Bhambatha’s Rock, 24 March 2004. See also Paul Thompson, “South African Military History Society, KwaZulu-Natal Branch”, *Newsletter* No. 328 (October 2002).

⁴¹Paul Thompson, South African Military History Society, KwaZulu-Natal Branch. *Newsletter* No. 328 (October 2002).

⁴²Paul Thompson, “South African Military History Society, KwaZulu-Natal Branch”, *Newsletter* No. 328 (October 2002).

power-seeking on the part of rival political factions. This meant that the employment of poisoning and magical manipulation were culturally acceptable methods for political strategizing. People from all areas in the Midlands where I have carried out research on this subject stated that they depended heavily on war-doctors to direct and strengthen them during the violence.

8.4 *Muthi* killing: stories of the 1980s and 1990s

Medicine murder occurred in several parts of South Africa that were affected by political violence. Few authors have investigated the subject in post-apartheid South Africa.⁴³ Isak Niehaus, writing about the period 1990-95, explores the increase in witchcraft accusations and witch-hunting in Lebowa. He describes the diminution of the authority of the chiefs and how the political space was filled in the mid-eighties by the ‘comrades’, the youth; a comparable process was occurring in the Natal Midlands during the same period. Youth organizations, in a culture where age was associated with authority, ‘faced a severe crisis of legitimacy’ and one way in which they sought to gain acceptance was by pledging themselves to the elimination of evil; and witch-hunts were conducted.⁴⁴ Concerning the political violence of the 1980s and 1990s in South Africa and the use of *muthi*, Ball noted, ‘these ‘*muthi* murders’ appear to have also increased considerably.’⁴⁵ Balic stated that there were ‘at least 30 ‘*muthi* murders’ in 1987’ and quoted Hammon-Tooke’s argument that ‘The incidence of medicine murders rises dramatically at times of political and social tension, insecurity and competition for economic resources.’⁴⁶ Thus the turmoil in South Africa saw the escalation of both witch accusations and ritual

⁴³Isaka A. Niehaus, “The ANC’s Dilemma: the Symbolic Politics of Three Witch-Hunts in the South African Lowveld, 1990-1995”, *African Studies Review*, 41 (1998), 93-118. See also Adam Ashforth, ‘Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in the New South Africa’, *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines*, 150-2 (1998), 505-32.

⁴⁴Isaka A. Niehaus, “Witch-hunting and Political Legitimacy: Continuity and Change in Green Valley, Lebowa (1930-1991)”, Unpublished article, Department of Social Anthropology, (University of Witwatersrand, 1991), 3, 15 and 24.

⁴⁵Joanna Ball, *The Ritual of Necklace* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994), 21.

⁴⁶S. Balic, “Changes Bring *Muthi* Murders”, *New Africa*, May 1990, 32-33.

(*muthi*) murders.⁴⁷ A brief but relevant study that focused on the use of *muthi* by the ‘comrades’ in the Midlands, Edendale, is that of M. B. Sosibo.⁴⁸

In the upheavals of the 1980s and 1990s, Natal and Zululand witnessed ritual killings and *muthi* use which involved mutilating bodies and cannibalism, not only to strengthen warriors but also to weaken their opposition. This mutilation was defined by interviewees as punishment for the ‘witches’⁴⁹ for bewitching and stealing or looting. UDF supporters labelled Inkatha supporters as witches and *vice versa*. The act of attacking people in their areas was equivalent to witchcraft. Secondly, the UDF and Inkatha accused each other of using strong *muthi* to bewitch and weaken the opposition. Each group also accused the other of theft. They called them criminals and thieves because the attackers looted cattle and property of their enemies.⁵⁰

This traditional punishment of witches was manipulated by warriors from UDF and Inkatha, claiming that it was an African method of dealing with witches. Sosibo states that the comrades in Pietermaritzburg would be given protective medicine by traditional healers and that this would be tied in a small bottle around their necks.⁵¹

A member from the rival group might be labelled a witch. In the past, Hammond-Tooke pointed out, the reaction to a witch was violent, especially among the Nguni, Tsongo and

⁴⁷Joanna Ball, *The Ritual of Necklace* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994), 21.

⁴⁸M. B. Sosibo, “Healing, Ritual and Violence at Edendale, Pietermaritzburg”, Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Anthropology in Southern Africa, 16-19 September 1992, University of Durban-Westville, quoted in Joanna Ball, *The Ritual of Necklace* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994).

⁴⁹Evans-Pritchard tends to distinguish between witches and sorcerers. He argues that a witch is born into his or her position and harms by means of psychic powers, a sorcerer is not born into his or her position and uses material substances such as medicines and charms. However, W. D. Hammond-Tooke writes that this distinction was not always expressed terminologically, for example *abathakathi* among the Zulu refers to both witches and sorcerers. See David Hammond-Tooke ed., *The Bantu-speaking peoples of Southern Africa* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd: 1974), 337.

⁵⁰Interview with informants from both former UDF and Inkatha movements, KwaShange and Mvundlweni, 17 April, 2010.

⁵¹M. B. Sosibo, “Healing, Ritual and Violence at Edendale, Pietermaritzburg”, paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Anthropology in Southern Africa. 16-19 September 1992, University of Durban-Westville, quoted in Joanna Ball, *The Ritual of Necklace* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994).

Sotho, where death was the usual penalty, but he makes no mention of mutilating bodies or burning. However, among the Nguni, the homestead of a witch was razed by fire.⁵² The research in Vulindlela shows that there was consensus in different communities that the 'old tradition' of punishment was acceptable for 'witches'. Mutilation and the removal of bodily parts were perceived by some people in Vulindlela as something which was invented by the youth as a political tool to destroy their enemies.⁵³ The youth were not, however, the only participants in these acts: there were many elders who were passive participants or directly involved.⁵⁴ Such acts provoked horror and incomprehension. In 1985, the Anglican Archbishop, Desmond Tutu, warned of necklacing, which was being practiced during the country-wide political unrest:

If you do this kind of thing [human body mutilation for *muthi* ritual and necklacing], I will find it difficult to speak for the cause of liberation. If the violence continues, I will pack my bags, collect my family and leave this beautiful country that I love so passionately and so deeply [...] I say to you that I condemn in the strongest possible terms what happens [in black communities].⁵⁵

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pik Botha, stated that he 'would not allow the future of South Africa to be decided by perpetrators who commit these kinds of acts' [body mutilation and necklacing].⁵⁶ In 1986, the *Sunday Times* described these acts as an 'offering to the demon that has entered the body of black politics.'⁵⁷ In 1985, the *Sowetan* defined this as 'becoming almost fashionable among blacks ... this is the beginning of a terrible phase that spells doom to the black nation ... this kind of savagery is completely

⁵²David Hammond-Tooke ed., *The Bantu-Speaking People of Southern Africa*. (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1947), 357.

⁵³Interview with Nunu Mchunu, Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 24 March 2009 and interview with Mhlekwana Ndawonde, MaZamisa Shange, KwaShange, 11 April 2010.

⁵⁴Interview with Nunu Mchunu and Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 24 March 2009.

⁵⁵Archbishop Desmond Tutu, *Times*, 5 August 1985, quoted in Joanna Ball, *The Ritual of Necklace* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994).

⁵⁶Pik Botha, *Times*, 5 August 1985, quoted in Joanna Ball, *The Ritual of Necklace* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994).

⁵⁷The *Sunday Times*, 16 February 1986, quoted in, Joanna Ball, *The Ritual of Necklace* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994).

out of step with the sophisticated thinking and behaviour of the twentieth century.’⁵⁸ *The Star* warned: ‘The children should know from their history books that this type of thing was common in the Dark Ages and cannot be countenanced in 1985.’⁵⁹ The perpetrators of these activities were reported by the *Star* as justifying these killings, saying ‘For how long will you tell us to show mercy to these ‘systems’⁶⁰ people when they kill us once we are in their hands? Why don’t you allow us to deal with these dogs in the same way they treat us?’⁶¹ The perpetrators said that they were angered by attackers, in other words, these acts were caused by anger, ‘...and it is not possible to do this to the victim if you are not angry enough.’⁶² Other perpetrators said it was done ‘in order to show others how ‘criminals’ and ‘witches’ are dealt with’.⁶³

Some scholars who have explored political violence in the Midlands have considered it an inappropriate subject to ponder.⁶⁴ The increased incidence of *muthi* murder in times of political stress has been documented in a few historical studies.⁶⁵ My own view is that the opposing forces saw the use of *muthi*, and magical means in general, as essential parts of their conflict. As a result of ignoring these matters, the reasons why warriors were mutilated and body parts mixed with *muthi* and eaten has been largely unexplored, the

⁵⁸The *Sowetan*, 18 April 1985, quoted in Joanna Ball, *The Ritual of Necklace* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994).

⁵⁹The *Star*, 18 April 1985, quoted in Joanna Ball, *The Ritual of Necklace* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994).

⁶⁰<http://www.csvr.org.za/wits/papers/papball.htm#note1> 10 November 2010.

⁶¹The *Star*, 11 July 1985, quoted in Joanna Ball, *The Ritual of Necklace* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994).

⁶²*Mail and Guardian*, 28 August – 3 September 1992, quoted in Joanna Ball, *The Ritual of Necklace* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994).

⁶³*City Press*, 4 July 1993, quoted in Joanna Ball, *The Ritual of Necklace* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994).

⁶⁴Joanna Ball, *The Ritual of Necklace* (Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, March 1994), 1.

⁶⁵Jean Comaroff and John, “Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from the South African Postcolony”, *American Ethnologist* 26:2 (1998), 279-303. Jean Comaroff and John, “Alien Nation: Zombies, Immigrants and Millennial Capitalism.” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101:4 (2002) 779-804. Jean Comaroff and John, “Policing Culture, Cultural Policing: Law and Social Order in Postcolonial South Africa”, *Law and Social Inquiry* (2004), 513-545. See also *Cape Argus*, 2006, *Eastern Cape News*, “Muthi Murders Part of Religious Practice”, 23 September 2001; *Daily Dispatch*, “Police Tell of Muthi Murder”, October 30. P. Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa*. (Charlottesville VA: University of Virginia Press, 1997). John Matshikiza, “Multicultural Muthi Messages”, *Mail and Guardian*, 30 August 2004. Aaron Nicodemus, “Soccer Fan Brutally Killed for Muthi”, *Mail and Guardian*, 11 June 1999. Deborah Posel, “A Matter of Life and Death: Revisiting Modernity from the Vantage Point of the New South Africa”, (Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER), 2002).

clichés left unquestioned. Even members of communities who themselves were sympathetic to the use of *muthi*, and who were directly affected by the violence, will nowadays refuse to discuss the practice and how it was used by war-doctors and warriors in the 1980s and 1990s. The evidence is that I myself (a former member of the Vulindlela community and a witness to much of the violence) had the utmost difficulty in persuading former combatants to discuss these matters. Eventually, through the influence of a local *induna*, they agreed to be frank with me, but insisted on remaining anonymous.

Other evidence of the use of magical practices is present in Truth and Reconciliation Commission reports, police and coroners' reports and Congress of South African Writers (COSAW) video footage.

Human body mutilation continued even after the violence subsided.⁶⁶ Some authors suggested that South Africa is still witnessing what is described as an 'epidemic' of occult-related violent crime.⁶⁷ It is believed that more than 300 people have been murdered for their body parts in the last decade in this country, although some accounts put the figure far higher, with one investigation reporting that there were 250 *muthi* killings in the Limpopo Province alone, in a single year.⁶⁸ The actual frequency of *muthi* murder is difficult to gauge, because in a country with a high murder rate, estimated at about 43 murders per 100 000 people,⁶⁹ it is likely that not every *muthi*-related murder is recorded as such.⁷⁰ Though predominantly a phenomenon of the country's more rural provinces, police records indicate that several *muthi*-related killings take place each year in urban Soweto.⁷¹ In 2000 a commission of inquiry into witchcraft was set up by the government after a spate of deaths in Soweto, in which young boys aged between one and

⁶⁶Mzilikazi Wa Afrika, "Patient's Penis Skinned in *Muthi* Murder", *Mail and Guardian* 29 May 1998. See also Joan Van Niekerk, "Failing or Future: Responding to the Sexual Abuse of Children", *SA Crime Quarterly* (3), 11-16.

⁶⁷Jean Comaroff and John, "Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from South African Postcolony." *American Ethnologist* 26:2 (1998), 279-303.

⁶⁸Louise Vincent, "New Magic for New Times: *Muthi* Murder in Democratic South Africa", in *Tribes and Tribalism, Special Volume 2* (Kamla-Rag Enterprises, 2008), 43.

⁶⁹Louise Vincent, "New Magic for New Times: *Muthi* Murder in Democratic South Africa", in *Tribes and Tribalism, Special Volume 2* (Kamla-Rag Enterprises, 2008), 43.

⁷⁰Louise Vincent, "New Magic for New Times: *Muthi* Murder in Democratic South Africa", in *Tribes and Tribalism, Special Volume 2* (Kamla-Rag Enterprises, 2008), 43.

⁷¹Aaron Nicodemus, "Soccer Fan Brutally Killed for *Muthi*", *Mail and Guardian*, 11 June 1999.

six had been kidnapped and murdered. ‘According to *post mortem* examination results, the child whose murder is discussed at the beginning of the chapter was left to bleed to death after having his genitals, feet, hands and eyes gouged out.’⁷²

The SAPS, in an article posted on its website, links ritual murder to the centuries-old belief that human blood⁷³ and body parts are essential to the preparation of *muthi*.⁷⁴ Nonkonyana Mwelo, Chairperson of the Eastern Cape branch of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa), however, claimed that he ‘does not believe’ human organs are being used by witch-doctors for *muthi* and does not see any use for body parts as *muthi* and cannot understand why bodies are being mutilated in this way other than as a result of ordinary criminality.⁷⁵ In contrast, the chairman of the South African Council of Churches, Reverend Thivhilaheli Nedohe, stated that:

This kind of murder only shocks people who want to be shocked. If we have to go back into history, we will see that these deeds have been happening, and will persist, as long as the perpetrators continue to believe in it [...].⁷⁶

8.5 Traditional healers and use of *muthi*: KwaShange testimonies

8.5.1 My own recollections

The abduction and death of Loyiso Njokweni described at the beginning of this chapter happened in an area of Vulindlela, Mafakatini, under Chief Nsikayezwe Zondi, whose people were killed in KwaShange in February 1990. About 17 people were killed and some of their bodies were mutilated for *muthi*. Of the incident, I recall:

⁷² Interview with Mthandeni Dlamini, KwaShange, 15 November 2009.

⁷³ <http://www.saps.org.za/7-crimeprev/7-sangoma2.htm> Last accessed 10 February 2011.

⁷⁴ <http://www.factnet.org/cults/Sangoma/index.html> last accessed 10 February 2011 See also Joan Camaroff and John, *The Policing Culture, Cultural Policing: Law and Social Order in Postcolonial South Africa. Law and Social Inquiry*, 513-545.

⁷⁵ *Cape Argus*, Two Held for Cape ‘*Muthi*’ Killing, 8 August 2006.

⁷⁶ Louise Vincent, “New Magic for New Times: *Muthi* Murder in Democratic South Africa”, in *Tribes and Tribalism, Special Volume 2* (Kamla-Rag Enterprises, 2008), 45.

I found that I was obliged to hide when an attack took place. After an hour or so I came out of hiding. Walking home, I came across my neighbour, Siphon Ndlovu, and he told me: “we have finished them” [meaning that they, as ANC supporters, had killed Inkatha vigilantes]. I did not believe him but as I walked further I was ‘welcomed’ by a ‘stream’ of blood and three mutilated human bodies, one of which had an arm, head and the abdomen cut open, and the insides were out. The other two bodies as well were butchered, but I was too nauseated to get closer to see what body parts had been removed. In retrospect, I have been informed by some of the informants who participated in this act, that ‘manhood’, i.e. genitals, had been removed for *muthi* purposes. This is the scene I have carried in my mind since then, one of three memories which are more prominent than any of the other horror images I recall from the wreckage of the KwaShange violence. This event was well covered by the media; where on 10 February 1991 an ANC ‘ambush’ took place in KwaShange and 17 Inkatha members were killed.⁷⁷ The following day the police went around trying to find people who had committed the act. They asked particularly women and youngsters like me (at that time I was about 13 years old). However, when they asked me what I had seen, I mentioned that I saw three dead bodies, but I had to ‘close my eyes’ as it was too horrible to bear.⁷⁸

The memory of this scene was triggered by a response I received from informants in KwaShange, when I asked about the effects of the violence in KwaShange almost 20 years after the violence. MaZamisa Shange gave an insightful reply. She said:

Do not even ask. Today we are a fragmented, cursed and sick community and we will never again be the community that we once were before this violence started. We talk all the time when we have community meetings about a number of people who were buried without some of their body parts. A number of people were

⁷⁷*Sunday Tribune*, 17 February 1991; *Sunday Star*, 17 February 1991; Chapter Two of this thesis: The Psychological effects of 1980s-1990s Political Violence on children in KwaShange: An Autobiographical narrative; see also Mxolisi Mchunu, “Cultural Change, Zulu Masculinity and Intergenerational Conflict in the Context of Civil War in Pietermaritzburg (1987-1991)”, in T. Shefer *et al.* eds., *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2007).

⁷⁸ My testimony during Father Lapley’s Healing of Memories Workshop held in Pietermaritzburg, 2005.

killed and their bodies were mutilated and even today nothing has been done to correct that and I am telling you nothing will heal our community until those body parts are discovered. Today we have insane people [in our community] because of this revolting act ... young people who partook ... *thula mntaka Zamisa kungaze kuthiwe uthe* [oh! let me shut up otherwise I will be accused of divulging community issues].⁷⁹

An elderly woman, MaNdlela Ndlovu, said:

Your Jacob Zuma [assuming that I am Jacob Zuma's ANC supporter] has abandoned our community. Our children killed people during the violence. They used strong *muthi* ... and all these other [evil] things they did. But when Mandela and Jacob Zuma got what they wanted [freedom and positions of power], they are now too busy building schools, roads and toilets. They forget the basics [rituals that need to be done after a war]. You know, those people who participated in these *muthi* rituals are now addicted to killing and harassing. Now that there are no Inkatha people to harass, they harass us, the community members themselves.⁸⁰

An elderly man, Manciza Zondi, added:

[...] like in any other conflict, the use of *muthi* was prevalent in the civil war of 1980s-1990s. In fact I can say that *muthi* was more important than any other weapon that was used. We were fighting against people who were known for using very strong *muthi*. I can tell you today that the reason why we [KwaShange] were strong and most feared by our neighbouring areas. It was not because we had big guns. No, no, no... but we used very strong *muthi* to strengthen ourselves and our families. There is no one in the area that did not use *muthi*. The few that

⁷⁹ Interview with MaZamisa Shange, KwaShange, 14 March 2010.

⁸⁰ Interview with MaNdlela Ndlovu, KwaShange, 14 March 2010.

refused [to use *muthi*], were all killed. I am just saying this because I want you to know what a big role *muthi* played in the war of 1980s-1990s.⁸¹

He continued:

It is sad that even today we have some of our people who died and were buried without some of their body parts. We have people who were kidnapped by Inkatha people who declared them dead, but even today we do not know where they were buried. We had a baby that was stolen when she was only three months old, even today we do not know what happened to that baby; her grandparents were consumed by fire in a burning house. As a result we have things that happened in our community of which the consequences will still persist until we find closure to the matter. Until then we will still have the stigma we are having today. Could you [myself as researcher] find where those body parts are? Could you talk to the communities we fought with and arrange for us to have a proper cleansing ritual.⁸²

Although the above testimonies are wide-ranging, interviewees avoided the details of what happened. They were not willing to tell what they know or experienced – these happenings are not discussed. They are known only by those people who witnessed and partook in the rituals. As I have indicated earlier, those that disclosed some specific details warned me not to write about them.

Community members stress the significance of cleansing rituals to the survivors. What happened carried many psychological effects. The people would have preferred ritual cleansing instead of developing infrastructure. Government would have done better if it had ensured cleansing of communities by doing cultural rituals to wash away all the misfortunes incurred by youths or child warriors and older men who had killed people and used their body parts.

⁸¹Interview with Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 14 March 2010.

⁸²Interview with Mancinza Zondi, KwaShange, 14 March 2010.

These emotional responses in some instances were accompanied by tears and are somewhat similar to responses from other areas affected by the political violence in the 1980s and 1990s. In 2008 I interviewed the Nyawose family on the KwaZulu-Natal south coast, at KwaShobashobane, where I went to interview families who were affected by the 25 December 1995 massacre. There I was meant to interview an old lady, Mrs. Nyawose, who had buried her son's body with some body parts missing. She was permanently paralyzed, as she had been shot in the head in the same incident. Even in 2008 her head had permanent bullet scars and she was mentally 'unstable'. I was warned by her daughter that I should not talk to her about the violence, as every time she talked about it, she had a nightmare and her daughter had to comfort her the whole night long.

Engelbrecht, a police investigator in the area (south coast), shed light on the Shobashobane massacre:

On Christmas morning, a Sunday, a large group of Inkatha supporters under the leadership of paramilitary structures mounted, from the south, a full-scale offensive on the ANC ward. The main attack group numbered well over 600 people, and was spearheaded by a select group of men armed with automatic rifles and other firearms, followed by a large group of warriors (*impis*) covered with *muthi* and armed with traditional weapons, among the dead were six women and a baby. The prime target, ANC leader Khipha Nyawose, was shot dead and his body, as were many other bodies, [was] severely mutilated: his stomach was slit open and his genitals completely severed, to be used for *muthi*.⁸³

From the 1980s to the 1990s, at the time of the unrest, the use of *muthi*, witchcraft and magic was so prevalent and regarded as so dangerous by Zulu communities that Radio Zulu played radio dramas meant to conscientise people. This was especially so in 1987, when the political violence had just started. In KwaShange, Thabethe was given the alias

⁸³See http://www.Specialoperations.com/Foreign/South_Africa/Special_task_force. Website accessed 14 March 2011. Engelbrecht, *Assistance: National Investigation Task Unit, Natal South: Shobashobane Massacre at Zingolweni*, 1. Interview with *mama* Nyawose, the late Khipha's mother, and his sister, KwaShobashobane, 9 July 2008.

‘Makhekhe’, after one of the characters of the drama, because he was alleged to have been seen performing the magic and killing his opponents to gain power as an Inkatha warlord.⁸⁴

Generally, people who lived in areas affected by the 1980s and 1990s violence were most susceptible to fear of the mysterious or unknown. Interviewees indicated that they had become used to ‘normal’ war, where two groups, Inkatha and UDF were fighting. However, they were completely subjugated by the abnormal or supernatural, where ‘strange things happened’. They believed in the effects of rituals and ‘medicines’. *Izinyanga* (war-doctors) were aware that, despite the intrinsic potency they might have, they had an immensely powerful psychological effect on the warriors doctored for war and were therefore of value in conditioning them for victory. The more powerful one’s own medicine was believed to be, the greater the confidence of defeating the enemy. This belief in invincibility through ‘supernatural’ means and protection, coupled with their discipline and tactics, worked wonders when the KwaShange ANC warriors met their enemies on what were otherwise approximately equal terms. Occasionally the use of *muthi* had disastrous results, for example when they charged opponents armed with firearms, in the belief that their doctored shields were impenetrable to bullets.

When talking to me, some interviewees indicated that certain leaders used supernatural *muthi* which had a lot of magic. They believe that the kind of *muthi* used was acquired outside South Africa. Some people in KwaShange believed that Inkatha leaders got their Muthi from Mozambique. For instance, iBhlamani Dlamini (see profiles in Chapter Five)

⁸⁴Commenting on the subject, Liz Gunner stated that: “The fear was so severe that Radio Zulu, now called Ukhozi FM, aired a radio drama that dealt with the subject. This is the seam of anxiety and ambiguity relating to power, the anxieties and stresses of modern life, and the space of the occult that the writer - both novelist and radio playwright- the late Morris Bhengu, exploited so skillfully in his radio drama, *Yiz’Uvalo* and its sequel *Unqob’Isibindi* (In Spite of Fear, and Courage Wins Through). The linked Radio Zulu dramas ran for approximately six months in the mid-1980s on Radio Zulu, a section of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). A twenty-minute segment of the drama played regularly every weekday with a repeat in the evenings for those who had missed it through being at work. Bhengu used a skilful combination of melodrama, elements of esoteric knowledge, a strong plot-line and a range of auditory effects on radio, plus a powerful cast whose voices were already familiar to listeners. The drama was on the air from December 1986 to May 1987. See Liz Gunner, “Wrestling with the Present, Beckoning to the Past: Contemporary Zulu Radio Drama”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26:2 (2000), 223-237.

was one of the most feared leaders of Inkatha in the area because of his cruelty. He killed many people in the area of KwaShange, even before the political violence started in 1986 between Inkatha and the UDF. Many people who were known to have resisted taking Inkatha membership, and who were opposed to the idea of making every community person a member of Inkatha, feared him.

Discussing his fate, Bhekimpi Mbanjwa said:

It was on a Friday, September 1987; I had just come into the area on the 5 pm bus. I saw iBhlamani across UMsunduzi River. He was herding his cattle. I was so terrified because I had never expected to see him there. I felt dizzy ... in less than a minute he was right in front of me. His cattle were where he had been on the other side of the river. This is where he stabbed me [showing his big scar], luckily a group of young men, my neighbours who were just passing by, noticed and they came to assist me – I managed to escape.⁸⁵

A group of five interviewees described a similar occurrence:

It was on a Saturday morning before 6 am in 1987- after chief Shayabantu had attacked and killed people in KwaShange – we saw his car, a Ford Cortina, going through KwaShange to *induna* Guvaza Khanyile's homestead. We ambushed the chief, having all kind of ammunition you can think of. Our intention was to kill him. We hid under the bridge. We saw his car come from a distance: he was driving very fast but when he was just about to pass the bridge, we all fell asleep. When we woke up, the car had already passed.⁸⁶

Thulebona Zuma says:

In 1990, after the Seven Days War, when many people were still in refugee camps in Edendale, because we had a lot of time doing nothing at home [as young men] we were hurting that David Ntombela and his people are having a nice time [at

⁸⁵Interview with Bhekithemba Mbanjwa, KwaShange, 12 October 2010.

⁸⁶Interview with a group of anonymous men, KwaShange, 12 October 2010.

Elandskop] whilst our people were struggling in refugee camps. We decided to attack him, in revenge for what he and his people had done. We left here on Friday night, we had invited some uMkhonto We Sizwe soldiers to come and assist us to ‘finish’ with Ntombela. We went there ... when we were just about to arrive at Ntombela’s homestead, strong mist came from nowhere ... we got mystified, we couldn’t see [Ntombela’s homestead] any more but instead we saw a big dam where David Ntombela’s homestead was. We began quarrelling amongst ourselves and we almost killed each other on our way back.⁸⁷

Muthi murder is only one component of this belief system, which underpins other magical phenomena, such as the appearance of *tokoloshe* and mythical dinosaur-like creatures, the power magically to transform a human being into an apple, or a homestead into a dam and gun bullets into grapes.⁸⁸

My informants in KwaShange testified to the powerful and continuing belief of Zulu people in the effects of *muthi* and the power of those using it. They also offered insights into how these beliefs could weaken rival parties.

8.5.2 Thirst for human blood:⁸⁹ the mutilation controversy

On 10 February 1991, an attack by Inkatha on the ANC-aligned community of KwaShange took place. The attack became known as *the ambush of Inkatha*. MaMthimkhulu Khanyile was awakened in her house at Mpumuza, near Sweetwaters in the Midlands, by a distraught Manzini Zungu, who had just escaped the attack at KwaShange. MaMthimkhulu and other neighbours who had relatives in the convoy

⁸⁷Interview with Thulebona Zuma, KwaShange, 12 October 2010.

⁸⁸Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 14 March 2009. Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 14 March 2009. Interview with a group of ten Inkatha members, Mpumuza, 17 February 2010. Interview with MaZamisa Shange, KwaShange, 11 June 2010. See also Joan Comaroff and John, “Alien Nation: Zombies, Immigrants and Millennial Capitalism”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101: 4 (2002), 779-804; Joan Comaroff and John, “Policing Culture, Cultural Policing: Law and Social Order in Postcolonial South Africa”, *Law and Social Inquiry* (2004), 513-545.

⁸⁹MaZamisa Shange used this expression to describe what she observed in KwaShange Youth. She said they looked as if they were thirsty for human blood.

immediately gathered together and set out to the scene of the disaster in KwaShange.⁹⁰ Her description of what she saw there provides a vivid insight into the aftermath of the ‘KwaShange ambush’:

As we approached the area a fearful and horrible sight presented itself, and the stillness of the spot was awful; there were our men lying all about the place, some naked and some only half clad. On the opposite side of the road I need not attempt to describe to you what I saw; all the bodies were full of spear wounds and nearly all of them were disembowelled [...] I did not see not even one body that was not mutilated.⁹¹

The accounts of MaMthimkhulu and other survivors of the KwaShange ambush mirror the sense of shock that KwaShange survivors of the incident felt upon their return to their homes, after hiding in river banks and valleys. “We saw the dead bodies of men strewed about on every side, and horribly mutilated ...”. “Our children mutilated them and pierced them with spears all over their bodies” observed MaZamisa, while Madlala noted that “Every man who was killed or wounded was ripped up, and his bowels torn out.” To suffer a sudden, unexpected and astonishing catastrophe was bad enough, but the treatment of the dead understandably angered those who witnessed it. “It was enough to make your blood boil,”⁹² commented one (anonymous) man. “To see men cut open, the worst ever was done in the violence in the Midlands”, said a retired policeman who was called just after the ambush. The sense of horror provoked by the sight of men killed by the ANC followers still lingers today. Vulindlela Inkatha supporters discuss the subject, offering bizarre explanations, which hint at witchcraft practices and even cannibalism.

In fact there should be little obscurity surrounding the reasons why the KwaShange ANC members treated the IFP dead in such a manner, as there is a good deal of contemporary evidence from local traditional healers’ sources, both with regard to the practices themselves, and with specific reference to this clash between Inkatha and the ANC. The

⁹⁰Interview with MaMthimkhulu Khanyile and Manzini Zung, KwaMpumuza, 13 October, 2010.

⁹¹Interview with MaMthimkhulu Khanyile, KwaMpumuza, 13 October 2010.

⁹²This is a Zulu expression, ‘*ukushiselwa igazi*’, equivalent to the English ‘to make your blood run cold.’

warriors of both Inkatha and the ANC repeatedly stabbed, disembowelled and mutilated the bodies of the rival party's men killed in action. They were in pursuit of three distinct post-combat rituals, all of which reflected the extent to which death in combat was regarded as an important part of interaction with the spirit world.⁹³

The dead of both sides often bore multiple stab wounds and this was a feature common to the descriptions of all the informants. In the fierce frenzy of action, it is likely that many enemies were stabbed more than once before they fell; despite the Zulu warrior's famed expertise with their stabbing weapons, it was probably impossible to dispatch an enemy with a single clean thrust every time, especially if he was parrying with his own weapons. Given the large wounds made by the blades of the stabbing spears and the bullets, the act of inflicting death itself was likely to be messy.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, bodies were deliberately stabbed again after death in a practice known as *ukuhlabana* or *ukuhlomula*.⁹⁵ Commenting about the practice of *ukuhlabana*, Knight says that mercy to a fallen enemy had less to do with delivering the final and fatal blow than a desire on the part of warriors to mark their role in the kill.⁹⁶

Members of the ANC and Inkatha all came from communal and traditionalist mind-sets, which were reinforced by complex pre-battle rituals, intended to bind the army together as a whole.⁹⁷ In action, therefore, those men who had been involved in the fighting, but had not actually killed an enemy, were entitled to some part of the 'glory' attached to the victory. In particular, the old practice of *ukuhlabana* had evolved in the hunt; after cornering and dispatching a particularly dangerous animal, the act of participation was

⁹³Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 19 March 2009. Interview with Chris Hlengwa, KwaShange, 19 March 2009. See also Ian Knight, *Brave Men's Blood: The Epic of the Zulu War 1879* (South Africa: Pen & Sword Classic, 2006), 100.

⁹⁴Interview with Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 19 March 2010. Knight, *Brave Men's Blood* stated the same about the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879.

⁹⁵Interview with Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 19 March 2010. Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange 20 October 2010.

⁹⁶Ian Knight, *Brave Men's Blood: The Epic of the Zulu War 1879* (South Africa: Pen & Sword Classic, 2006), 100.

⁹⁷For the *Inkatha* see A. T. Bryant, *The Zulu People As They were Before the White Man Came* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1949), 469, 476 and 478; H. L. Samuelson, *Zululand: Its Traditions, Legends, Customs and Folk-lore* (Natal: Marianhill Mission Press, n.d., 138; R.C.A. Samuelson, *Long, Long Ago* (Durban: Knox, 1929), 399-402. See also Jeff Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005), 243.

recognised when the men each came up and stabbed the dead beast.⁹⁸ While the man who had actually killed it was allowed his particular share of the glory, *ukuhlabana*, or the stabbing the corpse after it was dead, reflected the participation of the other members of the hunt.⁹⁹

The same rule applied in warfare, particularly when fighting an enemy who had stood his ground bravely, and had therefore been a dangerous opponent. Mancinza Zondi, an ANC warrior that fought against Inkatha during the KwaShange ‘ambush’, explained:

Indeed we stabbed our opponents even those who had already been stabbed and lying down. This is called *abahlabana*; then again those *abahlabana* became more numerous by reason of the fact that we had been fighting such formidable opponents. This custom was observed here [KwaShange] because it was recognised that fighting against such fearsome enemies and killing some of them was of the same high grade as lion-hunting, because Inkatha had SAP support, and they were known to be using strong *muthi* supplied by Manqele.¹⁰⁰

In regard to the second ritual, namely the custom of disembowelling a fallen enemy, termed *ukuqaqa*, this was directly related to the traditional Zulu view of the spiritual realm and its relationship with the world of the living. Prior to embarking on a campaign, the warriors were prepared for war in a complex set of rituals which set them aside from civilian life,¹⁰¹ and protected them against the harmful effects of *isinyama* – or literally ‘darkness,’ the harmful spiritual consequences that flowed from shedding human blood. They could not return to ordinary society until they had undergone parallel cleansing ceremonies at the end of the campaign, for fear of contaminating their families with

⁹⁸ Interview with Nunu Mchunu and Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 20 October 2010. Interview with Nelson Zondi, Engome, 2004.

⁹⁹ Interview with Nunu Mchunu and Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 20 October 2010.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 20 October 2010.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Nunu Mchunu and Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 20 October 2010; Ian Knight, *Brave Men's Blood: The Epic of the Zulu War 1879* (South Africa: Pen & Sword Classic, 2006), 100; Jeff Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005), 229.

isinyama.¹⁰² As part of the cleansing rituals, it was necessary that certain practices be observed with regard to the bodies of men who had been killed in battle. Specifically, it was necessary for a warrior to remove part of the clothing of a man he had killed and to wear it until he had undergone the necessary cleansing ceremonies. This practice was known as *ukuzila* – abstention from every-day life while in a dangerous state of spiritual pollution.¹⁰³ Men who had killed in battle, but who had not yet been cleansed, were known as *izinxeleha*. Those who had particularly distinguished themselves by their tally in battle were said to be “wet with yesterday’s blood.” As part of these observances, it was also necessary to slit open the stomach of the enemy.¹⁰⁴ In the hot sun, any corpse begins to decompose quickly, and the gases given off by the early stages of decay cause the stomach to swell. In Zulu belief, this was the soul of the dead warrior, trying to escape to the after-life. The man who killed him was obliged to open the stomach, to allow the spirit to escape. If he did not, he would be haunted by the ghost of his victim, who would inflict various horrors upon him, including causing his own stomach to swell, until eventually the killer went mad. To allow the spirit free passage, a cut was made vertically down the stomach, from sternum to groin.¹⁰⁵

Ngubane, the present-day traditional healer of KwaShange, suggested that, as part of the ritual, it was necessary for the killer to run the blade of his spear along his own tongue, touching the blood. The purpose of this remains obscure, but probably has to do with the killer gaining supernatural ascendancy over his enemy by ritually ‘eating’ his spirit; it is perhaps no coincidence that the warriors cry of exultation is “*ngadla*” (I have eaten!). The fact that both practices were followed in Vulindlela and elsewhere in Natal and KwaZulu

¹⁰² Ian Knight, *Brave Men’s Blood: The Epic of the Zulu War 1879* (South Africa: Pen & Sward Classic, 2006), 100; Jeff Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005), 229.

¹⁰³ Ian Knight, *Brave Men’s Blood: The Epic of the Zulu War 1879* (South Africa: Pen & Sward Classic, 2006), 100; Jeff Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005), This was also confirmed by Nunu Mchunu and Manciza Zondi.

¹⁰⁴ Ian Knight, *Brave Men’s Blood: The Epic of the Zulu War 1879* (South Africa: Pen & Sward Classic, 2006), 100; Jeff Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005).

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Ngubane, KwaShange, 21 October 2010. See also Ian Knight, *Brave Men’s Blood: The Epic of the Zulu War 1879* (South Africa: Pen & Sward Classic, 2006), 100; Jeff Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005).

is verified by not only survivors of both ANC and IFP factions as to their observations of the mutilated corpses, but by traditional healer' accounts. Mzila, an *inyanga* and descendant of Bhambatha Zondi's war-doctors, said: It is the custom for one man killing another to take off the deceased's things and put them on, even the penis cover. He mourns with them by so doing ... If he has killed two or more he will take articles from each and put them on. He will not put on his own things until the doctor has treated him and given him medicines ... to cleanse him from contagion or war killing" We took the ANC things at Vulisaka; they were all stripped. This was done to mourn them.¹⁰⁶

Mancinza Zondi, a respondent in a court case of the KwaShange 'ambush' incident, testifying at the Pietermaritzburg magistrate's court, was also present at a number of other battles between Inkatha and ANC. He made several references to stripping and disembowelling the dead in a long and comprehensive account of the war, which was recorded when he was brought before a magistrate in September 1990. He said:

As a rule we took off the upper garments, but left the trousers, but if we saw blood upon the garments we did not bother ... All the dead bodies were cut open, because if that had not been done we would have become swollen ourselves like the dead bodies [...] I heard that some bodies were otherwise mutilated.¹⁰⁷

It is not clear whether the disembowelling was always carried out in the immediate aftermath of the victim's death, or later, once the full fury of the fighting had passed. Certainly, at least some bodies were disembowelled immediately after death. Manzini Zungu from KwaMpumuza survived the KwaShange ambush, and had glimpsed terrible sights such as mutilation, even as he fled to report the matter to Chief Nsikayezwe Zondi.

¹⁰⁶Interview with Mzila, Engome, 24 September 2004.

¹⁰⁷Interview with Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 20 October 2010.

8.6 Details and rules of the normal practices of ‘doctoring’

Interviewees from both the ANC and IFP disclosed that they never went to war without being specially strengthened by the war-doctors of their respective communities, a process which took a few days, and which was begun as soon as all the warriors had arrived at the secret gathering place.¹⁰⁸ The process was carried out to ‘bring together the hearts of the people’ and a ritual was performed entailing the sprinkling of troops with liquids with magical properties, the ritual of the bare-handed killing of a bull, and the disposal of the carcass in prescribed ways, and the cleansing of the individual warriors by inducing communal vomiting through the use of emetics and ablutions.

In battle it was often preferred that the victim remain alive during disembowelment. When body parts, including internal organs, were removed while the victim was still alive it was believed that the power of the resultant medicine would be enhanced. Harvested body parts are usually mixed with other medicinal plant matter or cooked. The product is sometimes eaten, but may also be carried by the person who aims to benefit from its power. The use of human body matter in the production of traditional medicine does not always involve killing; for instance a living person’s nail clippings or hair cuttings may secretly be collected – or already dead bodies may be exhumed and used for *muthi* purposes.

Details of the normal practices of ‘doctoring’ are basically comprised of three aspects: the ‘doctoring’ and protection of the individuals in a war zone, the ‘doctoring’ or strengthening of an army or *impi* and, lastly, the cleansing ceremonies after a battle. No warrior would go to war unless he had first taken some *muthi* for protection. He would go to the place where *muthi* was kept, usually in a war-doctor’s homestead, to fortify himself. Warriors also had to abstain from sexual intercourse.

¹⁰⁸During political violence warriors usually met at secret places, where nobody knew where they were except other warriors; this was mainly because when police came they usually asked children where older people were. In most cases, children would disclose the hidden information without suspecting anything. This was the main reason why warriors had to hide. The rituals were normally performed at night, in some cases at the house of the *inyanga*, or in the field, hill, river or valley, depending on the kind of *muthi* they used.

Anybody who was injured or had a wound was not allowed to take part in certain rituals or use certain kinds of *muthi*. This was one of the main reasons why women were not allowed to be near the area where *muthi* rituals were being practised, let alone taking part in them. Interviewees stated that women have a ‘natural wound’ - they are born with it [the vagina] and this disqualifies them from partaking. They are also believed to be ‘weak’; they cannot keep secrets to themselves. When cornered by rivals, they could easily tell the enemy what *muthi* the warriors used. Discussing the kind of *muthi* used with ‘outsiders’ was dangerous, because if rivals knew, they could apply the same *muthi* or find *muthi* specifically to counter this *muthi*.

8.7 Prominent war-doctors of Vulindlela

Some war-doctors took advantage of the times and, regardless of where they were located, opportunistically assisted groups that promised to pay more. Sometimes an *inyanga* might have been situated in an Inkatha area, but secretly gave *muthi* to strengthen ANC warriors, and *vice versa*; it all depended on money.

Although the violence was obviously traumatic to many people, some benefitted financially. This is what some authors defined as occult economies: ‘the deployment, real or imagined of magical means for material ends’.¹⁰⁹ They detail what we know, from historical and anthropological accounts, about the occult in Africa, which is not a form of primitive magicality or “animism”; it embodies a set of ‘normative convictions about moral order, social value and material equity’; it provides a ‘matter of fact repertoire of “first cause” explanations in the face of human misfortune or natural catastrophe’; it suggests a set of practical techniques that can be deployed by those with the necessary power and knowledge to do so.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹Joan Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, “Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from South African Postcolony.” *American Ethnologist* 26:2 (1998), 279-303.

¹¹⁰Joan Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, “Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from South African Postcolony”. *American Ethnologist* 26:2(1998), 279-303.

Inkatha had a number of war-doctors they trusted. These included Manqele, Jamile in Durban and Mchunu, who lived in the neighbouring KwaMpande area. They also consulted with Mbanjwa in Richmond, in the ePhatheni area. Khangela Zondi in Mvundlweni was a brutal war-doctor who wore a heavy coat in winter and in summer. My informants claimed that every day in Mvundlweni, Inkatha people used to jump through huge flames of fire.¹¹¹ This had an intimidatory effect on KwaShange people, because Inkatha people jumped through fire during daylight, to make sure that KwaShange people could see them.

Other war-doctors' names mentioned in KwaShange were Gabuza, a well-known war-doctor who was also an expert on lightning and rain doctoring, and Mchunu who was the most feared war-doctor in Vulindlela. His son, Senzo, was a supporter of the UDF. In 1987, when Inkatha attacked all UDF supporters in Vulindlela, Senzo, like many other UDF youth supporters, sought refuge in Edendale. After almost a year he went home at night to visit his parents; some Inkatha people saw him. Inkatha attacked and killed him the following morning. This action of Inkatha angered Mchunu, the war-doctor. He secretly approached the UDF in KwaShange, with the aim of avenging his son. He told the KwaShange people what kind of *muthi* Inkatha was using at that particular time and he gave them (KwaShange ANC) the same *muthi*.¹¹²

8.8 Body parts used for *muthi*

One informant that participated in the ritual said:

We did it [ritual murder]. It had to be done; otherwise we were not going to win. We were going to be finished [by the enemies]. [...] we captured one of them; we were instructed [by the war-doctor] that we should not injure the person because *muthi* does not work if the person is already dead. We took him to a stream. We

¹¹¹Interview with group of 12 men, KwaShange 14 May 2010.

¹¹²This was the worst thing that was done to Inkatha. One of the reasons why *muthi* that was used was not disclosed was because it was dangerous. If your enemies knew the *muthi* you were using, they get the same *muthi* and yours will not work.

cut his genitals, left eye, left hand and when he was dead we cut open his abdomen and removed the liver and heart.

My informant, Mthandeni Dlamini, in KwaShange, speaking of the killing of his son in 1989:

My son (15 years old), Thulani's severed head, arms, legs and genitals were found in a forest, neatly packed separately, in black plastic rubbish bags. It was obviously *muthi* murder. We suspect that Inkatha killed him with the purpose of using his body parts for *muthi* purposes. This was common here [...].¹¹³

A person whose body parts were selected to be used for *muthi* was not supposed to have any scar on his body and he was not supposed to be injured. The body parts had to be removed while the person was still alive, so that those who took the body parts would be active and more powerful. When the person cried whilst they cut the body parts, the sounds would 'be heard' by the community he belonged to and that would make them lose the battle. They preferred to obtain body parts from the man who was leading the warriors but, because of the nature of violence, they usually did not know who the leader was, so they ended up mercilessly cutting anybody's body parts.¹¹⁴

They remove their masculinity, that is, their testes and penis. If they remove an enemy's masculinity, the rival group the deceased man belonged to would be disempowered by the *muthi* mixed with his penis and testis. When the testis is mixed with *muthi*, the rival *impi* would all drink the *muthi* and call the name of the enemy camp and say negative things about them, just to weaken them. Each person would be expected to roar like a lion and proclaim '*ngahlabana*'. Everybody who has taken part in this ritual would be expected to stab an enemy, even if he was already lying down injured or dead.¹¹⁵

¹¹³Interview with Mthandeni Dlamini, KwaShange, 15 November 2009.

¹¹⁴Interview with Ngubane (traditional healer), KwaShange, 14 May 2010. Interview with Mdunge (traditional healer), KwaMpande, 15 May 2010. Interview with Ndlala (traditional healer), Northern Zululand, 15 June 2010.

¹¹⁵Interview with Ngubane (traditional healer), KwaShange, 14 May 2010. Interview with Mdunge (traditional healer), KwaMpande, 15 May 2010. Interview with Ndlala (traditional healer), Northern Zululand, 15 June 2010.

The left hand had to be removed and was used to stir *muthi* and sprinkle warriors with *muthi*. They used the skull to sit on. While the battle was in progress, someone prominent in the community would sit on the skull until the battle was finished, because standing up would be detrimental to his group and they would be defeated by the enemy.

They also removed the eyes of the enemies, because they believed the eyes could be mixed with *muthi* called *nkungwini* that would cause the enemies not to see them, but rather see mist or a dam, or anything else. The eyes would be mixed with certain *muthi* that would confuse the attackers and they would end up fighting themselves. Inkatha was known to be strong on this *muthi*. Ntombela had been attacked several times, but his assailants, the UDF supporters, could not win because of the *muthi*. He drove confidently and alone in Edendale, without bodyguards.¹¹⁶ Inkatha was known to have a powerful medicine, *Babengadubuleki* (a charm against gun bullets). Even if you tried to stab such people with a spear, it would not work.¹¹⁷

The liver and heart were mixed with certain unnamed substance, and the combatants had to drink this mixture. This was aimed at making them brave and vicious when faced by the enemy.

8.9 Taboo and unwritten cultural ethics

Despite the diversity of existing traditions, stories and memories, the topic of *muthi* and magic is still taboo in Zulu society. The dramas played on Radio Zulu mentioned earlier in this chapter attempted to break this taboo. They enabled the exploration of issues of power and violence in a way that was both public and intensely private. The airing of a topic as feared, as secret and yet as pervasively present—or potentially so—as witchcraft, was opened up for debate, even though there was often official silence. As an insider to Zulu culture, I am aware that by trying to understand more deeply the details of the subject, I am breaking an unwritten ‘law’, an issue of cultural ethics.

¹¹⁶Interview with Fanozi Ndlovu, Edendale, 17 May 2010. Interview with a group of 12 men, KwaShange, 14 May 2010. Interview with Moses Ndlovu, KwaShange, 18 August 2005.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Fanozi Ndlovu, Edendale, 17 May 2010.

All my interviewees were reluctant to talk about the use of *muthi*. Everyone I interviewed, especially those who participated in violent activities, was reluctant to talk about their use of *muthi*. People were most reluctant to talk about cases of actual cannibalism on the part of warriors. Yet I did my best to reassure interviewees, saying *Lokhu kuphakathi kwami nawe* (this is between you and me). Informants would say, *Ungayithikuxu* (do not tell anyone), *Ufunelani ukwazi, uzokwenzani uma usuwazi* (Why do you want to know, what are you going to do with this?) Others would say *Ngizokutshela kodwa uma usungithutha ngiyothi angazani, angikutshelanga* (I am going to tell you, but when you discuss this with other people, I will deny it and say I do not know, I never discussed this thing with you); *Akukhulunywa ngo muthi* (you do not tell anyone about *muthi* you used).

It is for this reason that I have preserved the anonymity of my informants on this matter. The primary reason for these informants' fears may be the sensitivity of the subject, because war *muthi* involves human body parts. People are scared to talk about it because further questions may be asked, such as, did you personally take part in the ritual? If the victim had to be alive during the process, does this not constitute murder? The SAPS have dossiers and the reports of pathologists who had to stitch up victims before burial – but these records are not accessible, even to researchers.¹¹⁸ If a man is arrested and there is evidence against him, he goes on trial, but it is believed that he can use *muthi* to escape the consequences. In KwaShange, community members believe that the reason why David Ntombela and many Inkatha leaders, known to have committed violent crimes, were not sentenced is because they had strong *muthi*.

¹¹⁸*Daily Dispatch*, "Police Tell of Muthi Murder", October 30; see also Joan Comaroff and John, "Policing Culture, Cultural Policing: Law and Social Order in Postcolonial South Africa", *Law and Social Inquiry*, 2004, 513-545. In 2008 I was denied access to records of *muthi* murders and suspected cannibalism by the police authorities in Pietermaritzburg.

The warriors who participated in this ritual and families of people whose body parts were removed are still psychologically affected. They believe that even now, after the war, they carry the stigma associated with this ritual and that it affects them everyday. After the battle, or when the violence came to an end, it was important to conduct cleansing ceremonies, but only a few families were able to do this.

Chapter Nine

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)¹ AND RITUAL CLEANSING²

After the gradual subsidence of the violence, in the climate of exhaustion within the KwaShange community, and the general will to leave behind what was increasingly seen as destructive madness, it will be understood that there was a great need for reconciliation between opponents and reintegration within the community.

9.1 Background

During the political violence, male children as young as 14 were trained in their communities to fight and defend their families. They eventually participated in killings and in rituals associated with war. These men, then adolescents, who earned respect for their heroism in the 1980s, are now regarded as villains and are ostracized by their communities. Political violence undermines individuals' sense of belonging to society. The memories of such violence suggest to ordinary people how others value or devalue them as human beings.³ Williams suggests that a society under stress, in violent conflict, will have higher rates of depression, anxiety, panic and violence. If, as is often the case in war-torn societies, the conflict has continued, or has broken out sporadically, for years, violent behaviour may eventually become *accepted*, and may be common to large portions of the population, and thus may be considered a cultural phenomenon.⁴ Adam Curle, notes regarding societies torn by civil conflict, states that "alienation tends to escalate into post-traumatic stress syndrome. Violence generally continues to exist within

¹The PTSD approach was developed out of attempts to understand the problems faced by the American soldiers who fought in Vietnam. In this regard it was conceived as an instrument to deal with psychological distress in people who went from a situation of relative 'normality' into a traumatic experience (the war), and then returned to 'normality' - hence the prefix 'post'.

²This concept derives from research into home ritual cleansing rites.

³D. Becker, "Dealing with the Consequences of Organized Violence", *Handbook for Conflict Transformation* (Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2001).

⁴L. M. Williams, "Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse: Preliminary Findings from a Longitudinal Study", *The Advisor* 5 (1992), 19–20.

the social fabric of societies coming out of conflict for decades or even centuries after the war”.⁵

This chapter results from the findings of my research, and especially from what I have recorded in Chapter Seven, concerning the political violence in KwaShange, which left many people, young men in particular, ‘damaged in their spirits’.⁶ My research in KwaShange in 2008 – 2010, especially with those who were child warriors, and readings of the testimonies published in Truth and Reconciliation Reports, show that young people have ‘emotional scars’. As I have stated in previous chapters, political attacks in KwaShange started in 1986 and continued until 1996. During these conflicts (lasting more than 10 years in Vulindlela) many young males were drawn into armed conflict as active combatants. Discussion of later processes of healing the psychological wounds of war of these former child warriors constitutes the aim of this chapter.

The present study emphasizes the importance of cultural understanding and healing, mental distress and trauma; these lead to the ways people express their affliction. Biomedical psychotherapeutic notions of mental distress and trauma constitute ‘Western’ social and cultural constructs, which may often be ineffective in contexts where cultural beliefs and world views are different.⁷ The biomedical approach to war trauma should thus be regarded as only one of several ways of dealing with post-war healing, since there are other ways of understanding health and healing in post-conflict situations, which are culturally prescribed and favoured by the victims and communities themselves.

9.2 Introduction

Violence consequent upon any civil war may result in trauma amongst those who experienced it. Trauma is a world-wide phenomenon, but little research has been done on

⁵Adam Curle, *Another Way: Positive Response to Contemporary Violence* (Oxford: Jon Carpenter Publishing, 1995).

⁶Words of an elderly woman in KwaShange who preferred to remain anonymous.

⁷Alcinda Honwana, “Sealing the Past, Facing the Future: Trauma Healing in Mozambique”, in *Accord no.3*. (London: Conciliation Resources, 1997).

how it presents itself in different cultures.⁸ Remedies for trauma are often culturally specific and imported remedies may be ineffective in South African communities in damaged by violence. This chapter explores the ways in which the rural, Zulu-speaking people of KwaShange interpret traumatic effects and trace them to cultural thinking as regards causes. I will explain how the people have reacted to trauma over time.

Interviews conducted in KwaShange will be used to understand trauma from a non-clinical perspective, informed by an African cultural belief system. In Vulindlela, trauma is conceptualized as *ukuhlukomezeka*. This implies a disruption between the supernatural and natural domains of life. This disruption appears in anthropological literature as stigma or contagion, which is believed to make people vulnerable to traumatic events such as political violence, poverty, unemployment and HIV/AIDS. Such traumas are understood to rupture social relations. For many KwaShange Zulus, trauma, rather than being an individual condition, is seen as a general consequence of a disruption in the balance between the supernatural and natural/social worlds.⁹ The discourse of trauma is central to social functioning and it is possible to understand mental health as a socio-cultural construct.¹⁰ In terms of this view, to ensure efficacy, an approach to healing should include therapeutic strategies which draw on the appropriate world views. In this chapter I shall investigate the history of interventions premised on traditional Zulu healing practices to ensure culturally effective interventions.¹¹ Historically, trauma interventions within the Zulu context took into account local understanding, as well as the indigenous capacity for dealing with ‘social scars’.¹² Have these interventions evolved over time or have they remained the same? These are some of the questions that this chapter will attempt to answer.

⁸Alcinda Honwana, “Sealing the Past, Facing the Future: Trauma Healing in Mozambique”, in *Accord no.3*. (London: Conciliation Resources, 1997).

⁹See also Siyanda Ndlovu, “Trauma, Identity and Culture among Rural IsiZulu Speakers,” unpublished paper presented at Critical Method Nine (SA, ICC: Durban 2004).

¹⁰L. A. Barnett, “Critique, Culture and the Cough: Examining Conceptualisation of Healing”, unpublished paper presented at Critical Method Nine (SA, ICC: Durban 2004).

¹¹See Julie Parle, *States of Mind: Searching for Mental Health in Natal and Zululand, 1868-1918*. (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2007).

¹²Alcinda Honwana, “Sealing the Past, Facing the Future: Trauma Healing in Mozambique”, in *Accord no.3*. (London: Conciliation Resources, 1997).

Although research has been conducted in the area of trauma amongst victims of violent crime in South Africa,¹³ little attention has been paid to the way in which individuals construct and theorise their traumatic experiences and the impact that these explanations have on the healing process. This chapter will investigate the traditional understanding, as it prevails in KwaShange, of the traumatic violence of the past and how this impacts on the individual's socio-cultural view of reality. The first part of my discussion will examine the social and cultural interpretations of war trauma by deconstructing the universality of a concept such as PTSD, commonly applied to populations affected by conflict and political violence. The second part looks at local understandings of trauma healing in KwaShange by means of case studies. I conclude by analysing critically the 'Reconciliation and Cleansing Ceremony' in Vulindlela that took place in November 2010.

The methods of ritual cleansing after battles employed in traditional Zulu society are not unique, but are mirrored elsewhere in traditional societies in Africa, Asia and Australia.¹⁴ The debate in South Africa, however, will be whether these methods of dealing with trauma can be relied upon or whether contemporary western-style trauma counselling should be preferred to traditional Zulu ways of dealing with PTSD. An important proportion of the country's population is rural and still wedded to traditional culture. Even when they reside and work in urban areas, the same appears to be true. Traditional counselling methods have major advantages in comparison to other types, in that the individuals being treated have confidence in the processes, which are informal and less intimidating, allowing patients to be more at ease and less uncomfortable and alienated.

9.3 Beyond Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Dominant Western psycho-therapeutic models are often seen as universal and applicable everywhere. However, this assumption has been challenged, as Western psychology is

¹³Vaughn John, "Natal's War: Monitoring Internal Refugees and Assessing their Distress", Unpublished Report (Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1990). See also Philippe Denis, Radikobo Ntsimane and Tom Cannell eds., *Indians vs Russians: An Oral History of Political Violence in Nxamalala 1987-1993* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publishers, 2011).

¹⁴Alcida Honwana, "Sealing the Past, Facing the Future: Trauma Healing in Mozambique," in *Accord no.3* (London: Conciliation Resources, 1997);

also a culturally constructed system. Modern psychology locates the causes of psychosocial distress within the individual and devises responses which are primarily based on individual therapy.¹⁵ Recovery is achieved through helping the individual ‘come to terms’ with the traumatic experience and healing takes place in private sessions aimed at ‘talking out’ and externalising feelings. War-related PTSD was recognised in the 1980s in the United States and was based on research carried out with veterans of the Vietnam War.

The situation may be different in other socio-cultural contexts. Boyden and Gibbs have shown that in Cambodia, individual therapy conducted by modern psychotherapists can be ineffective because it does not account for the part that ancestral spirits and other spiritual forces play in the causation and healing processes.¹⁶ By focusing exclusively on the individual, family and community efforts to provide support and care are undermined. Studies on healing war trauma in Mozambique have shown that recalling the traumatic experience through verbal externalisation as a means to healing is not always effective.¹⁷ In many instances, people would rather not talk about the past and prefer to start afresh after certain ritual procedures, which do not necessarily involve verbal expression, have been performed.

What happens in KwaShange, however, and in other parts affected by political violence in the Natal Midlands, is that the vast majority of young men I interviewed for this study were born during the political violence and are between 23 and 26 years old. There is also a sizeable group of those who were ‘heroes’ in the Vulindlela conflict. For these young men, trauma is not ‘post’, but rather ‘current’, and part of their everyday life.¹⁸ Most of the population of KwaShange is still living with the ongoing aftermath of violent and

¹⁵J. Boyden and Gibbs, “Children and War: Understanding Psychological Distress in Cambodia” (Geneva: United Nations, 1997).

¹⁶J. Boyden and Gibbs, “Children and War: Understanding Psychological Distress in Cambodia” (Geneva: UN, 1997).

¹⁷Alcida Honwana, “Sealing the Past, Facing the Future: Trauma Healing in Mozambique,” in *Accord no.3* (London: Conciliation Resources, 1997); See also Alex Vines, *Renamo: Terrorism in Mozambique*. (London: Centre for Southern African Studies, University of York and Indiana University Press, 1991).

¹⁸Carolyn Nordstrom, *A Different Kind of War Story* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). Carolyn Nordstrom researched war and violence in Mozambique. She emphasizes the point that violence in Mozambique continued well beyond military attacks, landmines and direct war situations and she touched on the backlash of poverty, hunger and displacement.

traumatic circumstances. There is a need to adapt biomedical models to the concrete situations these people experience in day-to-day living.

9.4 War trauma and the spirits of the dead

In Zulu culture there are particular ways of understanding war trauma. People believe that war-related psychological trauma is directly linked with the anger of the spirits of those killed during the war. These spirits are called *imimoya emibi* (spirits of those who did not have a proper burial to place them in their proper positions in the world of the ancestors). Such people are believed to be unsettled and bitter, likely to cause harm to their killers or to passers-by.¹⁹ In Vulindlela this is a common understanding. Many people interviewed mentioned that the spirits of people killed during the violence – especially those that died in February 1991 – had to be appeased, to ensure peace.

Ritual pollution, known as *insila*, constitutes an important element in the context of post-war healing in Zulu cultural understanding. Pollution may arise from being in contact with death and bloodshed. Individuals who have been in a war, who killed or saw people being killed, are called *banequnga* (polluted by the 'wrongdoings of the war'). They are seen as the vehicles through which the spirits of the war dead might enter and afflict the community. These spirits may afflict not only the individual who committed the offences but also an entire family or group. After the war, when combatants and refugees return home, they are believed to be potential contaminators of the social body. The spirits of the dead can disrupt life in their families and villages. The cleansing process is seen as a fundamental condition for collective protection against pollution and for the social reintegration of war-affected people into society.²⁰ In KwaShange this did not happen immediately after the war in which the community fought amongst themselves – members who had participated in the February 1991 'KwaShange ambush' were regarded as especially polluted. Some community members attributed disasters which followed to lack of cleansing, but others believe that Inkatha buried their own dead with strong *muthi*.

¹⁹Alcinda Honwana, "Sealing the Past, Facing the Future: Trauma Healing in Mozambique", in *Accord no.3*. (London: Conciliation Resources, 1997).

²⁰Alcida Honwana, "Sealing the Past, Facing the Future: Trauma Healing in Mozambique," in *Accord no.3* (London: Conciliation Resources, 1997).

I will discuss how families and communities heal the social wounds of war in the post-war period through rituals. However, not everybody performs cleansing and purification rituals or rituals to appease the spirits of the dead; such practices are more common in rural areas, although some people might perform them in urban settings. Religious beliefs determine the ways in which people make decisions concerning the treatment of war trauma.

Rituals performed for former adolescent soldiers are aimed at dealing with what happened during the violence. Acknowledgment of the atrocities committed and a subsequent break from that past are articulated through the performance of rituals. Some rituals are addressed to those who have participated in the war but did not kill; others are particularly directed at those who killed other people. The latter are more complex and require the expertise of a traditional healer.

9.5 The traditional concept of warrior-hood

I use the archaic word ‘warrior’, because in traditional Zulu thinking there is a complex of ideas surrounding it, concerning the reasons why males conform to traditional military roles. Some men in KwaShange claim that they did not take part in political violence because they wanted to destroy or kill; they claim they sought to observe traditional warrior values: “To protect their community from the unruly behaviour exhibited by Inkatha.”²¹ They wanted to protect community ideals, and especially their families, communities and each other. From interviews I had with warriors it became apparent that they were driven by a conviction that said that if they had to kill, they needed transcendent reasons to do so.²² Throughout history, the only reason for fighting that has survived moral scrutiny is the fear of a direct attack with real, immediate threat to one’s people. PTSD is, in part, the tortured conscience of good people who did their best under

²¹Interview with Moses Ndlovu, Chris Hlengwa and Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 2005 and 2009.

²² Edward Tick, “Heal the warrior, heal the country”, accessed from <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-just-foreign-policy/heal-the-warrior-heal-the-country>

conditions that would dehumanize anyone.²³ Almost all cultures, past and present, have had warriors and have had stories and rituals to help them recover from combat and guide them through life. The presence of warriors is so universal that many psychologists understand ‘warrior’ to be one of our foundational psycho-spiritual archetypes.²⁴

Most conventional therapies teach healers to avoid talk of morality, but war is often claimed to be a moral enterprise, and veterans in search of healing are on a profound moral journey.²⁵ Healers and communities must support them in the process. In traditional cultures or communities such as KwaShange, men and boys who participated in violent activities were defined as warriors. This was not the same as a professional soldier; they were not members of a huge, anonymous military institution used for the violent execution of political ends. Rather, a warrior was one of the foundational roles that kept a community whole and strong. Warriors were fundamentally protectors, not destroyers.²⁶

Warriors, however, were not so highly valued or nurtured in KwaShange after the violence, and were often not accorded social status. A veteran, especially one who in the process of defending the community lost his opportunity to go to school, participated in strengthening rituals, or smoked dagga, appears to many, and sometimes to himself, as a failure in terms of normal civilian identity.

9.6 Reverberations of violence and case studies of the cleansing of former warriors

Father Benedict Mbhele is a leader of the Roman Catholic Church in Vulindlela and a trained psychologist. He interacted with some KwaShange former warriors. He told me:

²³ Edward Tick, “Heal the warrior, heal the country”, accessed from <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-just-foreign-policy/heal-the-warrior-heal-the-country>

²⁴ Edward Tick, “Heal the warrior, heal the country”, accessed from <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-just-foreign-policy/heal-the-warrior-heal-the-country>. See also Alcida Honwana, “Negotiating Post-War Identities: child soldiers in Mozambique and Angola,” in G. Bond and N. Gibson eds., *Contested Terrains and Constructed Categories: contemporary Africa in focus* (New York: Westview Press, 1999).

²⁵ Edward Tick, “Heal the warrior, heal the country”, accessed from <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-just-foreign-policy/heal-the-warrior-heal-the-country>

²⁶ Interview with Mancinza Zondi, KwaShange, 12 June 2010.

“Guilt, shame, alienation from the community and life itself—this was the legacy that the 1980s-1990s political violence left to young warriors in KwaShange.”²⁷

Nobuhle Ndaba, a Social Worker who specializes in trauma counselling at the University of Natal (now the University of KwaZulu-Natal), comes from KwaShange. Her family was deeply affected by violence. Nobuhle Ndaba came into contact with some of KwaShange former warriors immediately after the violence came to an end. She says:

Dealing with young men who were traumatized (using ‘Western’ psychotherapeutic techniques) because of the 1980s violence was an impossible mission – it just did not work. Because I come from a family that deals with similar kinds of issues in a cultural way, I advised families of my patients to consider using cultural therapeutic means – these rituals are what my family did to all of us at home. As a trauma counsellor, I still go back to cultural means of dealing with my own past issues.²⁸

Rather than feeling that their participation in defending their community had restored their families’ honour, these former warriors spent years ravaged by nightmares, homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse and sitting with guns at ‘the ready’²⁹, first because they are wanted by relatives and friends of people they killed or because of crimes they committed in the area.³⁰

9.6.1 Thembela Khanyile’s story: an example of the impact of violence

Thembela Khanyile was sixteen years old in 1987 when he participated in ‘defending the KwaShange community from Inkatha.’ He feels that, as a former warrior, he does not fit

²⁷ Interview with Fr Benedict Mbhele, leader of the local branch of the Roman Catholic Church. Similar cases were noted by Edward Tick, “Heal the warrior, heal the country”, accessed from <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-just-foreign-policy/heal-the-warrior-heal-the-country>.

²⁸ Personal communication with Nobuhle Ndaba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2009.

²⁹ Edward Tick, “Heal the warrior, heal the country”, accessed from <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-just-foreign-policy/heal-the-warrior-heal-the-country>.

³⁰ Personal communication with ex-combatants in KwaShange.

into the new South Africa. The only place he belongs to is “prison or six feet underground.”³¹

I asked him why he was active while still so young, as he could have opted not to participate. “I wanted to finally be accepted as one of the community respectable guys,” Khanyile answered. “Participating in a fight against ill-doings of Inkatha cronies in a righteous cause would expunge my family’s past (they were seen as newcomers, insignificant in KwaShange) and earn a place in the community.” He did not know that by becoming a young warrior he would return with *isinyama nokuhlukumezeka* (PTSD) or a stigma in Zulu thinking, feeling less than ever like “one of the respectable guys.”³²

Participating in a war or violence in a battle fields fosters stigma at home. When we participated in wars related to the struggle, we inevitably brought its *isinyama* stigma and horror back to our homes. We could not help it.³³

Themabela Khanyile claims he has been trying to find the will to end it all. He never married, but has five children with three different women. He neglects his children and cannot keep a job. He could not come back to his family homestead because he had never been cleansed.³⁴

War echoes down the generations. We all carry the wounds of war, known or hidden. Themabela was wounded by his father’s participation in the conflict and his own. He has been ostracized by the community and now his children, in turn, are wounded by his history.³⁵ When a warrior suffers from PTSD, his entire family and community are inevitably affected. From interviews I had with former warriors it appears that they have symptoms of PTSD—sleep disturbances, substance abuse, depression and problems with intimacy, employment and authority. The same trauma was mentioned by interviewees in

³¹Interview with Themabela Khanyile, KwaShange, 14 March 2010.

³² Similar responses were noted by Edward Tick when writing about warriors of the WWII, see Edward Tick, “Heal the warrior, heal the country”, accessed from <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-just-foreign-policy/heal-the-warrior-heal-the-country>.

³³Interview with Themabela Khanyile, KwaShange, 14 March 2010.

³⁴Interview with Themabela Khanyile, KwaShange, 14 March 2010.

³⁵Edward Tick, “Heal the warrior, heal the country”, accessed from <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-just-foreign-policy/heal-the-warrior-heal-the-country>. Interview with Themabela Khanyile and his uncle Sdumo Khanyile, KwaShange, 12 June 2010.

other areas affected by this violence, Shobashobane, Zingolweni on the South Coast and Richmond, where political violence survivors and former warriors suffer similarly.

The next sections are briefly looking at the traditional ways of ritual cleansing and reconciliation.

9.6.2 Ukukhumelana Umlatha (coming to terms with each other)

Ukukhumelana umlatha is a Zulu proverb that explains ritual cleansing and reconciliation of two groups or individuals that had differences or fought and had been enemies. Traditionally, the two parties or individuals would act under the guidance of an elderly woman. After formal discussions in a hut, when they reach agreement the old woman would take them to the ploughed field and the two groups or individuals would eat ash and wash each other's hands.³⁶ This process is called "*Ukuthelana amanzi*";³⁷ some people call it *ukuhlambulukelana* or *ihlambo* (to wash each other's hands).³⁸

Such rites are said to have been performed in instances similar to that of the 1980s and 1990s violence in Vulindlela, in order to get rid of the invisible but depressing shadow. Warriors, in particular, would be freed from the nightmares resulting from the human blood on their hands.³⁹ As in the case of individual cleansing, communities would, under the supervision of an acknowledged healer (*inyanga*), undergo treatment including *izintelezi* (medicinal mixture, particularly for expelling and keeping at bay certain evil spirits), *imibhemiso* (medicinal mixture for inhalation), *imbiza* (medicinal mixture for internal cleansing by vomiting and otherwise expelling unhealthy substances) and *amakhubalo* (herbal remedies recommended for healing, recovery or prevention of ailments and evil spirits). The blood and other parts of the beast (preferably *imbuzi*

³⁶Interview with Zenze Mkhize (traditional healer), KwaVulindlela, November 2010.

³⁷Zenze Mkhize, *inyanga* KwaVulindlela. See also Berglund Berglund, A. (1976). *Zulu Thought Patterns and Symbolism* (London: Hurst and Co. 1976).

³⁸See Ben Khumalo-Seegelken, KZN Civil-War/uDlame 1976-1996: Hurting and Healing Motives and Perspectives. http://www.benkhumalo-seegelken.de/dokumente/UkuBuyisana_2011.doc Accessed 14 January 2011.

³⁹Interview with Zenze Mkhize (traditional healer), KwaVulindlela, November 2010. See also Ben Khumalo-Seegelken, KZN Civil-War/uDlame 1976-1996: Hurting and Healing Motives and Perspectives. http://www.benkhumalo-seegelken.de/dokumente/UkuBuyisana_2011.doc Accessed 14 January 2011.

emhlophe (a white goat)), that had been selected, dedicated and slaughtered under the eyes of the officiating *inyanga*, form part of the *ihlambo* (medicinal mixture for the cleansing and purifying ritual), celebrated around the fire-place in the main hut, until shortly before sunrise.⁴⁰ Other animals, preferably *izinkomo* (cattle), are slaughtered and *utshwala* (beer) is brewed for the feast on the following day, in which every neighbour, stranger or well-wisher from afar is welcome.

Ben Khumalo, a Zulu theologian based in Germany, told me:

My grand- and great grand-parents, so I was told, would - till dawn - engage in conversation among themselves and with *abaphansi* (ancestors) to whom they spoke as if they were physically present and, by so doing, [my grandparents] embarked on a new basis of 'living in community beyond the disruption their relations had undergone.'⁴¹

Ian Berglund⁴² discusses the Zulu traditional ritual of reconciliation. When kinsmen are at loggerheads, a third party is called in to mediate. He or she invites them to cool the heat of anger. The two disputants would be seated opposite each other. Water mixed with ash and traditional medicine would be given to each person to wash his hands. Each would then be given a chance to air complaints. The mediator summarizes the statements of each person and asks them whether they are willing to forgive and forget. Each then takes a mouthful of water mixed with ash and spits it over his left shoulder. Thereafter the two drink beer from the same calabash. This is the communion of purification. Meat or beer is used. Such a ritual can be adapted and limited to the washing of hands. The symbolic cooling effect of water points to reconciliation.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ben Khumalo-Seegelken, KZN Civil-War/uDlame 1976-1996: Hurting and Healing Motives and Perspectives. http://www.benkhumalo-seegelken.de/dokumente/UkuBuyisana_2011.doc Accessed 14 January 2011.

⁴¹ Personal communication with Dr B Khumalo-Seegelken, Pietermaritzburg, 2010.

⁴² Axel-Ivar Berglund, *Zulu Thought-Patterns and Symbolism* (London: Hurst and Co., 1976).

⁴³ <http://www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/tlhagale.htm> by By Buti Tlhagale in Bringing the African Culture into the Church.

Berglund seems to suggest that the talking takes place at the same time as the two individuals or groups who have been fighting wash each other's hands. This is contradicted by traditional healers, who understand reconciliation as a process that cannot be achieved in one event. Mkhize, himself a traditional healer, and four elderly women interviewed in KwaShange understand *ukuthelelana amanzi* or *ukukhumelana umlotha* as not an event but a process.

The actual ceremonies arranged by individual families in KwaShange resemble the ritual which Berglund describes, but are not identical to it. Siphon Nxele, a former warrior, exhumed bodies of enemies from graves to get their body parts and then reburied them. He feels as though he had "dirtied and damaged his soul."⁴⁴ Zakhele Khanyile, another former combatant, declares that, though he had wished to be a great warrior of his community, all they gave him was "this dirty life and stigma."⁴⁵

9.6.3 Ukukhishwa Iqunga (ritual cleansing)

War poisons the spirit and warriors return contaminated. This is why, among the Zulu and in other traditional cultures, returning warriors were put through significant rituals of purification before reuniting with their families and communities.⁴⁶ In traditional cultures it was believed that unpurified warriors could be dangerous. Even in modern societies, the absence of rituals to reintegrate a warrior into a peaceful community helps to explain why suicide, homicide and other destructive acts occur among former warriors.

In traditional cultures, warrior-cleansing was often guided by diviners and traditional healers and a particular traditional healer presided over "warrior medicine."⁴⁷ A diviner was responsible for overseeing the spiritual lives and well-being of the society's warriors and communicating with ancestors on behalf of the warriors and communities concerned. Slaughtering an animal was considered to be the most important of all the activities.⁴⁸

⁴⁴Interview with Siphon Nxele, KwaShange, 14 March 2010.

⁴⁵Interview with Zakhele Khanyile, KwaShange, 12 March 2010.

⁴⁶Interview with Ngobese, traditional healer, Impendle, 14 August 2010.

⁴⁷Interview with Ngobese, traditional healer, Impendle, 14 August 2010.

⁴⁸Interview with Ngobese, traditional healer, Impendle, 14 August 2010.

9.7 KwaZulu-Natal government's intervention

On 7 November 2010 the KwaZulu-Natal government, working with some people in Vulindlela, organized a community ritual cleansing and reconciliation ceremony. This was aimed at bringing about peace and reconciliation to families, neighbours and residents in the areas that had been fighting in the 1980s and 1990s because of their political alignment. This ceremony received wide public attention because of the nature of the violence in Vulindlela, but it did not go unchallenged by Inkatha. I do not intend to replicate the assertions made, but rather to explore the views of persons that were directly affected by the violence.

In 1994 the KwaZulu-Natal government realized, that even though some families had performed ritual cleansing rituals, anger and resentment between communities still existed. The government established peace-committees within communities, but the efforts of the peace-committees to mediate a peace process always ended after a short period and fights erupted. The remnants of violent conflicts remained visible. The Premier's office Of KwaZulu-Natal, in partnership with other government departments, such as Safety and Liaison and Arts and Culture requested the organization SINANI⁴⁹ to support them in organizing cleansing ceremonies in a culturally acceptable way. The aim of these ceremonies was "to calm down the spirits of the dead and built up a climate of peace." The two parties, Inkatha and the ANC, met to finally break the deadlock of war and make peace possible.⁵⁰ Provincial cleansing ceremonies, for the most part effective, were carried out. In Richmond, five representatives from each of the four political parties worked together and managed to stop political violence in the area. In Umbumbulu, about 40 traditional leaders and councillors worked actively on bringing peace among the nine villages in this area. In Estcourt, peace-making strategies were initiated by religious

⁴⁹SINANI facilitates intensive residential workshops which make use of small group support to offer a space for people to reflect on their lives. The workshops cover: a sharing of an overview of one's life, discussing particularly painful past experiences, dealing with anger, dealing with loss, personal reconciliation, making decisions and goal-setting for the future.

⁵⁰Sinani www.survivors.org.za

leaders, who managed to draw in the political leadership of the area. The peace in Estcourt is fragile and the leaders are working hard to ensure that it deepens.⁵¹

In November 2010 the government's campaign to cleanse the communities that were at loggerheads in the 1980s and 1990s violence moved to Vulindlela. State President Jacob Zuma, KwaZulu-Natal Premier Dr Zweli Mkhize, the Zulu monarch, Goodwill Zwelithini, and chief Sondelani Zondi, from Vulindlela itself, were present. They emphasized in their statements a deep commitment to *ukubuyisana* [reconciliation], in very convincing terms.

The Zulu monarch, in his address, affirmed the good intentions expressed by the hosting communities; he admonished young and old, reprimanded grumblers and troublemakers and encouraged the reconciling communities to continue steadfastly in their efforts. His words were heeded by participants in and around the stadium. Before other speeches commenced, six representatives of religious communities, including *inkolo yendabuko* (the ancestral religion), *abakwaShembe* (an indigenous faith society, the Nazarene Baptists), mainstream religions such as Christianity, Islam and Hinduism opened with prayers.

As I was standing watching the whole process of cleansing and listening to the speeches about reconciliation, I began to ponder: is this a fitting way of carrying out this ritual? The national, provincial and local leadership of Inkatha had said it was not going to participate in the cleansing ritual and reconciliation ceremony. I decided to leave the stadium and went to KwaShange, to ask survivors' opinions. I conducted interviews with members of the community who were directly touched by the violence.

Muzikayifani Khumalo, KwaShange violence survivor, said:

I did not know about it. I only heard this morning on the radio that Jacob Zuma is coming and the King [Goodwill Zwelithini]. ...No, no! Even if I heard, I am the last person who would have set my foot there. What reconciliation? What reconciliation? What cleansing? Who is cleansing whom? [He is crying]. Look at

⁵¹Sinani www.survivors.org.za

my condition right now – you see [referring to his mud house].⁵² Is he [David Ntombela] prepared to return my cattle? Is he going to return our cattle? How can you speak of reconciliation, Macingwane, if people who looted our homes and our property are known and they live good life and we are still struggling because of their doings?⁵³

Makhosonke Mshengu replied:

I knew about this meeting, last week there was a loud speaker when our headman encouraged community members to attend. He said he got the instruction from *komkhulu* [the chief]. I did not go. I want to be honest with you – I did not attend. How do you say sorry to a person who lost his relative because of you? I think what happened – happened and there is nothing we can do now. My brother was killed in front of his wife and children and since then things never got back to normal...I do not think that going there would have made any difference. I was drinking at home ... life goes on.⁵⁴

Zodwa Ntsusha said:

I can only reconcile if Inkatha supporters tell me who killed my father and, more importantly, if they were to tell the truth about where his body parts are hidden or buried. I would like those to be exhumed and be buried properly. My mother spent every cent she had consulting with diviners and traditional healers trying to see if they can help us to find closure, but it did not happen – she passed away in 2003 and left us with stigma. I finished standard 10 but I do not have money to further my studies. My elder brothers are alcoholics. The eldest brother is not well, he often gets terrible headaches – he has a gun bullet that cannot be removed

⁵²Mdletshe's house was burnt in March 1990 during the Seven Days War. He never recovered from this. His son, who was a teacher, was killed in one of the KwaShange attacks in 1988, allegedly by Inkatha supporters because he refused to join Inkatha youth meetings.

⁵³Interview with Muzikayifani Khumalo, KwaShange, 10 November 2010.

⁵⁴Interview with Makhosonke Mshengu, KwaShange, 10 November 2010.

from his head because of Inkatha. I cannot find employment – I have a stigma because no proper ritual was done after my father’s death.⁵⁵

As I have shown, some survivors disapproved of the cleansing ritual and reconciliation ceremony. I concluded that the cleansing ritual and reconciliation ceremony was not a success for everyone. Instead of healing survivors, some felt that they were re-wounded. The interviews above show survivors’ anger and resentment. Firstly, some people who were supposed to know about the gathering did not know. Secondly, concerned communities were not prepared in advance. Reconciliation is not an event, it is a process. Communities that were at loggerheads claimed that they felt aggrieved because they do not know the truth about what happened in the past. National, provincial and local leaders of Inkatha and the ANC, whose speeches incited people to violence, never apologized to the victims. The Inkatha leadership refused even to go before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This was an indication that they were not prepared to tell the truth and/or reconcile with their former enemies. I concur with the statement of Inkatha about the gathering in Vulindlela, that “not enough ground work has been done to prepare the people in the area [for the gathering]. The IFP and the ANC still have a lot of issues to talk about.”⁵⁶

I believe that truth-telling is a pre-condition for reconciliation. It creates opportunities for people to see the past in terms of shared suffering and collective responsibility. In the case of Vulindlela, both Inkatha and ANC supporters suffered and they have a collective responsibility to bring about peace in the area, for the sake of future generations. More important still is the recognition that victims and offenders are members of the same community, as survivors and as human beings, and simply have to get on with each other.

The leadership of both these parties in the conflict should help the community of Vulindlela to points of agreement, partnership appears more sensible than sustained conflict. Common interests may be found in roles and identities that cross former lines of division, such as religion, gender and generation or region. Empathy, however, does not

⁵⁵Zodwa Ntsusha is 26 years old. She was born in 1986 during the violence. Her father was killed when she was only five years old; interview with Zondwa Ntsusha, KwaShange, 10 November 2010.

⁵⁶Albert Mncwango, IFP national spokesperson, *The Witness*, 11 November 2010.

lead to a fully harmonious community. Conflicts and controversy are part of all human communities. Moreover, empathy does not exclude the continuation of feelings of anger and resentment, nor does it require that the victims be ready to forgive and forget. Pardoning the offenders will, of course, broaden the basis for empathy, but for some victims it may be too distant, or too sudden, a goal. To pursue it relentlessly may result in an abrupt end to the entire reconciliation process. At this stage it may be unjust to ask victims to forgive if perpetrators refrain from expressing regret and remorse, as has been the case in Vulindlela.

In this chapter I have looked at the discourse of trauma as it is central to social functioning and it is possible to understand mental health as a socio-cultural construct.⁵⁷ In terms of this view, to ensure efficacy, an approach to healing should include therapeutic strategies which draw on the appropriate world views. I have investigated the history of interventions premised on traditional Zulu healing practices to ensure culturally effective interventions.⁵⁸ Historically, trauma interventions within the Zulu context took into account local understanding, as well as the indigenous capacity for dealing with ‘social scars’.⁵⁹ The chapter has attempted to answer the following questions: have these interventions evolved over time or have they remained the same?

⁵⁷L. A. Barnett, “Critique, Culture and the Cough: Examining Conceptualisation of Healing”, unpublished paper presented at Critical Method Nine (SA, ICC: Durban 2004).

⁵⁸See Julie Parle, *States of Mind: Searching for Mental Health in Natal and Zululand, 1868-1918*. (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2007).

⁵⁹Alcinda Honwana, “Sealing the Past, Facing the Future: Trauma Healing in Mozambique”, in *Accord no.3*. (London: Conciliation Resources, 1997).

Chapter Ten

REMEMBERING THE VIOLENCE: CONSTRUCTION AND CONTESTATION OF COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUALS' MEMORIES

10.1 Background

Memory has been studied since the end of the nineteenth century.¹ Recently it has become one of the most written and discussed topics in academic disciplines, resulting in a number of publications covering an array of issues. Pierre Nora, in the introduction to his seminal three-volume work, published in English in 1996, attributed the preoccupation with memory to modernisation and the resulting “acceleration of history.”² Some scholars have noted that interest in memory is intricately linked to trauma, particularly related to war and other armed conflicts.³ Once memory was believed to be like “a video played back over – the details reported accurately and unchanged no matter how many times, or from how long ago.”⁴ Van der Kolk and Fisler state that memories “are invariable and do not change over time.”⁵ This perception of memory, however, has been found to be inaccurate. When memory is viewed with reference to past events, it becomes clear that the way in which memory represents past events can deviate from reality in many ways. An event or character stored in memory can be, and often is, altered by time and

¹ Ebbinghaus, H. *Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology*. H. A. Ruger, C. E. Bussenius translators, (New York: Columbia University, 1913). Original work published 1885. quoted in McNally, Richard. “*Debunking Myths About Trauma and Memory*, The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry – In Review, Vol 50, No 13. 2005, p. 817.

² Pierre Nora, "General Introduction: Between Memory and History," in *The Realms of Memory*, ed. Pierre Nora, vol.1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 1-20, Quotation is on p. 1.

³ For example, Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), in particular, Chapter 1 “The Setting: The Great War in the Memory Boom of the Twentieth Century” 17-51.

⁴ Van der Kolk, B. A, Fisler R. “Dissociation and the Fragmentary Nature of Traumatic Memories: Overview and exploratory Study. *J Trauma Stress* 1995;8: 505-25, quoted in McNally, Richard. “*Debunking Myths About Trauma and Memory*, The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry – In Review, Vol 50, No 13. 2005, p. 818.

⁵ Van der Kolk, B. A, Fisler R. “Dissociation and the Fragmentary Nature of Traumatic Memories: Overview and explanatory Study. *J Trauma Stress* 1995;8: 505-25, quoted in McNally, Richard. “*Debunking Myths About Trauma and Memory*, The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry – In Review, Vol 50, No 13. 2005, p. 818.

influenced by perception. Richard McNally says “No memory, traumatic or otherwise, is ever frozen and immune from the vicissitudes of time.”⁶

In South Africa a number of scholars have published on the theme of memory. Sarah Nuttall and Cheryl Michael contend, however, that the theorising of memory in South Africa has been characterised by the weight given to politics, resistance struggles and race as determinants of identity.⁷ Nuttall and Carli Coetzee; Njabulo S Ndebele⁸ and André Brink write about memory and the significance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s work. Nuttall looks at the differences between what is often regarded as the ‘freeing’ of memory and how such autobiographical narrative affects the narrators’ lives.⁹ Gary Minkley and Ciraj Rassool discuss oral history in South Africa, arguing that oral historians have too often constructed a ‘master-narrative of resistance’ from the individual memories collected in interviews.¹⁰ Central to their case is their reading of Charles van Onselen’s work.¹¹ These works warn against oversimplicity in the interpretation or reading of any form of life history or memory.

10.2 Introduction

My thesis focuses upon the history of political violence and how it is remembered by survivors: it relies heavily on oral sources and memories of the turmoil. I was exposed to my interviewees’ criticism of national and provincial attempts to help them to remember, forgive, forget and heal the wounds of the past.

This chapter is built around three fundamental questions: How is the political violence in KwaShange remembered? When and where do survivors remember? I will postulate in this chapter that memory can be influenced by any number of factors, the

⁶ McNally, Richard. “*Debunking Myths About Trauma and Memory*,” *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry – In Review*, Vol 50, No 13. 2005, p. 818.

⁷ Nuttall, S, and Michael, C. (eds.), *Senses of Culture: South African Culture Studies* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 6-10.

⁸ Ndebele N. S, *Fine Lines from the Box: Further Thoughts about Our Country* (SA: Umuzi Publishers, 2007), pp. 84-91.

⁹ Nuttall, S. “Telling ‘Free’ Stories? Memory and Democracy in South African Autobiography since 1994” in Nuttall, S. and Coetzee, C. (eds.) *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹⁰ Minkley, G and Rassool, C. “Orality, Memory, and Social History in South Africa”, in Nuttall, S. and Coetzee, C. (eds.) *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 89-99.

¹¹ Van Onselen, C. *The Seed Is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper 1894-1985* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1996).

most significant of which would be personal perception and errors in the memory process. The chapter incorporates national and provincial dimensions and attempts to apply the issues that have been discussed on personal and collective levels. I shall begin by showing how issues of national or community memory have been privileged so much so that they undermine individual survivor's memories. How the interviewees remember violence during my study was affected by national, provincial and local discussions about 'forgiving and forgetting' the atrocities of the 1980s-1990s, which were still topical in Vulindlela and the province of KwaZulu-Natal in 2010.

I shall therefore look at the role of memory in the construction of history. In his article, Philippe Denis warns researchers about the careful treatment of oral history narratives.¹² In this chapter I attempt to answer the question of what kind of caution they should exercise: how much is accurately remembered about this violence and how much is filtered through other experiences. There is a general consensus amongst scholars who have recently ventured into the field of oral history and memory that many things influence how people remember. Even the way a person is questioned on an event can alter the memory being retrieved. Also, memory is only concerned with what has been remembered, not what has been omitted. Thus there can be variance between what has been recounted and what actually occurred. Memory is therefore not merely a passive representation of events that occurred.

Dominick LaCapra feels that no memory can be pure, since "it has always already been affected by elements not deriving from the experience itself."¹³ Memory of trauma is even further removed from actual experience, since "what occurs is not integrated into experience or directly remembered, and the event must be reconstructed from its effects and traces."¹⁴ I reason in this chapter that all memories undergo similar transformation. Just as personal memory is filtered through other experiences, "official" or sanctioned, state memories also alter, based on changes in political regime. In his writings on collective approach to memory Maurice

¹² Denis, P. and Worthington, J. (eds.) *The Power of Oral History: Memory, Healing and Development. XIIth International Oral History Conference, Pietermaritzburg, 24-27 June 2002*, 4 vols. (Pietermaritzburg: Sinomlando Centre, 2002).

¹³ Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 21.

¹⁴ Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 21.

Halbwachs has shown that memory is subject to social context.¹⁵ This chapter argues that similar influences are at play in the life of memories at the state or provincial level.

10.3 The ambiguities of the collective approaches to memory

There is a plethora of studies on memorials, monuments and collective approach to memory. Sabine Marshall published on commemorative monuments, memorials and public statuary in post-apartheid South Africa. She reasons that these symbols are aimed at reconciliation, national building and the creation of shared public history. Marshall states, however, that not everyone identifies with these symbolic markers and their associated interpretation of the past.¹⁶ Marshall's book critically explores the booming memorials phenomenon in the new South Africa, 'the political discourses that fuelled it'; its inconsistencies and ambiguities.¹⁷ Khangela Hlongwane concentrated on commemoration and memories of 'the class of 1976', Hector Pieterse Memorial and Museum.¹⁸ Lazarus Kgalema studied monuments as a 'symbol of hope'. He uses case studies of communities which have built monuments such as Thokoza, Katlehong, Tembisa, Wilgespruit, Vaal, Kagiso and Memelodi.¹⁹

Kgereshi Mokwena explored the issues of collective approach to memory using Thokoza township, near Johannesburg, as a case study. Greater Johannesburg, like the Natal Midlands, was ravaged by political violence. In his discussion of the situation in Thokoza, Mokwena concludes that people who witnessed and experienced atrocities recorded and archived in their memories what they observed and experienced in Thokoza.

¹⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective approach to memory* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

¹⁶ Sabine Marshall, *Landscape of Memory: commemorative monuments, memorials and public statuary in post-apartheid South Africa* (South Africa, Brill, 2009).

¹⁷ Sabine Marshall, *Landscape of Memory: commemorative monuments, memorials and public statuary in post-apartheid South Africa* (South Africa, Brill, 2009).

¹⁸ Khangela Hlongwane, *Footprints of the 'Class of 76': commemoration, memory, mapping and heritage* (Johannesburg: Hector Pieterse Memorial and Museum, 2008).

¹⁹ Lazarus Kgalema, "Symbols of Hope: monuments as symbols of remembrance and peace in the process of reconciliation" (Centre for the study of violence and reconciliation, 1999).

When an historical event occurs, whether it is recorded or not, those who witness the occurrence archive it in their memories. To people who were actually involved in the incident, and those who were onlookers, the occurrence can create strong and long-lasting memories. When the incident is remembered, the experience is reconstructed through memories.²⁰

James E. Young holds that the nature of memory is one that is delicate, often suppressed, ever changing and, most importantly, invariably influenced by politics; ‘the memories of [a] narrator are undoubtedly influenced by experiences and information acquired after an incident, they are modified by a narrative strategy.’²¹ Discussing collective approach to memory, Peter Novick contends that people make a conscious decision when they construct memory. They deliberately choose what they remember, how and when they remember - therefore memory, either individual or collective, is manipulated.²² Their memories are nevertheless shaped by collective ways of remembering. Mokwena defines space each side of the collective act of ‘remembering’ as a deliberate, purposeful and planned recalling of certain memories by a group or through an institution such as government or the state.²³ He reasons:

It involves more than just the recalling of events, and includes the careful recomposing, reconstruction and even deconstruction of such memories to suit a particular agenda. This process is not a spontaneous but a carefully planned one.²⁴

²⁰ Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, “Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society, with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Master of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, 2008).

²¹ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust memorials and meaning*, quoted in Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, “Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society, with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Master of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, 2008).

²² Novick, P. *The Holocaust and Collective approach to memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

²³ Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, “Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society, with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Masters of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, 2008).

²⁴ Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, “Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society, with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Masters of Art, University of the Witwatersrand, 2008).

There is a relationship between the construction of memory and the healing process, especially as it relates to the use of memorials.²⁵ Brandon Hamber stresses that, in order for people to come to terms with the past, it is essential that they relive it first, it in their minds; they can then move on to the second stage, which is the healing process.²⁶ Hamber challenges the idea that, after violence, should states want to bring about peace and stability, they expect the victims of the violent activities to “forgive and forget”. Hamber reasons, “psychologically, sleeping dogs do not lie”, meaning that people cannot just bury and forget their past traumas simply because government urges them to do so.²⁷

I concur with Mokwena, that if governments introduce memorial projects or commissions such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, urging people to reconcile and forgive each other for their wrong-doings, people may not necessarily forget the past because government has told them to. Memories have a way of continuing even if they are not in line with the popular expectations of leaders or government officials.²⁸ The way I see it, is that it also ambiguous, for surely the erection of memorials is a process of community or government - prescribed remembering – how then can the victims forgive and forget? Yet it is supposed to be for healing. In this regard Hamber suggests reparations.

The reconstruction of memory in this case can take place at a national, provincial or local (community) level, where a collective decides to engage in an exercise meant for

²⁵ Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, “Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society, with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Master of Art, University of Witwatersrand, 2008).

²⁶ Hamber, B. “The Burdens of Truth: An evaluation of the psychological support services and initiatives undertaken by the South African TRC”, *American Imago*, Vol.55, No 1, Spring 1998, quoted in Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, “Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Master of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, 2008).

²⁷ Brandon Hamber, Dineo Nageng and Gabriel O’Malley, “Telling it like it is...”: understanding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission from the perspective of survivors (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Johannesburg, South Africa), published in *Psychology in Society (PINS)*, 2000, 26, 18-42. See also Brandon Hamber, “The Burdens of Truth. An evaluation of the psychological support services and initiatives undertaken by the South African TRC”, in *American Imago*, Vol.55, No 1, Spring 1998.

²⁸ Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, “Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society, with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Master of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, 2008).

conscious memorialisation of an event or people.²⁹ After the first democratic elections in South Africa there were a number of initiatives such as memorials, which were built with the intention of reconstructing the memories of violence supposedly to aid the healing process.³⁰ The government introduced projects such as the Truth Commissions, commissions of enquiry and commemoration projects, which are usually employed to revisit and recompose memories.³¹ This notion of having one national memory has been criticized. Jaspal Singh and Rajendra Chetty state that this idea of collective approach to memory is problematic because memory, like truth, is subjective and dependent on the experiences of individuals.³²

There can never be one whole [memory], that the idea of collective history and memory is fraught with complications, and that [...] the production of any history narrativising the past always contains an element of fiction.³³

Brandon Hamber and Richard Wilson label collective approach to memory initiatives such as the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission as “a hostage to their own memory” and therefore obstructions to the process of selective forgetting advocated by reconciling national political leaders. They challenged the call by the then State President, F. W. de Klerk, for South Africans to simply ‘let bygones be bygones’.³⁴

²⁹ Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, “Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society, with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Master of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, 2008).

³⁰ Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, “Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Master of Art, University of Witwatersrand, 2008).

³¹ Brandon Hamber, “The Burdens of Truth. An evaluation of the psychological support services and Initiatives Undertaken by the South African TRC, in *American Imago*, Vol.55, No 1, Spring 1998.

³² Jaspal Singh and Rajendra Chetty (eds.), *Trauma, Resistance, Reconciliation in post-1994 South African Writing* (New York, Peter Lang Publishing, 2010).

³³ Jaspal Singh and Rajendra Chetty (eds.), *Trauma, Resistance, Reconciliation in post-1994 South African Writing* (New York, Peter Lang Publishing, 2010).

³⁴ Brandon Hamber and Richard Wilson, “Symbolic closure through memory, reparation and revenge in Post-conflict societies”, *Journal of Human Rights* 1,1: 35-54, quoted in Anna John Vetlesen, *Evil and Human Agency: understanding collective avoiding* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[...] it is critical that victims are not expected to forgive the perpetrators, or forget about the past because some form of reparations (or comprehensive report on the nature and extent of past violations) has been made.³⁵

Hamber and Wilson require reparations and it is not just remembering and memorials that can claim to heal the victims. Hamber and Wilson feel that the idea of dealing with the past through a national Truth Commission ascribes a collective identity to a nation and assumes that nations have psyches which experience trauma similar to individuals.³⁶

Mokwena reiterates Hamber and Wilson's understanding, stating that collective approach to memory initiatives such as the TRC tacitly implies that pursuit of national unity is a unitary and coherent process when it is not, in fact, and that the national process of dealing with the past and individual processes of dealing with the past are largely concurrent and equivalent. A national process of uncovering and remembering the past is said to allow the country to develop a common and shared memory and, in so doing, creates the sense of unity and reconciliation for its people.³⁷

The collective approach refers to an initiative, for instance by an entity such as a government, to reconstruct and represent memory through the use of a Truth Commission, commissions of inquiry and projects such as public memorials and monuments. Such a move is believed to be helping the nation to develop a common and shared memory which is pivotal to the enhancement of unity and perhaps reconciliation, as in the case of South Africa. In some cases, the collective process would seek to re-enact one memory for the entire nation and individuals within it, in spite of their different experiences.³⁸

³⁵Brandon Hamber and Richard Wilson, "Symbolic closure through memory, reparation and revenge in post-conflict societies", *Journal of Human Rights* 11: 35-54.

³⁶Brandon Hamber, and Richard Wilson, "Symbolic closure through memory, reparation and revenge in post conflict societies", (paper presented to the Traumatic Stress in South Africa in South Africa Conference, Johannesburg, 2009), quoted in Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, "Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society, with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Master of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, 2008).

³⁷Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, "Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society, with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Master of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, 2008).

³⁸Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, "Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Master of Art, University of Witwatersrand, 2008).

The case against the collective approach to memory reconstruction is that it ignores the fact that human society is not heterogeneous. Hamber and Wilson state that the collective national approach to memory reconstruction ascribes a collective identity to a nation, an identity of a traumatised people³⁹ and this makes it dubious. They are critical of national processes such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, because these initiatives fail to recognise that each of the traumatised individuals live in a world of his or her unique circumstances. This results in the national process failing to take account of the individual's personalised trauma, especially if the process was seen as a high-profile initiative, handling well-known cases involving high-profile political activists.⁴⁰

A similar dilemma was noted in smaller communities where people who had committed atrocities in their past were expected to join hands with the victims and work with the state to promote peace and harmony in the country and to forgive each other and forget all the wrongs done against them. This was a countrywide phenomenon; many local communities were coerced to abandon their memories in a sea of forgetfulness. Christians could counter that, according to the Bible, only God is able to genuinely forgive and forget "He throws our sins into the sea of forgetfulness and remembers it no more."⁴¹

This coerced forgetting was rejected in some local communities. Kgereshi Mokwena looked at the Thokoza Township near Johannesburg. The experiences and findings of Mokwena are similar to the community experiences in Vulindlela. In 2009 I was requested by the community to organize a committee that would express their views about their unhappiness at the KwaZulu-Natal government's announcement of the erection of a Heroes' Arch in Slangspruit. The Premier of KwaZulu-Natal announced this in 2009 and on a number of occasions I raised concerns with KZN government officials. In 2010 I organized a conference on the memories of political violence at

³⁹Hamber, B and Wilson, R. "Symbolic Closure Through Memory, Reparation and Revenge in Post Conflict Society" (Paper presented to the Traumatic Stress in South Africa in South Africa conference, Johannesburg, 1999).

⁴⁰Hamber, B and Wilson, R. "Symbolic Closure Through Memory, Reparation and Revenge in Post Conflict Society (Paper presented to the Traumatic Stress in South Africa in South Africa conference, Johannesburg, 1999).

⁴¹Hebrews 8: 12 (New International Version).

Msunduzi Museum, Pietermaritzburg, with special reference to the ‘Seven Days War’. The Premier’s wife, Dr. May Mashego-Mkhize, delivered a speech announcing that the government intended to continue building memorials in the Midlands.

On 27 March 2009, *The Witness* published my article. I was aggrieved about the fact that many people who suffered in the Midlands violence were ignored, their stories not heard and they were expected to forget what had happened to families and communities and move on with their lives.

The names of prominent people who fought in the struggle are written in history books; their names are engraved on a monument in Freedom Memorial Park in Pretoria. The names on the monument include those of dead and missing soldiers. Most of the people who suffered in the Seven Days War are not even known in the public arena, except the few whose names are at the peace monument that was erected in Imbali Stage Two. It is the consequences that we need to consider as a serious indictment on our society: most of the people who suffered are still tormented by what they went through.

When I raised questions on behalf of my community as to why victims of the war in rural Vulindlela were ignored with regard to these memorials, I was told to raise it ‘on the right platform.’ Similar situations were noted by Mokwena in Thokoza. There had been reports, even in 2012, about a big monument to be built in 2019 in Imbali to commemorate the victims of political violence. People in other areas surrounding Pietermaritzburg, equally affected by violence, have been left wondering why they are excluded. One example of how collective approach to memory can go wrong is the Peace Monument erected in Imbali in the Midlands in 1998, in honour of those who died during the violence. The choice of the location of the Memorial means that people from areas neighbouring Imbali are confounded. Families of the victims and the people of Vulindlela were disappointed and frustrated by this act of the government. Many people I interviewed in KwaShange expressed their discomfort about the ANC government selecting where in the Midlands political violence was to be remembered. Many people said that Edendale is given more attention in everything, including

services: “*asisezukuyivotela i-ANC thina, sikhathele*” (we are not going to vote for the ANC, we are sick and tired [of being treated this way]).⁴²

Sabine Marshall reasons that ‘the government invests in monuments to achieve specific objectives [...]’

...in South Africa, the government tends to assume a particular strong and somewhat paternalistic role, where government officials see themselves as public representatives who must develop strategies and make decisions on behalf of and in the interest of “the people” who elected them [...].⁴³

Marshall argues that this occurs in a context where the majority of the population owing to a long legacy of marginalization and disempowerment strongly relies on the government to provide development and services, and where individuals often lack the capacity and experience to actively participate in decision-making and especially to take initiative and follow through with the implementation of proposed projects.

As in the case of Thokoza township residents, Nonjabulo Khumalo, a political activist in KwaShange, who was part of the group I interviewed, expressed her unhappiness and that the government of the ANC, “...i-ANC esayilwela, sayilwela sisebancane. Uhulumeni osimele sonke thina esalwela umzabalazo kodwa iqhakambisa abantu baseyiDeni abahlukumezeka. Thina?...thina? [she was in tears] (...the ANC we fought for, we fought for from our very young age, our own government has singled out Edendale victims of violence [as if they were the only ones]... what about us? what about us? [from neighbouring KwaShange]...)”.⁴⁴

This is a shared view amongst many KwaShange victims of violence. As Mokwena noted with regard to Thokoza residents, “it is representative of the complaints of communities and individuals against what they considered to be an attempt to reduce and submerge their history, individual memories, pain, trauma and healing processes

⁴² Interview with a group of five women, KwaShange, 14 November 2010.

⁴³ Sabine Marshall, *Landscape of Memory: commemorative monuments, memorials and public statuary in post-apartheid South Africa* (South Africa: Brill, 2009).

⁴⁴ Interview with Njoloba Khumalo, KwaShange, 14 November 2010.

under the image of a single area.”⁴⁵ Since emotional healing requires space for individuals to reflect and heal at their own pace, collective processes such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission seem to be taking away that individual space by emphasising a collective approach. This may submerge individual memories under the collective’s uniform memory.

Based on the findings of his research in Thokoza, Mokwena concluded that concepts such as nation, community and individuals do not necessarily refer to one and the same entity. He agrees with Anderson that they exist as entities in people’s imaginations and are their mythic constructs, wrongly equated with individuals’ experiences.⁴⁶

Following this line of argument one might conclude that the idea of a community having a psyche like a human being and being capable of suffering trauma may be in many cases be without basis. Concepts such as community trauma and community healing are also dubious political myths. This also applies to the concept of community healing which seems more metaphoric than literal.⁴⁷

Thus single programmes initiated on a national scale may not, in practical terms, be in a position to deal with the trauma experienced by every individual throughout the country and especially not with the trauma of people in small communities, where the sense of ‘nation’ is weak. Even the much-publicised TRC could not attain that kind of influence. Organisations such as Sinani (see Chapter Nine) and Khulumani Support Group⁴⁸ thus took upon themselves the responsibility of filling in the obvious gaps

⁴⁵Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, “Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society, with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Master of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, 2008).

⁴⁶Anderson, B. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, rev. ed. 1991), quoted in Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, “Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society, with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Master of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, 2008).

⁴⁷ Kgereshi Petrus Mokwena, “Commemorating painful experiences in a divided society, with special reference to the Thokoza Memorial: A case study (Master of Art, University of the Witwatersrand, 2008).

⁴⁸The Khulumani Support Group was formed in 1995 by survivors and families of victims of the political conflict of South Africa’s apartheid past. It was set up in response to the pending Truth and Reconciliation Commission by victims who felt the Commission should be used to speak out about the

and provided psychological support to victims and survivors of violence at the individual level. The TRC Evaluation Report, compiled by Khulumani and the CSV, states that the TRC's national programme for healing was far above the individual survivor's needs level and could not deal with their trauma and healing.⁴⁹ The victims' memorial in Imbali was the ruling party's initiative and represented the party's views and agenda, neither the full history nor the healing needs of the victims of the violence. Most victimised families in Vulindlela thus boycotted it. In KwaShange, interviewees said that they were not consulted on how to commemorate or where the commemorative structures were to be built, nor was there consultation on the name of the memorial.

A similar debate occurred regarding the reconciliation and cleansing ceremony in November 2010 in Vulindlela, to commemorate the victims of the violence, but also to reconcile communities that were at loggerheads.⁵⁰ According to interviewees in Vulindlela, the memorial ceremony was conducted by local, provincial and national politicians, without the locals' knowledge.⁵¹ Many complained that the memorial and reconciliation ceremony aggravated their trauma, since hearing about the memorial revived terrible memories. Some said that they went to the extent of organizing themselves in order to disrupt the ceremony, so that it would not take place, because it would re-traumatise them instead of helping them to go through their personal healing. The memorial ceremony would perpetuate the haunting experiences and memories. Yet the memorial was supposed to be 'the community's' way of commemorating those who died from 1987-1996. It does not seem as though individual survivors were regarded as members of the 'community', since many of the directly affected survivors were excluded.

As the rest of my thesis indicates, the politics of the Midlands violence were very complex. At least two political parties were involved – communities and representatives belonging to both, even relatives, and any memorials should at least

past to ensure that such violations never occurred again. <http://www.khulumani.net/khulumani/about-us/item/1-background.html>.

⁴⁹ CSV and Khulumani Support Group: Survivors' perceptions of the TRC and suggestions for the final report.

⁵⁰ <http://www.survivors.org.za/programmes/peace-building-programme.html>. I attended the ceremony as a community member, also as a researcher.

⁵¹ Interviews with Khethokwakhe Khuboni, KwaShange, 14 November 2010.

have reflected this if they claim to aim at the healing of memory. It was, however, seen by most of my interviewees and the community as a partisan process biased towards the ANC, this in spite of some of these very victims having been supporters of the ANC. Supporters who now find they lived in the ‘wrong’ zone to be remembered cannot depend on the government for their trauma to be recognized or assuaged. Many interviewees believed the violence will rekindle. Thus it is best to recall none of it, rather than a one-sided picture of such terrible experiences.

10.4 Counter-Collective Memories and Individuals’ Memories Constructions

In KwaShange, reluctance was displayed by people to participate in national and provincial initiatives to create community memorials. They did not participate in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As seen earlier in the chapter, they opposed the memorial in Imbali. They opposed the memorial, cleansing and reconciliation ritual organized by the national and provincial governments in 2010 in Vulindlela. There seemed to be a counter-memory conspiracy.

One of the reasons mentioned by interviewees is that in 1991, when KwaShange ANC combatants killed 17 Inkatha combatants, the late Harry Gwala, ANC leader in the Midlands in the 1990s, promised that the ANC government would erect a memorial stone in KwaShange, to honour those ‘heroes’ that fought in the battles [and killed Inkatha combatants] but nobody in the ANC-led government has implemented Gwala’s vision. This is one of the reasons why they are reluctant to support these initiatives. Another reason seems to be anger against Inkatha. Some interviewees mentioned that they do not think it is fair to be given equal recognition with Inkatha since Inkatha, leaders were ‘traitors’.

Inkatha betrayed black people and the struggle in general. How could we submit names of our people to the Imbali memorial where in the same memorial stone there is a list of names of Inkatha members; who are we fooling here? Whose story should be told?⁵²

⁵² Mzoneli Mfeketho, KwaShange, 14 November 2010.

The attitude displayed by some KwaShange residents counteracts the government's large-scale plan. Daniel Bouchard delivered a counter-memory concept. He reasons that counter-memory can exist in opposition to the official (hi) story:⁵³

Individuals who do not subscribe to the dominant memory, who refuse to forget or remember what it prescribes, become part of society's counter-hegemonic groupings. Their memories exist in private spaces and individual minds. Their memories are subaltern and exist as a potentially threatening undercurrent to the social order. Their ability to survive depends on what claims to political resources and state power the group is able to muster.⁵⁴ Yet, even in totalitarian societies, the state does not completely control individual or social memory. Agents of civil society can play an active role in strategies of remembrance; sometimes in collaboration with the state, sometimes against it.⁵⁵

George Lipsitz's understanding of counter-memory differs somewhat from that of Foucault. In his view, counter-memory is a way of remembering and forgetting that starts with the local, the immediate and the personal.⁵⁶ Unlike historical narratives that begin with the totality of human existence and then locate specific actions and events within that locality, counter-memory starts with the particular and the specific and then builds onward toward a total history. Counter-memory looks to the past for hidden histories excluded from dominant narratives. But unlike myths, which seek to detach events and actions from the fabric of any larger history, counter-memory forces revision of existing histories by supplying new perspectives about the past.⁵⁷ Counter-memory embodies

⁵³ Daniel Bouchard (ed.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Select Essays and Interviews with Michel Foucault* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), quoted from Gary Baines, "The politics of public history in post-apartheid South Africa," accessed from http://sun025.sun.ac.za/portal/page/portal/Arts/Departemente1/geskiedenis/docs/baines_g.pdf.

⁵⁴ Daniel Bouchard (ed.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Select Essays and Interviews with Michel Foucault* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), p. 144, quoted from Gary Baines, "The politics of public history in post-apartheid South Africa."

⁵⁵ Daniel Bouchard (ed.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Select Essays and Interviews with Michel Foucault* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), p. 144, quoted from Gary Baines, "The politics of public history in post-apartheid South Africa."

⁵⁶ Lipsitz, G. *Time Passages: Collective approach to memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 213. Daniel Bouchard (ed.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Select Essays and Interviews with Michel Foucault* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), p. 144, quoted from Gary Baines, "The politics of public history in post-apartheid South Africa."

⁵⁷ Gary Baines, "The politics of public history in post-apartheid South Africa."

aspects of myth and aspects of history, but it retains an enduring suspicion of both categories. Counter-memory focuses on localised experiences of oppression, using them to reframe and refocus dominant narratives purporting to represent universal experience. Thus counter-memory is not a rejection of history, but a reconstitution of it.⁵⁸ Particular versions of the past are selectively invoked to add credence and authenticity to truth claims, as well as to assert the right to a particular legacy and identity. David Lowenthal cites a civil rights veteran: “If we don’t tell the story or control the telling it’s no longer about us”.⁵⁹ The issue is one of ownership and control of the past, and how to get others to buy into a specific version thereof. This is where public memory comes into the picture.

10.5 Examples from Interviews in Vulindlela

Earlier events can be reconstructed in the process of remembering, as they are retrospectively instilled with new meaning. In other words, “the past is not preserved, but is reconstructed on the bases of the present.”⁶⁰ This was evident in the interviews. The interviewees largely remembered events in the past by connecting these with current systems of meaning. These reconstructed memories on occasion strengthened resentment between individuals in Vulindlela communities. One interviewee, asked to share his memories of violence, said:

[...] The reason why we have all these problems today in our communities is because the ANC allowed young people to control us – there is endless and uncontrollable crime in our community. Women were raped during the period of violence, women are still raped today. Schools were boycotted and broken into by the very same *amaqaban*;; we have similar problems even today. People were killed and their bodies mutilated then, have you heard [on the news], even today these things are happening. Who do you blame? The youths

⁵⁸ Lipsitz, G. *Time Passages: Collective approach to memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 213, quoted from Gary Baines, “The politics of public history in post-apartheid South Africa,” http://sun025.sun.ac.za/portal/page/portal/Arts/Departementel/geskiedenis/docs/baines_g.pdf.

⁵⁹ Lowenthal, D. *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) see also Lowenthal, “Fabricating Heritage”, *History and Memory*, 10, 1 (Spring 1998), pp. 5-24, quoted from Gary Baines, “The politics of public history in post-apartheid South Africa.”

⁶⁰ Halbwachses quoted in Edkins, J, *Trauma and Memory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 32, quoted from Gary Baines, “The politics of public history in post-apartheid South Africa.”

that did not get opportunities to go to school during the violence period are responsible for all problems we are faced with and the ANC is responsible. Bheki Cele says people should return their illegal guns to the police. They [ANC] gave these guns to the ANC supporters to kill us. They are testing their own medicine.⁶¹

One woman in KwaShange had an interest in being a ward councillor (Ward 4, comprised of areas aligned to ANC and IFP. These areas were at loggerheads in the 80s and 90s) shared her memories of political violence:

You see, the reason why our infrastructure development is delayed in KwaShange is because Inkatha [IFP] won the elections in the province in 1994. They deliberately created a system that made it difficult for us [supporters of the ANC] to get development in our areas. We fought for this democracy. Many people in KwaShange lost their lives. Even today [2008] our area is not developed because, even though the ANC is in control of KwaZulu-Natal, many office officials are still IFP and they deliberately bypass ANC-supporting communities. I want to be a councillor so as to 'settle the score'. Firstly, for all our people that Inkatha killed during the time of violence [in the 1980s-1990s]. Secondly, to develop ANC supporting areas in Vulindlela, as they have been ignored since 1994.⁶²

Another woman interviewee, in the IFP area:

Now that there is no more fighting in our area, we need to seriously consider appointing women in the leadership of our communities. Women suffered a great deal; they were the ones who made sure that children are taken care of whilst men were fighting. The tension that existed between us [IFP] and ANC is the reason why we are not progressing as women in rural areas. I think we should put aside our differences as women and fight for our rights. Women are reliable. They are not corrupt as men are. I think one thing that the violence taught is that we should not allow men to do as they wish with our lives. The

⁶¹Interview with Mhlephila Ndlovu, KwaShange, 14 March 2009.

⁶²Interview with Nozibele Mthombeni, KwaShange, 12 March 2009.

reason why violence got out of hand was because men were dominating – and look where that brought us, to this endless circle of pain, suffering and lack.⁶³

These testimonies show that memories of violence are reconstructed. The earlier events are given new meanings as they are interpreted through the needs of the present day. Giving the past new meaning, they came to the conclusion that everybody is affected by political actions or systems in this country.

The second interviewee feels that men were dominant in the past and their dominance led to the area being engulfed by violence. She feels that men should not be allowed to continue ‘messing-up’ the area [and the country] because “they are not reliable and they are corrupt.” She sees the suffering of women in Vulindlela [and South Africa, in general] as a continuation from the time of violence when men were dominant and led the area astray. The current outcries in the country about corruption influence her memory of violence. Women suffered then but they are still suffering today. She feels that women should take community leadership positions in Vulindlela, precisely to correct the wrongs that were done by men who led the area into an “unnecessary war”.

Remembering is an important aspect in this regard, because in one sense these women “compose their memories to help them feel relatively comfortable with their lives, which give them a feeling of composure.”⁶⁴ This corresponds with the fact that these two women are caregivers, reliable, anti-corruption, have memories of suffering and feelings of community leadership responsibility.

Memories in KwaShange are often referred to as proof or evidence of what really happened. In the aftermath of violence, people draw on memories when justifying their actions today. One man shared his memory of violence and used them to justify why his son had to be appointed as the ward councillor in KwaShange.

[...] I suffered a lot for this community. I was found guilty of a crime I did not commit – but a state gun that was signed out under my name was used to

⁶³ Interview with Thulile Mbongwa, KwaShange, 12 March 2009.

⁶⁴ Thomson in Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, p. 29.

killed Inkatha youth – the killing was justified because if the youth were not killed, many people would be dead by now. The Inkatha youth was planning to attack and kill many people here. [...] Now I am not able to support my family because I cannot be employed. [...] my son should at least be given opportunities by the ANC-led government to be a councillor. This will help my family to ‘put food on the table.’⁶⁵

The debate in KwaShange as to who should become the ward councillor, and why, is built partly on constructed memories of previous times – violence of the 1980s. The use of memories as proof of previous suffering and the reasons for benefitting in the current dispensation is common in KwaShange. Interviews show that people use memories of violence in their strategies to gain political authority and benefit from the current government of the ANC.

Tacit carriers of community memory are often to be found in all three areas in the form of ruins of homesteads, shops and buildings that were once homes of people who were either killed or displaced by the violence. Families, even those who have relocated, will keep these places untouched, as reminders as sacred ground and the graves of their forefathers. It can be argued that these sites also tell the ‘silent’ story of the violence.

A number of ruins from the violence are kept untouched. They serve as constant reminders of what happened in KwaShange, but also as proof of the suffering of individuals. Many interviewees voiced their memories of the sites where their relatives died. These sites are, in the main, houses that were burnt with people inside. The survivors use these as proof when they claim compensation from the provincial government. They also use these ruins to prove that their suffering “really” happened.

⁶⁵ Interview with Ntandose Nhlumayo, KwaShange, 12 March 2009.



Burnt house in KwaShange – picture taken by member of SAP in 1987 (Pietermaritzburg archives)

It is in these ruins that interviewees remembered details of their experiences; for instance, Zenze Dlomo remembered that his son had been wearing his grey raincoat because it had been raining. He also remembered that his son had been standing leaning on the wall when the bullet hit him and he was able to point to the section of the house which was standing. Many were overcome by emotions which they had suppressed. Beside ruins or sites that are used as memory triggers and constant reminders of what really happened, others used photographs to evoke memories of violence. Visual historians such as Patricia Hays have shown the importance of photographs as legitimate historical texts to be analysed and presented.⁶⁶

Zulu philosophy says *umenzi uyakhohlwa kodwa umenziwa akakhohlwa* [the doer of bad deed forgets, but the sufferer does not]. This Zulu expression is normally used if there has been a quarrel.

⁶⁶ Hayes, P. and Bank, A. "Introduction" in *Kronos* (Special Issue: Visual History, 2001) 27, pp. 1-14

My interviews with oral informants from KwaShange who were ANC supporters and from neighbouring areas which supported the IFP proved this expression to be correct. Many interviewees from KwaShange remembered only bad things that were done to them by Inkatha combatants. Gonyela Ndlovu was a UDF child combatant in 1988 in KwaShange; in the same year he and other seven young UDF combatants were apprehended by police in Mvundlweni whilst carrying out an attack. They killed three men at the bus stop who were waiting for transport to Pietermaritzburg. In an interview, Gonyela Ndlovu said:

Inkatha combatants were merciless; they often attacked unexpectedly and killed people. I cannot even count how many times we were attacked. They usually came at awkward times, early in the morning, 03h00, when everybody is fast asleep, and they burnt houses. Many people [in KwaShange] were killed in these attacks [...]⁶⁷

Gonyela's memory is selective. He seemed to have forgotten about the many atrocities and human rights violation he committed. All that he remembers, when asked about his experiences of violence, are atrocities committed by Inkatha combatants toward him and KwaShange people. This testimony is representative of many such stories in KwaShange, where oral sources speak as if they had not attacked Inkatha supporters, despite evidence to the contrary.

In Mpumuza, an IFP neighbouring area, Manzini (in a wheelchair), who was injured in KwaShange in the February 1991 massacre, said:

[...] *Ngingaxola kodwa ngeke ngikhohle* [I will forgive but I will not forget] what was done to us in KwaShange. Today I am in a wheelchair because of their brutality. I am grateful, however, because I am still alive because many of my neighbours did not survive. They died. They were killed and mutilated in KwaShange. Others disappeared; even today we do not know where their remains are.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Interview with Gonyela Ndlovu, KwaShange, 14 April 2009.

⁶⁸ Interview with Manzini, KwaMpumuza, 14 April 2009.

Another thing I noticed with Vulindlela oral sources, particularly those who had committed human rights violations, is that they minimise their actions during the violence. This is a less extreme form of denial. They do not deny that particular gross human rights violations occurred, but they question victims' or recipients' emotional responses or experiences. They make statements like “*banehaba*” (they are exaggerating) “*nabozwela kakhulu*” (they are too sensitive):

This was common during those days, there was a war. Did they expect us to fold our arms when they attacked us? Did they not kill our people, did they not destroy our property? Did they not loot? For me it was not a big deal. These things should not be blown out of proportion. All I know is that we defended ourselves from people who attacked us. We eliminated *ophumasilwe* [warlords] and I do not regret we got rid of them because otherwise this area would be something else if they did not die [...] so I am saying it is not a big deal.⁶⁹

Many survivors of this turmoil have compartmentalised their memories. Because their stories are no longer regarded as heroic, as they used to be during the times of violence, they select or choose what they want to discuss with the interviewer. Painful and traumatic memories – especially the terrible things they did to their enemies – were not shared. In some instances they denied that certain gross human rights violations were committed. Many refused to revive these suppressed traumatic memories. Common immediate responses were either to remain silent or show anger, when, for example, asked about atrocities and body mutilations, in particular. Silence and anger seemed to be their defence mechanism. When they showed anger or remained silent they either changed the subject if the interviewee was a kind person or discontinued the interview if the interviewer was persistent. Only three people threatened me. The defence mechanism was used against a truth which seemed unbearable to them. What made them open up and tell the truth eventually? Survivors of violence have to develop trust in the interviewer that is genuinely prepared to listen and is not going to be judgmental. The venue in which the interviews took place was private.

⁶⁹ Interview with Ndonga Dlomo, KwaShange, 14 April 2009.

At the beginning of the interviews in 2008 there were high levels of resistance, mainly from men. Those men who had participated as young combatants at the time of the violence refused to share their memories. This group of men showed symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. They tended to be alcoholics, or use drugs (dagga). The majority is unemployed and some of them have been in and out of prison. They were mentioned as people who had committed atrocious acts in the name of the community. They were regarded as heroes at the time but after the violence had come to an end, they were regarded by the same community as villains.

I was not there. I never did anything wrong. I do not remember anything. I think if you want to know how what happened, you should talk to your brothers and stop bothering the whole community. Why do you want to bring back things that we have forgotten about? Do you think it was nice? Do you think we enjoyed it?⁷⁰

In September 2008, I phoned Nosihle Phakathi and made an appointment to interview her. She promised that she would be ready. The following week I drove from Durban to meet with her in KwaShange, as per our arrangement. She did not come to welcome us (my research assistance and myself), but instead her older brother asked:

Tell me, what are you going to gain with all this? [...] do you realise that you are hurting people. Nosihle lost her three months baby. Inkatha people attacked her boyfriend's family where she was at the time; they shot and killed everyone in the house, took the baby and burnt the house. She does not talk about this [...] because she does not want to talk about it. I would advise you to stop it. She will not talk to you about it [...].⁷¹

These two passages are examples of aggression, anger and silence shown by interviewees in KwaShange. These statements attest that informants have not dealt with their past experiences. Sipho Sokhela, for instance, shows that his memories of the violence are unbearable. He does not want to remember it. In order to avoid

⁷⁰ Interview with Sipho Sokhela, KwaShange, 11 May 2008.

⁷¹ Interview with Ndovela Phakathi, KwaShange 16 August 2009

talking about it, he becomes defensive and he tells ‘white lies’ – he started by saying “I was not there”, “I did not do anything” and “I do not remember anything.” Nosihle Phakathi’s silent response is a defence mechanism against the fact that she lost her baby.

I continued working with members of the community, especially those that had a problem with sharing their memories, but I noted that many interviewees in the beginning were talking in generic terms – they avoided discussing personal experiences. To be on the safe side many interviewees used words like “*sezwa kuthiwa*” [we heard that this and that happened]. It took a lot of negotiation between myself and the individuals concerned and the intervention of community leadership. It was only when I shared my own experiences of this violence with community members in a meeting that many began to trust me. Others even mentioned afterwards that they thought that I was interested in getting stories for newspapers or radio, because in 2004 I was working for the SABC radio news and I was a regular commentator in *The Witness* newspaper in early 2009. As a result, many thought it was a journalistic project. It was only after I had assured them that I would not publish this in any newspaper or broadcast it on the radio that they agreed to talk to me. I referred to the safe, secluded place where we would do the interview. I had to promise that that I would not bring a camera or tape recorder, as I had done before. I promised that I would come alone, without my research assistant. I also promised them anonymity⁷². Even after this, it took them many months to agree to share their experiences. It was only in 2010 that I managed to break through and get some people to share – especially those who had been young combatants.

Inkatha combatants were strong, they had ammunition and the sort of weaponry that we did not have. They came here at night with [Magnus] Malan and they were trained in Caprivi – so you see – they had a lot of support from the boers. To cause them pain, we had to be brutal to those that we managed to capture. We always ran to hide when we saw them [Inkatha] attacking, but when they started killing women and children who could not defend themselves – we used to come and defend our women and children. That is

⁷² See appendix “consent form and letter

when we really started mutilating their bodies. You must know that we need to be strong. It was the only way we could protect ourselves from their bullets [...] ⁷³

This is a typical example of a memory reconstructed. Firstly, at the time it was not known that it was Magnus Malan who worked with the state police in Vulindlela to kill people; it was only during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings that Malan spoke out and asked for forgiveness. The memories of this interviewee are mixed with information he must have learnt from newspapers, or heard on the radio in discussions after the violence. During the interview he spoke as if he saw Magnus Malan. Secondly, he spoke about Inkatha combatants as trained in the Caprivi. These details were not known at the time of the violence. They only surfaced after the violence, during the Commissions' hearings.

When I interviewed those who were young combatants during the violence, especially when asked about their involvement in *muthi* rituals and human body mutilations, many denied that it happened. Others admitted “we heard about it but we do not know details because we never partook of those rituals”. When I persisted, on some occasions I was harshly treated and requested to stop, because “it had nothing to do with you”. Some questioned me “where are we going with this discussion?” and “what are your intentions?” Others even asked “why are you asking these questions?” Many of them refused ever to talk to me again about their experiences of political violence in the 1980s-1990s. Some, when asked, claimed that they had forgotten. They did not remember anything that happened because “it was a long time ago”.

10.6 Memory Triggers

Human beings have memory triggers that set off very strong recollections of past experiences. In KwaShange, interviewees spoke of a number of things that brought back memories of the violence of the 1980s. Many spoke of memory triggers such as sound, a particular scent, or something a person sees, that flashes him or her back into his or her past. These triggers cause them to relive long ago times so intensely that

⁷³ Interview with an anonymous source in KwaShange, 14 September 2010.

nothing else existed but the moment they were reliving. Many indicated that they feel the same feelings they felt when the memory was born.

10.6.1 Sgede's testimony:

I had been smoking dagga and drinking beer and joined [Inkatha] group that attacked and burnt Zibula's family [in 1987]. I assaulted Zakhe Zibula [owner of the home that was attacked], kicked and stabbed [a two year-old baby] in the face, insulted Zibula's wife with being UDF informer and of being a witch. I also got injured in the incident when UDF supporters came to defend the family. I must have also heard about the incident from my friends Tana and Latu Zuma, who were there when the attack was carried out. And I'm sure I brooded about the incident for days when I was in Edendale hospital and then Plessislaer police station in Edendale.

Sgede claims to have no memory of being part of the Inkatha group that attacked the Zibula family that night, or of anything he did or said. Like many other violent crimes he committed in the 1980s-1990s, it dropped down into a memory hole and has stayed there ever since. Sgede continued "[...] but even if I cannot remember that night, I have never forgotten that it occurred." Several things serve as memory triggers for him. One memory trigger is the Zibula homestead itself. It is still there on the same plot in KwaShange and still the same house that was burnt, but rebuilt later. Following his friends' advice, Sgede has not set his foot therein it for more than twenty-four years. He fled to Elandskop that September [1987], but returned home many times to visit. "And I could not walk past that the homestead without remembering the incident [attack] I could not remember."

Another memory trigger for Sgede is a mark on the face of Nana Zibula [who was wounded when she was two years old]. Nana is mature now, but the scar is still there. As she grows older, the scar grows bigger. Nana Zibula's testimony about the incident contains a similar phenomenon. She cannot remember the actual incident, but because of the scar on her face and the information she received from her parents about how she was injured and by whom, she can talk about the incident as though she remembered it.

Another memory trigger for Sgede is Edendale hospital itself and the Plessislaer police-station, which is opposite the hospital. These two institutions are situated on the main Edendale Road. Anybody travelling by bus or other transport from KwaShange to Pietermaritzburg is bound to see them.

Two other memory triggers involve the name of the Zibula. The homestead is close to the main road in KwaShange and the name of the bus stop close to the homestead is “KwaZibula”. Every time the name is mentioned Sgede remembers the night when he attacked the Zibula homestead. Zibula subsequently died because of the injuries he received during the attack. His grave is marked by an imposing monument. “When I pass the grave, I think of that night of attack,” Sgede says.

Some people reported that they contracted terminal illnesses. A few have bullets, which cannot be removed, in their bodies. They take medication, which itself is a constant reminder to them that they went through a terrible phase in their lives.

10.7 Where do they remember?

Most of my interviews were conducted in KwaShange. The landscape, mountains, hills and rivers bring back memories of the violence. Beside the fact that they see these things every day, once they are asked about the violence they point at these things as their memory triggers. For instance, Moses Ndlovu walked with me to Msunduzi River where his daughter was shot and killed during the Seven Days War. They seem to remember well when they are in the KwaShange area – when many of their experiences took place – as opposed to when they are elsewhere.

10.8 When do they remember?

As I have claimed earlier in this chapter, some memories are suppressed; some people, whom I began to persuade in 2008 to be interviewed, refused and said they had forgotten what happened. They only started opening up when they developed trust in me. After a long period of persuading them to talk, they started talking in 2010. I did not record them on a tape recorder, but they allowed me to take some notes.

10.9 Dreams and reconstructed memories

The concept of flashback (while the facts of the dream might not be accurate, the feelings are), implies the literal re-instatement of the sensory context of the traumatic event. Yet the notion of a timeless, inflexible, photographic reproduction flies in the face of what we know about the dynamics of the brain.⁷⁴ In other words, the feeling of sensory reinstatement can be very powerful, but this metacognitive (knowing about knowing) sense of literal replaying is illusory. The same holds for traumatic nightmares. Although survivors reported that their nightmares are replays of the traumatic experiences, this cannot literally be true. To be sure, dreams tied closely to the traumatic events can be reconstructed and “re-experienced” during sleep, but such re-experiences are not reproductions.

Flashbacks can happen in a number of ways. While most people think of flashbacks as visual, they can tie into any of the senses. For example, one woman mentioned that she often gets a memory or flashback when she smells braai meat. Since 1987 she has never again eaten braai meat or wanted to be around where there is braai meat. This ties into a memory in which she saw a person burning to death during one of the attacks in KwaShange. She was at close range and she could smell the burning body, which “smelt like braai meat.”

Example of a dream: Zenzile Hlomuka says she dreamt in 1987 of a group of vigilantes attacking KwaShange, carrying traditional weapons and singing war songs. Their commander was a short man with long hair, dark in complexion, and they were accompanied by a few white men. In the dream, the white men were carrying ‘big machine guns’ she had never seen before. In telling her dream in 2009, Zenzile attached names to the faces she had seen in her dream. She calls the commander of the impis David Ntombela and she identifies the white men that accompanied the combatants as state police led by Magnus Malan.

Zenzile admits that she only got to hear about David Ntombela in 1990. The same applies to Magnus Malan, who was not known in KwaShange in the 1980s. People

⁷⁴ McNally, Richard. “*Debunking Myths About Trauma and Memory*,” *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry – In Review*, Vol 50, No 13. 2005, pp. 113-7.

got to know about him and his contribution to the KwaShange violence in 1996, when there were TRC hearings in Pietermaritzburg. This is a typical example of a reconstructed memory. Her narration is based on knowledge she acquired many years after she had dreamt. Her telling of the dream is influenced by what she heard in the TRC hearing, as well as what she read in the newspapers about state police.

In conclusion, this chapter claims that past-present relationships shape memory. Individual and collective or state memories are reconstructed. In KwaShange, individual memories are influenced by time, guilt and shame. The violence this thesis is concerned about happened 15 to 25 years ago. It is a relatively long period and much has been said in the media and TRC, so interviewees reconstruct their memories based on what they have learnt or heard subsequently. Some interviewees feel guilt and have shameful or unpopular memories.⁷⁵ These are those who are alleged to have been violators of human rights. They are the ones who show signs of guilt and anger when asked to remember. These shameful memories, that interviewees cannot tolerate emotionally or imagine that they are too risky to disclose, are also shaped by ongoing relationships to people and spaces around them.⁷⁶ How people consciously and unconsciously evaluate the external significance of their memories determine how they frame their memories and stories for disclosure, or retain them as privately closed and inaccessible. Moreover, constructions of the private/public relationship are crucial in shaping what is remembered, how it is remembered, what is silenced or forgotten, what is expressed and how it is expressed and to whom.

⁷⁵ Thomson, A. *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* quoted in Field, S. *et al. Imagining the City: Memories and Cultures in Cape Town* (Cape Town: HSRC, 2007), p 10.

⁷⁶ Connerton, P. *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Chapter Eleven

CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the aims of the study, including the argument, followed by an assessment of the contribution of the study and an outline of implications for further research.

Ryszard Kapusckinski, a Polish journalist, wrote:

The world contemplates the great spectacle of combat and death, which is difficult for it to imagine in the end, because the image of war is not communicable – not by the pen, or the voice, or the camera. War is a reality only to those stuck in its bloody, dreadful, filthy insides. To others, it is pages in a book, pictures on a screen, nothing more.¹

Despite Kapusckinski's claim, with which I agree to an extent, that the full horror of war cannot be communicated in words or images, I have tried in this thesis to record and communicate some of the facts of the violence in Vulindlela, KwaShange.

The study fills an existing gap in the literature on political violence in the Natal Midlands, by describing and analysing the history of political violence in KwaShange, centring the account on the testimony of survivors, and its effects on the community members in the ensuing years. Most studies concerning violence during the period of the conflict did not obtain details of what happened in local communities. I have therefore looked into the events that took place in a relatively small community and how the violence generated there subsequently spread to surrounding areas of Vulindlela. I describe key events prior to 1987, which contributed to the climate in which hostilities took place – such as the breach between supporters of Inkatha and those of the UDF in the early 1980s.

¹Ryszard Kapusckinski, *Another Day of Life*, quoted in Kentridge, M. "The Unofficial War in Natal: Pietermaritzburg Under the Knife", paper presented in a seminar at Wits University, 29 March 1990.

11.2 Restatement of the argument

My hypothesis is that suffering experienced as a result of this violence, and its consequences, has influenced the lives of the whole population of KwaShange, and that this has been transmitted across generations, through whole families and communities. The social structure of the community was affected by it and, by implication, successive generations were, and probably will be, also affected. I contend that the impact of political violence in KwaShange is felt beyond immediate survivors and it has become part of some of the resident's identity.

11.3 Contributions of the present study

This study cannot do full justice to the history of political violence in Vulindlela, which would occupy volumes. My major preoccupation is to record this turmoil and to produce the first scholarly work specifically on KwaShange. The wish that the conflict be recorded as it took place in this small area was attested to by the exhilaration of local leaders when approached to contribute to the study by recounting their memories of the history of the area and of the violence of the 1980s and 1990s. MaZamisa Shange, now about 90 years old, exclaimed, "I knew that the complex history of this area would be told by one of us." Her contemporary, Manciza Zondi, concurred with her, saying that "this is our heritage, this is our wealth [laughing sarcastically] – this is the only share of inheritance we can give to our young ones."²

I have provided a new type of contribution to the literature on political violence in Natal and Zululand, but particularly the Midlands: the experience, memories and interpretation of the insider. I feel that political violence not only affects the generations that experienced and actively participated in the violence; those born during and after the violence suffered – and continue to suffer – a great deal. Within the existing literature, there is little focus on, or analysis of, the psychological effects on survivors many years after the violence ended.

²Interview with MaZamisa Shange and Manciza Zondi, KwaShange, 14 March 2010.

Most of the earlier studies concentrated on townships; few attempted to focus on rural areas. My own work describes and analyses the prevalence of *muthi* use and all rituals associated with it, a subject avoided by most other historians.³

Women are at the heart of acts of remembrance, because political conflicts or wars move out of the battlefield and into every corner of civilian or ordinary people's lives. This is why women, as well as men, construct the story and disseminate it. Women join men in forming a new class of historical actors: what we now term "witnesses," people who were there; who have seen war at close range, whose memories are part of historical records. Their testimony documents the crimes they have seen, but their stories and their telling of them in public are historical events in their own right. Most studies on political violence have neglected the experiences of women. This thesis provides women with a platform outside of KwaShange on which to share their memories. They tell of their prophetic dreams related to this violence, a subject that has never been touched on in the existing literature.

Much research has been conducted in the area of trauma amongst victims of violent crime in South Africa, but little attention has been given to the ways in which an individual constructs and theorises his or her traumatic experiences and the impact that these explanations have on the prognosis and the healing processes. My study investigates and describes the non-professional understanding of traumatic violence within a historical and political context and how this impacts on the individual's socio-cultural view of reality.

For Freud, violence is innate in human nature and finds easy expression in times of conflict. Backer states that political violence undermines individuals' sense of belonging to society. Political violence is laden with social meaning and tells victims how others value (or devalue) them as human beings; it communicates to them their

³I think the reason why this ritual was not recorded was the monitors' abhorrence of what they would consider barbaric custom. When Jeff Guy launched his book, *Remembering the Rebellion: The Zulu Uprising of 1906*, at the Campbell Collections on 19 October 2006 he said, when he was doing field research at KwaMaphumulo, he wanted to ignore the incident of the death of Oliver Veal, who was killed for ritual purposes. However, it was Qwabe people who broached the subject and asked Guy to take up the issue because they felt that Veal's spirit had to find rest and be reconciled.

place in society.⁴ Adam Curle states that a society under stress, such as civil war or violent conflict, will have higher rates of depression, anxiety, panic and violence. If, as is often the case in war-torn societies, the conflict has continued or broken out sporadically for years, this behaviour may eventually become *accepted* and may be common to large portions of the population and thus may be considered a cultural phenomenon.⁵ Curle notes, regarding societies torn by civil conflict, that “alienation has tended to escalate into post-traumatic stress syndrome. Violence generally continues to exist within the social fabric of societies coming out of conflict for decades to come.”⁶

Generally, what I describe in this thesis did not take place in the public eye, nor was it recorded in newspaper reports: it does not deal with any prominent man that was a founder of the UDF or Inkatha, or with ‘war lords’ or commanders of vigilante groups. It is not much concerned with the sufferings of the mighty in camps or on battle fields, but rather with the sacrifices, emotional torture, agony and psychological effects that almost every man, woman and child endured.

My study was conducted 15 years after the end of the violence in KwaShange. The fundamental questions my work attempts to answer are: how is the violence remembered by its survivors 15 years later; what are the consequences of the experiences and how do they affect family life and schooling? How much displacement of families has there been? I have tried, especially in Chapters Three, Eight and Nine to answer the following questions: how did communities, families and individuals survive these traumatic experiences? How did they cope, or fail to cope, with their experiences, both then and 15 years after the end of the violence?

In Chapter One I examine the issues mentioned above, which, I assert, have never been subject to investigation. This chapter then proceeds to set this study in the

⁴D. Becker, “Dealing with the Consequences of Organized Violence”, in *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*. (Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2001).

⁵Adam Curle, *Another Way: Positive Response to Contemporary Violence* (Oxford: Jon Carpenter Publishing, 1995).

⁶Adam Curle, *Another Way: Positive Response to Contemporary Violence* (Oxford: Jon Carpenter Publishing, 1995).

context of the wider literature concerning Natal violence, memory and trauma. I introduce my topic and explain under what conditions my study was carried out.

Chapter Two explains and justifies the research methodology of the study (mainly with respect to interviews). I systematically and rigorously reveal my research methodology and myself as “the instrument of information generation.”⁷ This engages with the insider-outsider debate. I note that critical and feminist theory, post-modernism, multi-culturalism and action research help reframe one’s understanding of insider-outsider issues, particularly in respect of positionality and power and knowledge construction. This chapter considers the advantages and disadvantages of insider research. Against this background I consider my own position. I reason that the insider-outsider dichotomy is simplistic. I found myself in a constantly changing continuum between the two positions.

Chapter Three deals with what I consider to be my main contribution to the scholarly work on violence in the region. The effects of the violence of the 1980s and 1990s on the generations not directly involved because of their age, and on the ‘born free’ generation, constitute a major subject in my study; I have also presented the accounts of actual combatants. I have used my own memories to paint a picture of the psychological and emotional effects of this upheaval. I offer first-hand accounts of this terrible period of the past, drawn from the time period that I am interested in, as primary sources. My mother’s memories and my own provide ‘windows’ into the past.

Part of the subject matter of this thesis is how I experienced the violence of 1987 to 1996, from the age of about eight until my early teens. This period of uncertainty and violence marked my life and affected my identity. I have made regular reference to my historically constructed self, shaped by my own history and past experience. Mine was a childhood that, in its interactions between parents, children and siblings, was echoed in many other families in KwaShange. I use this thesis to understand some of the effects of war on family dynamics. This adds an authentic dimension to existing

⁷Ruby, “Exposing Yourself: Reflexibility, Anthropology and Film” in *Kinesis Reports* 3: 1 (1980), 153.

knowledge of the violence in the Midlands. I hope that my work helps to justify the methodological use of self in research.

My study does not claim to be an account of facts and events, but of personal experiences, which thousands of people who experienced violence suffered time and again. It is the inside story of KwaShange, told by one of its survivors. What makes it unique is that it does not focus on great incidents, but deals with the multitude of small emotional and psychological effects. It tries to answer the question: how was everyday life in KwaShange during the years of conflict reflected in the mind of the average person? That is why I have opted to use myself and my mother as examples of what was going on in people's minds, because I know what was happening in my mind. Section one deals with how a scholar researches a traumatic event that he himself experienced. What influence has the past on the present – the memories of violence today? Personal experiences are interwoven with scholarly comment and used to explain how my research project developed. I use autobiography as a method in qualitative research and discuss the challenges and opportunities it raises for qualitative researchers.

This thesis tries to answer, with reference to the small details of personal experience, the question of what happened in KwaShange. As mentioned earlier, this area has never been researched. What happened there in the 1980s and 1990s is not documented.

In Chapter Four I provide an historical background to KwaShange. I record the influxes and layers of diverse groups of refugees and others who settled in the area, the final wave of whom were escaping from white farms. Chapter four attempts to show how these various epochs and phases affected the KwaShange area. It documents these, with the object of determining the roots of violence in the 1980s and 1990s. I reason that the history of KwaShange remains in the hearts of its residents, and more especially it resides in the spirits of their ancestors, in their graves. This chapter specifically shows a deep history of internal conflicts in the area (so-called 'faction fights') and how this fed into and was overlain by the later political violence between Inkatha and the ANC. While political violence was not a new phenomenon, what happened from 1987 onwards was different from anything that preceded it.

Chapter Five has two main thrusts. Firstly it provides biographies of four key ring-leaders of the contending forces in KwaShange. These men played a central role in the civil unrest which unfolded. Two of them (Ngedlezi Mchunu and Makhekhe Thabethe) were leaders of the Inkatha group in the area, two (Moses Ndlovu and Chris Hlengwa) were UDF/ANC leaders. Drawn from newspaper sources, but also, critically, from interviews with these protagonists, I offer insight into the disintegration of the KwaShange community into civil war and its wider repercussions in Vulindlela, in general. The interviews and biographical sketches, among other sources, reveal how the bitter enemies Mchunu and Hlengwa were once best friends, how the union leader, Ndlovu, was recruited at a remarkably early stage into the ranks of the ANC. Secondly, this chapter provides a month-by-month, sometimes day-by-day chronology of events in KwaShange, based mainly on interviews I conducted in KwaShange.

The principal purpose of chapter six is to explain the wider politics that stood behind the conflicts of the 1980s and 1990s in Natal and Zululand, with a view to showing how provincial and national developments, in particular the emerging tension between Inkatha and the ANC at the national level of leadership, changed the climate in KwaShange and fuelled violence.

Chapter Seven focuses on the subject of precognitive dreams and visions of political conflict. The chapter outlines some precedents in colonial and apartheid society, before concentrating specifically on KwaShange. A key point that this chapter makes is that dreams and visions comprise a culturally defined means of communication between the living and the ancestors or God and have a strong impact on communities' conceptions of reality. I reason that through dreams and visions one can gain an additional and unique access to the period studied; dreams and visions in KwaShange affected and influenced the political history of the area. I note that it was mainly women who experienced prophetic dreams and visions in this period. The chapter goes on to discuss dreams and experiences by women. A common theme for several of the dreams that it discusses is their revelatory, predictive character. Another was the carnage they saw. A third was their muddled, disturbed character. The chapter then elaborates on a point raised earlier, the gendered character of visions and dreams – women saw visions, men practised rituals.

The chapter records that women are at the heart of acts of remembrance of political conflicts. It demonstrates that the violence moves out of the battlefield and into every corner of ordinary people's lives. Women join men in forming a new class of historical actors: what we now term 'witnesses,' people who were there; who have seen violence at close range, whose memories are part of historical records. This chapter discusses the dreams and visions women had during and after the violence. In my opinion researchers, through studying the dreams of their research subjects, gain access to their period of study. Dreams are often about past and future events. In the case of KwaShange, individuals had dreams that affected the history of violence in the area. I suggest that historians, especially those that conduct research into the lives of people who have faith in the prophetic powers of dreams, should draw on dreams and visions, because they are part of most Zulus' lives and beliefs.

Chapter Eight highlights on the issue of ritual murder in the conflicts of the 1980s and 1990s. The aim of this chapter is to fill the critical gap left open by scholars of political violence in the Midlands, Natal and Zululand. It postulates that war doctors were at the core of political violence and that *muthi* made from human body parts played a crucial role in the rise of communities and individuals to power. The chapter first explores the prior history of *muthi* power, from Shaka onwards. It then justifies its focus on this subject, noting first that some scholars who have explored the political violence in the Midlands have considered it an inappropriate subject to ponder and, secondly, that this means ignoring the reasons why warriors were mutilated and body parts mixed with *muthi* were eaten. This chapter chronicles the psychological and social scars that *muthi* murders have left on the KwaShange community. It concludes by noting that few cleansing services happened after the violence came to an end, leaving these people deeply psychologically wounded.

Chapter Nine in many ways extends the argument presented in Chapter Eight. It makes a number of central points. Firstly, the young people who were involved continue to bear emotional scars. Secondly, that processes of healing of the psychological wounds of war of these former children warriors need to be carried out. Thirdly, that biomedical psychotherapeutic notions of mental stress, trauma and healing may be inappropriate and ineffective in contexts where cultural beliefs and world views are different, remedies for trauma often being culturally specific.

Chapter Ten connects with Chapter One – the Research Methodology Section. It answers one of the questions raised in the thesis, how political violence is remembered by individuals, by the community and by the state. Analysis of testimonies from KwaShange interviewees indicated that their memories are influenced by time, guilt, shame and the accounts of others, over the years.

My reliance on oral interviews poses a dilemma: it is impossible for me to judge with certainty whether my interviewees were telling the truth or presenting stories they had heard or created. What is of importance, however, is the way their memories are constructed and presented; because this reflects what they perceive should be known about this recent history. All research methods have their strengths and weaknesses. I mention in Chapter One the view that oral history is necessarily subjective, but while I recognise that oral history is unlikely to produce uncomplicated ‘truth’, I believe that its central strength is that in the dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee one can learn much about the importance of the past – or a telling of it – in the identity of the interviewee.⁸

Understanding how people individually and collectively remember sensory experiences is central to understanding how they cope and manage their lives in KwaShange.

11.4 Limitations of Current Research

The limitation of this study, as is the case with most studies that use oral interviews as the main research method, is that it is restricted in scope because not everybody who knows the story is prepared to share it; oral sources are not always readily accessible. This study deals with a subject that left many people traumatised, while others lost their lives. The voices of those who died are not audible. Some people died with information that could have been invaluable for a study such as this. Property was destroyed and the State of Emergency made it impossible for detailed information to be documented by the media. Many private documents, like death certificates and

⁸Sean Fields, “Memory, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Significant of Oral History in Post-Apartheid South Africa”, History Workshop at Wits University, 1999.

photographs which could have been helpful in this study, were burnt. Another limitation is that the study takes place almost 15 years after the end of the violence. Some people may have genuinely forgotten important information; others have died without passing the information down to younger generations. It is impossible to distinguish a lie from the truth without corroborative or contradictory evidence. My study relies, to an extent, on newspaper articles written concurrently with the violence and on violence monitors who recorded details of the events. These accounts help to validate or throw doubt on my interviewees' narratives. I am also aware that state controls on the press may have rendered accounts inaccurate.

I found that people in KwaShange are moving on with their lives; many did not realise that they still have these issues buried in their minds. When asked to remember, some broke into tears, whilst others deliberately blocked off the memories.

One woman in Liberia used a metaphor of an earthquake in a vivid description of the violence that she had experienced.

There are not many warning signals; the pressure building up from the bottom is not visible. It just hits. The ground shakes and splits. The noise of crumbling emotions is great. And then, a deep silence settles over the destruction. Now nobody can trust the ground, and the clean-up appears impossible.⁹

This metaphor applies well to the experience of the civil war in KwaShange and the challenges it poses for dealing with the past.

Trauma associated with the KwaShange violence is like a 'scar on the soul' to some people. Something that they block – but no matter how they suppress it, it is always there in their memories. People do not readily speak about this for fear of exacerbating the now established hatred between former neighbours and between

⁹S. William, Approaches to dealing with trauma caused by war and political repression. Quoted from Committee for Conflict Transformation Support (CCTS) *Newsletter 18*. 2002. <http://www.c-r.org/ccts18/trauma.htm> accessed on 16 July 2010.

generations. I have found a certain conspiracy of silence applicable to many of those who lived through these events.

The great challenge with which the government is faced is to unify communities divided by political hatred, or memories of losing their relatives. Faced with such divisions, and uncertain about the fragile peace that came like bolt of lightning after the elections of 1994, the new government decided to put nation-building and reconciliation high on their list of priorities. In Chapter Nine I outline the programmes of government aimed at solving the problems remaining from the period of conflict.

These processes of reconciliation and community-building may not be on the victims' agenda of priorities. The victims' and survivors' primary needs might be personal healing and not national reconciliation, since the two are not necessarily mutually inseparable. Some of the victims might not even be aware of the government's priorities and how they relate to their own traumatic situation. The ideas of reconciliation and nation-building that our government is promoting may not have anything to do with individual trauma and healing, at all.

In the same way as the TRC did, national and community projects for symbolic reparation have shown a tendency to approach issues of memory and healing on a broad scale, failing to address the trauma of individuals. After considering the problems that national or collective processes can cause, especially the sidelining of voices that needed a platform and further traumatising the individuals they are suppose to help, I admit to harbouring some doubt as to whether national projects have the ability to help the individual healing process.

I take issue with concepts such as 'community trauma' and 'community healing', due to their limitations as definitions and my doubts about their applicability. It would be simplistic, however, to conclude that attempts to achieve healing by collective memorial projects are completely ineffectual. The TRC played an important role in providing the space and platform through which the wounds of the past could be laid bare, so that appropriate remedial measures could be taken. One such outcome of the TRC was the birth of organizations such as Khulumani, whose focus was on addressing issues of personal healing. According to the study conducted by

Khulumani and the CSVR, survivors affirmed that, though the TRC did not cater adequately for their healing, it did provide a necessary platform upon which individual healing could progress.¹⁰ The fact that a nationally-driven memory reconstruction process may not completely address the needs of individual victims and survivors may not mean the two cannot converge at all.

Although initiatives such as the KwaShange annual memorial prayers (see Chapter Nine), born of the collective efforts of communities, may not adequately address the needs of individual survivors, they play a crucial role in creating space for suppressed voices to be heard. In Hamber and Wilson's words, these types of initiatives help traumatised individuals to 'articulate their individual narratives',¹¹ which is necessary for the healing of the individual. This kind of platform for the voices of surviving victims should be understood as the beginning and not the final stage of a psychologically liberating process. The TRC is said to have provided such a platform.¹²

A final conclusion can be drawn from the entire thesis:

There is evidence in the archives, media reports and oral interviews that males and females, while no doubt both surely traumatized by the civil war, perhaps had different conflicts and approaches to the war situation and the subsequent trauma. Males appeared to be dealing with earlier traditionalist Zulu masculinity issues of power-politics and protecting hearth, territory and home. This resulted from their roles as warriors and bread-winners and their position within politics. They aligned themselves with political factions such as Inkatha or the UDF (and respective unions and allies), according to their circumstances at the time. Men who fought have to handle guilt for deeds perpetrated during the war and often show symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, like soldiers who return to civilian society only to find no support for their role in the war.

¹⁰CSVSR and Khulumani Support Group: Survivors' perceptions of the TRC and suggestions for the final Report.

¹¹B. Hamber and R. Wilson, "Symbolic Closure Through Memory, Reparation and Revenge in Post Conflict Society (Paper presented to the Traumatic Stress in South Africa conference, Johannesburg, 1999).

¹²Peter Storey, A different Kind of Justice: (in the New World Outlook: The Mission Magazine of The United Methodist Church, 1999).

Females, however, appear to have had other means of trying to restore peace during the fighting, approaching neither Inkatha nor the UDF/ANC, but a white opposition liberal party, the Progressive Federal Party (PFP), for intervention and negotiation with the Nationalist government (see Chapter Six). Subsequent to the violence, some females wished to work for the community (such as the woman who wished to be an ANC councillor), but found themselves stymied by male power-politics (see Chapter Ten). It is possible that trauma was suffered by women like my mother (see Chapter Two), who feared for their children, families and homes, who still had to work and who watched their men, both husbands and sons, ‘destroying’ themselves and their nearest and dearest for ‘ideological’ reasons.

Secondly, what seems to have been happening, indicated in the historical archives, the media records and the oral interviews, is a process of adaptation of black societies from a more patriarchal Zulu traditional socio-political order to a more urbanised, even global one, complicated by the apartheid and post-colonial struggle of the times. It was a surely as much a spiritual battle as one of the here-and-now, a battle involving the ancestors. The ways of the past that they endorsed must have been seriously compromised and maybe healing had to be spiritual.

Thirdly, my question is whether the fighting was worth it for those who lived through the civil war and were left with broken homes, enmity, grief and having to cope permanently on their own. The people on both sides of the political divide feel that neither Inkatha nor UDF supporters really won. All they say is that this civil war irreversibly changed the fabric of their lives. If the Nationalist apartheid regime following colonialism, impacted so balefully on the lives of ordinary black people, this civil war exacerbated the impact. Evidently no memorial can do justice to the suffering, even with the best of wills. One can argue that this was inevitable and the freedom attained in 1994 was the reward, but then it must also be said that this was no easy freedom for the peoples of KwaZulu-Natal in general, and KwaShange, in particular.

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State vs Hlengwa and others, transcript of judgement by Mr. Page, Natal Provincial Division of the Supreme Court, Pietermaritzburg, 11 April 1988. (Pietermaritzburg Archives)

Appendix One

A CODE OF ETHICS FOR ORAL HISTORY PRACTITIONERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

(adopted at the OHASA 3rd Annual General Meeting in Polokwane on 24 October 2007)

When planning an oral history project

1. Considering any possible harm that the interview process may cause to the interviewee's feelings or reputation or his/her community
2. Acquiring sufficient technical knowledge to conduct an interview of the best possible standard.
3. Obtaining the best possible knowledge on the culture and habits of the interviewee and his/her community.

Before the interview

4. Following a culturally-appropriate protocol when approaching the interviewee and requesting an interview.
- 5 Informing the interviewee of the purpose for which the interview is to be carried out and ensuring that he or she has understood this.
6. Agreeing on the place, time and circumstances of the interview.
7. Agreeing on whether or not the interview should remain confidential and on where and how the interview material will be stored and disseminated. This should be done in writing (release form) or verbally with a record on tape.
8. Agreeing on how the interviewee will benefit from the interview (eg receiving a copy of the tape and transcript / a community celebration). Ensuring that the interviewee do not have no false expectations.

During the interview

9. Respecting the interviewee's style of personal interaction (language, posture, dress, eye contact, etc).
10. Being gender sensitive.
11. Dealing appropriately with painful and emotional issues.

12. Verifying that the interviewee remains comfortable with the interview process and, when necessary, granting him/her the right to withdraw.

When processing the interview

13. Ensuring that the interview is transcribed, indexed, catalogued and made available as agreed with the interviewee.

14. Ensuring that all possible measures are taken to preserve the interview material.

15. Informing the interviewee of any change regarding the storage or dissemination of the interview.

16. Verifying that no part of the interview has a defamatory content.

On completion of the project

17. Reporting back to the interviewee or his/her community and giving them a copy of the recording if an undertaking to do so has been given.

18. Acknowledging the contribution of the interviewee and his/her community in any form of subsequent publication.

19. (*Where applicable*) Sharing with the interviewee or his/her community any form of financial benefit which may accrue to the interviewer.

(Oral History Association of South Africa, 24 Hamilton Road, Pretoria)

Consent Letter (English version) Mxolisi Mchunu PhD research

Introduction

Mxolisi R Mchunu of the School of Anthropology, Gender and Historical Studies of the University of KwaZulu-Natal is undertaking research with men and women in the area of KwaShange on survivors of violence memory of what happened during the time of violence. The research is being undertaken because history needs to understand more about how the violence of the 1980s-1990s affects people today. How has it affected people's attitudes, values, practices and relationships? A number of participants have been approached to be interviewed for this study and this Consent Letter serves to inform the participants of the purpose and aims of the study.

Voluntary participation.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Participants choose to participate of their own free will. Should any participant decide he/she does not want to do so he/she can withdraw from the interview without threat of consequences. If a participant decides to start an interview but does not wish to finish it or wants to skip certain questions he/she is free to do so.

Research procedures.

The participant will be asked to answer questions by the interviewer. It is envisaged that the interview will be about one and half hours long. The questions will be asked verbally by the interviewer and the participant will respond verbally directly to the interviewer. The questions are about the participant's memory of violence in KwaShange. Some of the questions are of a sensitive nature. The participant has been informed in this Consent letter that he/she will be asked some personal questions about his/her involvement in the violence and about anything that affected him/her directly. Throughout the participant can refuse to answer any such question if it makes him/her feel uncomfortable.

Everything that the participant elects to keep confidential will be kept private, including the names of those participants who have elected to remain anonymous. The participant can elect a period of time to keep the information embargoed. The information will be used to write a PhD thesis and will be analysed together with the responses of other participants.

Risks

The participant may find some of the questions are mildly distressing. There is a risk that the information he/she gives could be seen by someone else but elected confidentiality and anonymity is assured.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to the participant for participating. However, the research will ultimately be beneficial to society as it will increase knowledge of social problems.

Contact numbers

If any participant has any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist him/her in reaching a decision about participation, he/she is free to contact Philippe Denis at 0333 2605464 or Dr Vukile Khumalo at 031 260 1409

If any participant would like an assurance that this study has received ethical clearance through the UKZN Office for Research Ethics or should any participant have any comments or concerns resulting from his/her participation in this study, he/she can contact Ms Phumelele Ximba. Tel: 260 3587. Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

Having read and understood the above explanation,

I, _____ Of _____, hereby give my consent to participate in the study with the proviso that I do _____ do not _____ elect to have my name withheld and will indicate in the interview which sections I elect to have held confidential or "off the record." And I elect to have the record of the interview embargoed _____ for a period of _____ years. Alternately I do not request that the record be embargoed _____.

Signed _____ Date _____

Witnessed by _____ Date _____

Ethics Committee: Study approved by the Human/Social Sciences Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal

5.4 Summary of events in KwaShange leading up to the 1987 violence

In the late 1950s Moses Ndlovu and Nunu Mchunu and other young men of their age from KwaShange, who had come mainly from white-owned farms, escaping the tenant-labour system, were already politicised. They attended ANC organised meetings in Pietermaritzburg, where they met with people like Harry Gwala, Moses Mabhida and others of the more politically sophisticated ANC active leadership. They became influenced by this leadership and ideology and this became their political rationale for becoming involved in the struggle against Apartheid.¹

In 1960 the struggle against Apartheid in the country intensified: Ndlovu, Mchunu and Kubheka became attached to the ANC. They had their own informal meetings in KwaShange and encouraged each other not to miss these meetings.²

The ANC, PAC and SACP were banned by the Nationalist government in 1960 and no open meetings of these organisations were allowed thereafter. Mchunu, Ndlovu and other new members had no contact with the main ANC. Aitchison recorded that when the ANC was banned in 1960, the province of Natal was not a great centre of resistance.³

In March 1961 Mchunu and Ndlovu from KwaShange attended the All-in-Africa Conference held in Plessislaer in Edendale. Clearly by this time, they were fully committed to ANC ideology. *Drum Magazine* in 1961 reported the atmosphere of the conference, which left a mark on the minds of Mchunu and Ndlovu:

Few meetings can have been preceded by so many unfavourable omens as the All-in-Africa Conference at Maritzburg. There was the ban on the two main political organisations, the round-ups and imprisonment of leaders, the last-minute withdrawal of some Liberal Party and

¹ See Chapter Four for details.

² See Chapter Four for details.

³ John Aitchison, "The Origins of the Midlands War", in Ran Greenstein ed., *The Role of Political Violence in South Africa's Democratisation* (Johannesburg: CASE, 2003), 48, Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and Politics of Loyal Resistance* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), Thembisa Waetjen, *Workers and Warriors: Masculinity and the Struggle for Nation in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press: 2004).

ex-PAC men, the difficulty of finding accommodation for delegates, and the problems of transport. There was the decision to change the hall after tape-recording wires were reported to have been found in the original venue. Yet despite all this, 1400 delegates from all over the Union got to Pietermaritzburg and many of them slept out in the veld because there was no other place for them to stay. Inside the hall the labourers, the clerks, peasants, ministers of religion, intellectuals, the people from all walks of life, got down determinedly to discussing the need for united political action.⁴

After this all-important congress, the Nationalist government intensified its 'war' against all organisations that fought against apartheid and many people who were suspected of orchestrating resistance against state laws were killed.⁵ It was for this reason that Mchunu and other members of the ANC decided to play it safe.⁶ This killing and detention of people who were suspected by State Police to be ANC, PAC or SACP members continued in the years after the 1961 congress in Edendale.

In 1973, because of the lack of open political activities in Natal, the ANC instructed Ndlovu to contribute to the formation of labour unions, which eventually amalgamated and became part of COSATU. This was an important achievement for the KwaShange community members who had decided to participate in the struggle, but who had to be cautious of showing sympathy with the banned ANC. Ndlovu's active participation in the unions meant that these persons were kept up-to-date with political happenings.⁷

In 1975 the first man from KwaShange, Kubheka, was detained under the State of Emergency regulations. In the same year, Ndlovu was tasked by the ANC in exile to identify suitable young men and women within the trade union structures to be sent abroad for military training. Ndlovu worked tirelessly in KwaShange, recruiting mainly young males. He also recruited youth in other places in Natal and Zululand. This caused him to work with seasoned unionists and ANC leaders like Harry Gwala, Mathews Meyiwa, Alpheus Mdlalose and William Khanyile.

⁴Feature article in the *Drum Magazine*, May 1961.

⁵Interview with Dr May-Mashego Mkhize, Pietermaritzburg, 24 June 2010, see also Interview with Nunu Mchunu, KwaShange, 13 August 2008.

⁶See Chapter Five my interview with Nunu Mchunu, see also Interview with Dr May-Mashego Mkhize, Pietermaritzburg, 24 June 2010.

⁷See Chapter Four for details.

In 1975, Inkatha was re-established by Chief Buthelezi as an 'internal wing' of the ANC.⁸ Mchunu, Kubheka and Thabethe joined Inkatha and became active members of the movement. In 1979, tension arose between Inkatha and the ANC in exile, and in 1983, the UDF was formed in response to the Nationalist Government's proposals for a new tri-cameral Parliament, which was to include representative government for Coloureds and Indians, but exclude Africans as supposedly having Homeland Government representation. The UDF then became the 'internal wing' of the ANC in exile and Inkatha became increasingly an ethnic Zulu movement.

On 11 June 1986 the ANC in exile declared 'armed struggle' and in December 1986, the Inkatha leaders in KwaShange assaulted community members who participated in BTR Sarmcol strike in Howick.

⁸See Mzala, *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Agenda* (London: Zed Books, 1988).