

Chapter Five: National and Regional Politics: The Role of the State in Political Violence in Natal

5.1 Introduction

One of the arguments of this thesis is that political violence is the outcome of the articulation of multiple trajectories, which means that the violence needs to be thought of as a process – rather than a series of events. At different points along the way these articulations coalesce and sediment to produce something new which again interacts with the other spheres. Thus in order to understand why the conflict between the UDF and Inkatha turned violent, to the extent that the province was engulfed in what amounted to civil war, it is necessary to examine both local and national dynamics. ‘Violence’, it is argued, is embedded in the articulation between them. By this I am suggesting that each ‘sphere’ ie the local community of Mpumalanga, the regional polity of the KwaZulu homeland government and the central South African state, had its own issues and dynamics. Yet, as this chapter will demonstrate, these were not unconnected to each other.

Previous chapters have given insight into the local dynamics of Mpumalanga township. In the early 1980s local politics was spirited and diverse (see chapter four). Residents belonged to a wide range of different political and community organisations. Debate and organisational competition was located in an atmosphere largely tolerant of diversity. This is not to deny either the occurrence of incidents of violent conflict between organisations, or that the township was a violent place where a particular level of violence was accepted and tolerated by the residents. Yet despite these conflicts violence in Mpumalanga did not ‘have to happen’ but rather a series of encounters sedimented the conflict, gave it new shape and moved communities along the path towards violence. Nevertheless, as will be argued in chapter six, what we see after 1987 is political intolerance and violence of a distinctly different order.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a further set of answers to the question ‘how did we get from a situation of competing political organisations and political tensions to a situation of political violence?’ If one wishes to understand what was politically distinctive about this period, and why this order of violence didn’t happen before, then the role and the nature of the central apartheid state has to be confronted. The chapter argues that the violence was (at one level) the outcome of a confluence of dynamics between the militarised South African state and the clientelist KwaZulu government. Both were concerned, for somewhat different reasons, to stamp out political opposition and allow the government reform programme to hold sway.

At another level the chapter contributes to the theoretical argument of the thesis by illustrating that the foregrounding of locality, context and spatiality are essential to developing an analysis of political violence in Natal. Political tensions between the organisations’ leadership and some violent clashes between supporters are not sufficient to explain why ordinary people who had been living together in neighbourly co-existence suddenly started killing one another. Similarly, the state’s covert activities while able to bring about violence (see Haysom, 1990) are not on their own sufficient to explain the longevity and intensity of the violence as well as the extent of the involvement of ordinary people. Ordinary residents, who had not been politically active, quickly assumed a political identity and on the basis of that identity, judged friends to be enemies. The state did not as Haysom (1990) suggests just ‘manufacture’ the violence rather they were able, as will be explored below, to hook into local networks and exploit local conflicts.

The chapter discusses the reform policies of the South African state in the 1970s and 1980s. It outlines the way in which the so-called securocrats managed to gain the upper hand within the ruling bloc itself, enabling them to implement the ‘Total Strategy’ policy. Thus from the mid-1980s the security establishment came to play an increasingly central role within state structures. This allowed for the implementation of covert strategies intended to sow conflict and violently destroy

political opposition to both the South African state/government and the KwaZulu government/Inkatha.

The second area that needs to be considered is the specific politics of Natal and KwaZulu. The regional political dynamics set in place a distinct trajectory that was to bring Inkatha into conflict with the UDF and facilitated Buthelezi's collaboration with state initiatives to destabilise the region and wipe out support for the UDF. Since his installation as chief, Buthelezi had embarked on a mission to utilise the institutional structures provided by the homeland legislation in order to become a regional political force. The chapter will show how any opposition to these structures was seen as opposition to both Inkatha and the Zulu nation. By 1985 Inkatha had begun to take the view that its attempts to become a regional political force were being increasingly undermined by the UDF and thwarted by the support urban township dwellers were showing for what was interpreted as anti-Inkatha forces.

The chapter then goes on to discuss the approach made by the KwaZulu government to the South African state for military assistance. This request resonated with sections within the state and found support amongst the proponents of the 'counter-revolutionary warfare' position. Therefore they were prepared to assist in giving Inkatha covert military capacity in order to 'restore law and order' in the province. Of interest to the broader argument of this thesis is the way in which the implementation and execution of these plans and strategies relied on local Inkatha networks and structures. Inkatha branches, under the 'command' of loyal subjects, who had already shown they were not adverse to violence conflict, were used in the recruitment of operatives. The same networks were then used to infiltrate the covert agents back into communities. In many cases operatives were utilised in the very areas from which they came. This further disguised the role the state played in fermenting the conflict as to all intents and purposes the violence was between those within the same community.

As will be discussed in chapter six, once the Caprivi trainees were back in Mpumalanga, they used trickery and subterfuge to convince those Inkatha members opposed to violent conflict of its necessity. They also fed fire-power into the community and sabotaged peace and cease-fire attempts. Thus they assisted in shaping the form the violence took. The township quickly divided up into territories under control of one or the other political group. As will be argued in chapter seven, the spatial form was essential to the formation of the political identities that rapidly accompanied the violence.

5.2 Thinking about the South African State

As both O'Meara (1996) and Glaser (2001), amongst many others,¹ have noted in their extensive reviews of the literature on the apartheid state, there has been a tendency for much of this literature to provide a reductionist and instrumental view of the state. This was particularly so of the revisionist writings of the 1970s (some of the key examples of this literature are discussed and cited in Glaser, 2001:76-78). While there were significant differences amongst them, they were primarily concerned to understand the relationship between apartheid and capitalist growth and accumulation in South Africa (O'Meara, 1996).

O'Meara (1996:425-426) captures some of the major critiques of this approach. Firstly, they offer a 'functionalist conception of apartheid'. For many of these theorists apartheid was a set of policies that 'directly served the economic interests of capital' and enabled swift capital accumulation. This made it difficult for them to realise the impacts of the changes in the structure of South African capitalism in the 1970s. Secondly, closely linked to the first critique, is the instrumental conceptualisation of the state which sees the state as 'both monolithic and a simple instrument' of one or other faction of capital. As the statist (see Glaser, 2001:78-80) pointed out, this conception was weak on a number of fronts. It failed to explore the 'concrete organisational forms of the state', and, it didn't take into account the way in which bureaucrats and state managers pursued their own

interests. Thirdly, the analysis provided by most of this work tended to be reductionist, whereby the actions of these groups were seen to represent a class or class faction. The implication of this was that the relative autonomy of politics was lost and they were unable to 'explain the process of real politics within the state' except as a result of clashes between different class interests (O'Meara, 1996:425).

Much of the later work on the state, particularly that produced during the 1980s, attempted to address some of these shortcomings. The 'statists' as termed by Glaser (2001: 78-80) stressed the autonomy of the state and the need to examine its internal structures and workings. Amongst this literature, has been an interest in explaining power balances and conflicts within the apartheid state, as well as attempting to connect these internal conflicts to external processes.² Of significance to this dissertation is the work looking at the 'security state' of the 1980s. Those who examined the rise of the 'security state' included the radical writers, (see Cock, 1989; Swilling and Phillips, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c) as well as, those whom Glaser (2001:80) calls the liberal institutionalists (see Alden, 1996).

Glaser (2001:80) argues that the statist literature, while casting a useful light on areas that the earlier radicals had not paid much attention to, 'nevertheless, produced a mixed yield'. Empirical knowledge was usually expanded, but the work often remained decidedly descriptive. Hyslop (1989) in his 'introduction' to the 'State and Politics section' of *South African Review 5* makes similar allusions. He suggests that while the contributions to that volume are rich in empirical detail, showing amongst other things the 'detailed and precise accounts of the structures and policies of the state' (Hyslop, 1989:3), as well as, how 'the security

¹ See also Hyslop (1989), Posel (1991) and Robinson (1996).

² Glaser (2001:80) cites the following as examples: S Dubow *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid*, Macmillan, 1989; D Posel *The Making of Apartheid 1948-1961: Conflict and Compromise*, Clarendon Press, 1991; J Lazar 'Verwoerd versus the "Visionaries": The South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (Sabra) and Apartheid, 1948-1961', in P Bonner, P Delius, & D Posel (eds) *Apartheid's Genesis 1935-1962*, Ravan Press, 1993; and, D Duncan *The Mills of God: The State and African Labour in South Africa, 1918-1948*, Witwatersrand University Press, 1995.

establishment became the dominant force in policy-making' (Hyslop, 1989:5), social scientists have not 'fulfilled their obligation to theorise anew' (Hyslop, 1989:3).

Most influential in writing on the security state has been the work of Swilling and Phillips (1989a; 1989b; 1989c), their work appears in key texts of the time (see Cock & Nathan, 1989) and is favourably cited in many of the later analyses of the period (see Price 1991; Marais, 2001). Yet, the militarised, security state thesis has attracted substantial criticism (see Hyslop, 1989; O'Meara, 1996; Glaser, 2001). Much of the criticism stems from the view that they remained entrapped in an implicit instrumentalism. O'Meara's criticism (1996:427) is the most damning, the central thrust being that 'it tended to oversimplify and exaggerate the military's role in internal state politics coming close to explanations based on military conspiracies'. The writings on the militarisation of the state have tended to ignore the theoretical debates of the time (see Glaser, 2001:79-80 for a broader exposition of the issues) and thus are inclined to present a view that the state of that period had one overriding purpose and it was able to bulldoze ahead in achieving that purpose. However, a central objective of the statist literature was to demonstrate, theoretically and empirically, that the state has its own institutional cleavages and conflicts and that these 'play a major role within policy-making and administrative processes' (Posel, 1993:21).

Mindful of these issues and debates, my intention is to look at the last decade of the apartheid state. This is not intended to provide a comprehensive analysis of the state; instead the focus is on the internal power struggles within the state during this period and the broader impact of these power struggles on the political violence. Clearly, these power struggles did not happen in isolation and as Posel (1993:22) has reminded us the internal workings of the state need to be analysed in relation to the boarder economic and political forces impinging upon it. State building is simultaneously a productive and reactive process. Furthermore, place-

He also includes those writing on the security state.

specific conflicts shape the relations between the central and regional power blocs (in this case the KwaZulu government). All this impacts on both the processes of fragmentation within the state as well as the state's attempts to build a coherent state project (see Robinson, 1996).

5.3 The Militarisation of the South African State

O'Meara (1996:170) suggests that as South Africa entered the decade of the 1970s there was little to suggest the economic, social and political crisis that was to be facing the state by the mid-'70s. However, lurking below this deceptive picture was a rising inflation rate, and rapidly increasing black unemployment (Marias, 2001:39). The economic boom of the 1960s was coming to an end, severely impacting on the creation of new jobs and reinforcing capital's resistance to demands from labour to increase wages. A response to this - the 1973 Durban strikes - caught both state and capital unaware.

By the mid-'70s, some of the crisis points for the state had begun to emerge. On the political front, internally, there had been the 1973 Durban strikes followed by the emergence of the independent trade union movement, as well as, the 1976 Soweto uprising followed by student uprisings in other parts of the country. Externally, the military coup in Portugal had resulted in Portugal's withdrawal from its African colonies, providing the African National Congress with bases in neighbouring states and exposing South Africa's borders. Furthermore, the regimes that replaced the colonial powers were Marxist-Leninist, strongly supported by the Soviet Union (Glaser, 2001:101). On the economic front, the 'apartheid growth model had begun to decay' (Marais, 2001:40) and by 1976 there was a full-scale recession (O'Meara, 1996:176)

These structural contradictions (what Saul & Gelb, cited in Marais (2001:40) termed an 'organic crisis') pushed the state to consider a series of reforms. Certain sections of the state and business began to agree that there was a need to 'stabilise labour' (Posel, 1987:424). The Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions were

tasked with making recommendations in the areas of labour reform, and, influx control and housing of black workers, respectively. These were initiated under Vorster³ but only came to fruition in the Botha era.

Already at this point there were cracks emerging within state institutions, and more widely within the National Party between the hard-line *verkrampptes* and more pragmatic *verligtes*. Vorster had previously engaged in battle with the *verkrampptes*, ‘successfully marginalising them’, and winning over the Broederbond (Glaser, 2001:101). But the strategies of reform that were now being proposed went against the fundamentals of Verwoerdian apartheid. The state needed to find a ‘new language of legitimacy’ (Posel, 1987:425) if the reform programme was to find credibility amongst all sectors.

In 1978 the Muldergate scandal saw Vorster ejected from power. The revelations of corruption in the Department of Information allowed Minister of Defence, PW Botha to play his hand and take control, in the process discrediting *verkramppte* elements in the state (Posel, 1987; O’Meara, 1996).⁴

Botha moved rapidly to reorganise the state, as well as, to embark on a more definite programme of political and economic reform (Posel, 1987; O’Meara, 1996; Glaser, 2001). Botha called this programme ‘total strategy’. As Minister of Defence, in his 1975 and 1977 White Papers he introduced the concept of ‘total strategy’ (see Swilling and Phillips, 1989a; Price, 1991). Botha pointed to the regional changes brought about as the result of the end of colonial rule in Mozambique and Angola; their potential impact on domestic black politics; and, increased organisation and resistance in the domestic sphere, and, argued for the

³ John Vorster, Prime Minister from 1966-1978, and State President from 1978-1979. In the wake of the information scandal he resigned the premiership in 1978 in ill-health (O’Meara, 1996:xxxviii).

⁴ O’Meara (1996:210-219) provides a fascinating account of the internal wranglings between different sections of the state, demonstrating the broader point of the need to analyse the internal workings of the state.

need for an overarching strategic plan (Price, 1991). In the 1977 Defence White Paper

‘Total strategy’ was defined as involving the coordination ‘with all the means available to the state’ of the military, economic, psychological, political, sociological, diplomatic, cultural and ideological fields of state activity. (Swilling & Phillips, 1989a:135)

It also argued that South Africa was facing a ‘total onslaught’ from communist forces and thus needed a ‘total strategy’ that would combine security measures with reform.

In implementing this strategy, Botha looked for allies in business and the military. Business had already expressed their concerns about the direction of government and was pleased with the new ‘reform’ direction (Posel, 1987:425; O’Meara, 1996:294-5; Glaser, 2001:105). As Minister of Defence Botha had been involved in a long-running battle against the police and the Bureau of State Security (Boss) (O’Meara, 1996:210-219), he moved to isolate those elements of the state and to incorporate the military into his reorganisation (see below).

Once in government he instituted what Spence (1989:242) termed a ‘managerial revolution in the structure and process of government’. The rationale for much of this was outlined in a 1980 White Paper on Rationalisation (Swilling & Phillips, 1989c). The state was reorganised through a three-phase rationalisation programme (Swilling & Phillips, 1989a:136). Overtly, the logic lay in the need to deal with the bloated, inefficient civil service (Posel, 1999:110). However, as Posel (1999:110) suggests there was likely to be another motive; ‘the need to marginalise the right-wing opposition within the civil service’ and avoid the possibility of either an intransigent civil service that refused to cooperate or the loss of electoral support amongst civil servants. In effect, the circuits of power were re-routed to bypass resistant bureaucrats. The state’s rationale for reform was bound up in a technical discourse – ‘reform was presented as rationally incontestable’ (Posel, 1987:421).

The first phase of rationalisation involved ‘the dramatic reorganisation of the pinnacle of state power’. Four ‘planning branches’ to deal with security, economic policy, and social and constitutional affairs were established in the Prime Minister’s Office. Cabinet meetings and affairs were to be coordinated by the newly established cabinet secretariat. And, four permanent cabinet committees dealing with constitutional, economic, social and security issues replaced the twenty *ad hoc* cabinet committees that existed under the Vorster administration. A long dormant committee, first established in 1972, the State Security Council (SSC) became the key decision-making body in the state (Spence, 1989:243).

The second phase reduced the number of state departments from thirty-nine to twenty-two. This involved the creation of a new department, Constitutional Development and Planning under Minister Chris Heunis. This department was a central leg in the total strategy framework. Its role, to manage the planning and implementation of the reform policies.

The third phase involved the continuous process of ‘rationalising areas of authority’. The newly formed Department of Constitutional Development and Planning emerged as the central authority in managing ‘black affairs’.

A key feature of the reorganisation was that the security establishment⁵ became central in state policy-making. The State Security Council became a policy-making body involved in both domestic and foreign matters. It was chaired by the State President⁶ and met twice a week to recommend policy to Cabinet (Price, 1991:86). As well as the ‘security establishment’, membership also included key

⁵ The security establishment consisted of the Department of Defence, the South African Defence Force, the intelligence services, intellectuals based in key think-tanks, Armscor and the South African Police.

⁶ In terms of the 1983 constitution the office of Prime Minister was abolished and replaced by that of State President. In 1984, PW Botha became the first state president and remained so until September 1989 (Price, 1991:86).

government ministries.⁷ In effect, the State Security Council subverted Cabinet's place at the state decision-making body (Cock, 1989:8). Security as seen by the SSC was defined to include economic, political, constitutional, ideological and welfare issues.

This process demonstrated the shifts in the balance of power within the state.

Glaser (2001:103) comments that

Botha elevated two kinds of reforming technocrat: the constitutional engineer and the counterinsurgency strategist.

The former was responsible for the 'constitutional reorganisation' and the later for crushing opposition while at the same time 'winning hearts and minds' through service delivery to black areas.

These realignments allowed for 'significant changes in the form of state control' (Posel, 1987:426-427). Power became higher centralised, and the executive had greater independence from both parliament and the party. The military penetrated into civil spheres of governance with many senior military officials being incorporated into the new committees in their capacity as 'experts'. Similarly, leading business people were also incorporated onto cabinet committees.

Political reform was key to the total strategy doctrine (Swilling & Phillips, 1989b; Price, 1991). The Wiehahn Commission reporting in 1979 resulted in wide reaching reforms to the industrial relations system. Under amendments to the Industrial Conciliation Act black workers were recognised as workers for the first time and black trade unions were able to register and legally allowed to participate in the industrial relations system. The Riekert Commission was tasked with investigating influx control and the housing of black workers. A second set of legislative reforms resulted from its recommendations that conferred urban rights (economic and social) on Africans residing in white South Africa (see Greenberg, 1987; Murray, 1987; Cobbett et al, 1988; Swilling and Phillips, 1989a; Price,

⁷ Price (1991:86) lists these as foreign affairs, defence, law and order, constitutional development

1991; Alden, 1996; Marais, 2001). The Botha government also moved to amend the constitution through the introduction of the Tri-Cameral system and establish a new regional development policy.

In the early 1980s charterists⁸ within South Africa had made strategic decisions to become involved in a wide-range of political and civic organisations (Seekings, 2000:31/2), a thinking which mirrored the ANC's emphasis on organising a 'domestic political base' (Seekings, 2000:34). These strategic decisions lay behind the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in August 1983. The UDF was a broad front to which like-minded organisations affiliated. The *raison d'être* behind its formation was opposition to the Koornhof Bills and the Tri-Cameral Parliament – key elements of Botha's reform policy. Thus, most of the opposition to the state's reform programme was organised through affiliates of the UDF.

The mid-'80s was a period of intense opposition to the State. The tri-cameral elections were boycotted, as were Black Local Authority elections. There were rent boycotts, school boycotts and consumer boycotts of white shops. Government responded by declaring a partial state of emergency (O'Meara, 1996:325-328) and thousands were detained. Business was uneasy about the ineffectiveness of the government's response to the 1984-86 township uprising. They opted out of their alliance with Botha and began to explore new alliances (Glaser, 2001:105).

The failure of the total strategy doctrine resulted in intense struggles within the state over what was to replace the failed policies (Swilling & Phillips, 1989a) and opened the way for the security establishment to increase its power within the state.

and planning and finance.

⁸ Charterists is a generic term for organisations claiming broad allegiance to the Freedom Charter.

Key to the struggle was the debate between the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning and the security establishment over the way forward. The ‘reformers’ argued for the need to extend and widen the reform programme while the securocrats maintained that opposition needed to be crushed before reforms could be implemented. In particular, according to Swilling and Phillips (1989a:143), they disagreed with the ‘soft repression’ strategies pushed by the police commissioner, which emphasised ‘limited coercion and espionage to control low-intensity conflict’.

By 1986 the Office of the State President (OSP) was showing its support for the security establishment’s proposals ‘that the state defend itself by means of ‘counter-revolutionary warfare’ methods’ (Swilling and Phillips 1989b:74, O’Meara, 1996:343). At the heart of the new strategy was a plan for a more coordinated programme that would crush the opposition, ‘counter-organise’ the communities and improve socio-economic conditions (Swilling and Phillips 1989b:75).

O’Meara (1996:343) warns that while in the post-’86 period the securocrats were clearly on the rise, they should not be seen as a ‘monolithic force’.

Inter-service rivalries and territorial disputes continued to set Military Intelligence against the National Intelligence Service (formerly BOSS) and the Security Police, both jealous of the military pre-eminence. With the SADF General Staff conventional counter-insurgency proponents did battle with the advocates of ‘WHAM’ (Winning Hearts and Minds) approach.

Nevertheless, despite these differences, the security apparatus agreed on the need for a new strategy.

The national security management system (NSMS) was at the heart of the new organisational infrastructure. According to Price (1991:86), its purpose was to provide a policy-implementing capacity to go along with the SSC’s policy planning functions. The NSMS was a separate arm of government falling under the direct control of the Office of the State President. It was tasked with the

responsibility for formulating and implementing all the strategies needed to win the war.⁹ The turning point for government came in May 1986 when they rejected the Eminent Persons' Group's proposals (see Swilling and Phillips 1989b:76; O'Meara, 1996:340-341) and declared a national state of emergency activating the NSMS at all levels. O'Meara (1996:340-341) argues that the deliberate 'sabotage' of the Eminent Persons' Group's mission by the 'securocrats' through the attacks on three neighbouring states, was a clear signal that the State Security Council consensus was over.

According to Swilling and Phillips (1989b:80) the implementation of 'counter-revolutionary' warfare involved three significant changes. Firstly, there was the implementation of a new structure of centralised power and authority – the National Joint Management Centre (NJMC). After the declaration of the state of emergency, the NJMC was directly responsible for co-ordinating both the welfare and security functions within the Office of the State President.¹⁰ Secondly, there was a dramatic increase in the number of key security personnel drawn into the joint management centres at all levels. They occupied key positions within these structures. And thirdly, a new 'theory of state action' – counter-revolutionary warfare in order to 'win-hearts-and-minds' (WHAM) replaced the 'counter-insurgency' position of earlier years. Citing Frankel, Cock (1989:8) suggests that the militarisation of the South African state was 'reflected in the penetration of top government institutions by Defence Force personnel, on either a formal or informal basis'. The armed forces did not exercise a coup d'état in an explicit and dramatic way instead they exerted 'tight control over the formal holders of power' (Lowy & Stader, 1985, cited in Cock, 1989:8)

⁹ According to Swilling and Phillips (1989a:143) the securocrats circulated a document entitled *The art of counter-revolutionary warfare* in which they suggested that in order to defeat a revolutionary movement the governing power must adopt a revolutionary strategy but apply it in reverse.

¹⁰ These having been taken away from the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning (O'Meara, 1996:343).

Three assumptions underlay the new strategy (see Swilling and Phillips 1989b:81). Firstly, there was the imperative to restore law and order before reforms could be introduced. Secondly, socio-economic development needed to happen before political reform could be implemented. And thirdly, constitutional change and development needed to begin at the local level and then proceed to higher levels.

The fundamental difference between ‘total strategy’ and the WHAM programme is that the latter is no longer concerned primarily with restructuring the access points to political society. Instead, the emphasis falls on recasting the foundations of civil society so that political access points can at some future date be restructured in a way that does not threaten the system as a whole. Realising that it was resistance from below that limited the effectiveness of ‘total strategy’, the state has now turned to strategies aimed at radically reshaping the moral, cultural, religious, political and material underpinnings of civil society in the black townships. This shift from grand visions of reform from above to building up new foundations from below is the single most significant feature of current strategic thinking in the state. Although the objective of dividing, neutralizing and containing black opposition still stands, the means to achieving it have changed. (Swilling and Phillips 1989a:144)

Cock (1989:9) emphasises the need to realize the degree to which township upgrading and development represented a military strategy. She refers to the announcements by the chief of the SADF General Magnus Malan that he had taken ‘personal responsibility’ for upgrading projects in certain townships.

Alongside this, the restoration of law and order also involved the detention of individuals, the banning of organisations and the support of vigilantism (see O’Meara, 1996:344-346). The declaration of what came to be an almost permanent state of emergency in 1986 provided the enabling environment for much of this – the exception being vigilantism. It was the tight control of state policy, through the office of the state president, and, the hegemony of the security establishment that allowed for state involvement in covert activities (see below).

Clearly the empirical story of the South African state during the 1980s is, as O'Meara (1996) illustrates, much more complex than what has been outlined above. My primary concern has been to show how it might have been possible for the state to support the covert activities discussed below. The time at which Inkatha approached the SADF for assistance coincided with the point at which the securocrats were in ascendance, and the request fell on fertile soil.

Does this mean that South Africa became a security state? O'Meara (1996:427-428) presents a strong argument to suggest this was not so. Ultimately, he suggests those who argue the case for a security state

... made the same mistake as many generals – to confuse the internal logic and precision of a strategy drawn up on paper with both the murky and contested processes of elaborating and implementing policy as well as with the subsequent struggles to adjust policy to deal with its own unintended consequences. (O'Meara, 1996:427)

Bearing in mind the problems of an instrumentalist view of the state, and wishing to exercise caution in pursuing such analysis, the tenacity of 'third force' activities even after the end of the Botha presidency does need to be noted.

5.4 Regional Politics in Natal and KwaZulu

In accordance with the apartheid state's homeland policy the Zulu Territorial Authority was established in 1970. Its purpose was to co-ordinate the 196 tribal authorities in KwaZulu and to provide a higher tier of government (see Maré and Hamilton, 1987).

In 1972, in terms of the 1971 Bantu Homelands Constitution Act, KwaZulu was granted its own legislative assembly with its own constitution. The KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA) was composed of members of the former Zulu Territorial Authority – the *amakhosi* and their representatives. Chief Gatsha Buthelezi headed the KLA. Buthelezi immediately went about constructing a discourse that closely knitted together the Zulu nation, Inkatha and the KwaZulu homeland (Maré and Hamilton, 1987).

While there was provision for elected posts within the KLA, Buthelezi opposed the holding of the elections (see Bonnin et al, 1996). This left the KLA in the hands of traditional authorities. The new power bloc of the KwaZulu homeland embodied a new petty bourgeoisie, consisting of traders who had managed to take advantage of tripcos¹¹ and Bantu Investment Corporation (BIC) support and the traditional authorities (see Bonnin et al, 1996). The *amakhosi* played an important role in the bureaucratic bantustan machinery, operating as the administrative, judicial and policing agents of the new homeland. The government's policy of forced removals in Natal (primarily implemented against labour tenants and black spots) 'transferred' large numbers of African people to KwaZulu and brought them under the administrative control of the homeland government (see Bonnin et al, 1996:150).

Inkatha was formed in March 1975 with what many claim was the tacit approval of the ANC (see Maré and Hamilton, 1987:77-78). It was formed as an exclusively Zulu organisation with Buthelezi claiming that

all members of the Zulu nation are automatically members of Inkatha if they are Zulus. There may be people who are inactive members as no one escapes being a member as long as he or she is a member of the Zulu nation. (KLAD, cited in Maré and Hamilton, 1987:57)

From the beginning Inkatha's structures were intricately bound to those of the KLA (see Maré and Hamilton, 1987:61-64). By the late 1970s, it was difficult to distinguish the political authority of Inkatha from that of the KwaZulu government KLA (see Maré and Hamilton, 1987:83-88). The close and overlapping relationship between Inkatha and the KLA was to define Natal and KwaZulu politics in more ways than one. On the one hand, it provided numerous opportunities to increase the number of 'pressure points'. The homeland bureaucracy was to offer job prospects to those who would repay the emerging

¹¹ Tripcos were tripartite companies – three-way business deals between white capital, the bantustan authority and the Bantu Investment Corporation.

power elite with loyalty, respect and obedience. Membership of Inkatha was viewed as proof of this loyalty. It's suggested that 'the KLA and Inkatha withheld or provided services, jobs and tenders according to political loyalty' (Bonnin et al, 1996:168). However, on the other hand the embeddedness of Inkatha in apartheid created institutions meant that any opposition to those institutions was interpreted as opposition to Inkatha, KwaZulu (defined as the Zulu nation) and Buthelezi.

In 1978 the first elections for the KLA were held (see Maré and Hamilton, 1987:85). The Inkatha central committee controlled the selection of candidates for both the parliamentary and the local government elections. In a thirty-eight percent poll they won all fifty-five elected seats in the KLA. Their control of the elected seats gave them greater institutional control in urban areas. Always able to control political access points in rural areas – the seventy-five non-elected seats were allocated to traditional authorities and their representatives - they were now able to extend this to urban areas. Inkatha had also participated in community councils in townships both within Natal as well as in KwaZulu (Maré and Hamilton, 1987:155). Providing them with access to the same range of 'pressure points' as they had enjoyed in areas under traditional authorities, their control also had the potential to bring Inkatha into conflict with township residents. Given the precarious fiscal base of many African townships, community councils were unable to provide the services residents had been promised. Councils provoked the ire of residents when they were forced to increase rents (as in KwaMashu) or did not keep their promises (as in Umlazi). Given the close relationship between Inkatha and these institutions of local government Buthelezi was particularly sensitive to such consequences.

Initially Inkatha was considered part of the anti-apartheid fold. At first, for the ANC, non-participation in state-created structures was a question of strategy not principal (Maylam, 1991; Seekings, 2000). Their response to Buthelezi's involvement in homeland structures was ambivalent. Censure and condonement co-existed. Albert Luthuli absented himself from Buthelezi's installation as chief

(Maré and Hamilton, 1987:35) yet Buthelezi was accepted on the public platforms of black oppositional politics (Maré and Hamilton, 1987:39).

However, in the late 1970s this position changed. Firstly, within the black consciousness movement¹² there was criticism of Inkatha's participation in homeland structures and the resulting collaboration with the State. For the black consciousness movement non-collaboration was a non-negotiable principle. Secondly, Inkatha's ambiguous relationship with the ANC came to an end in 1979 at the infamous 'London meeting'. Furthermore, with the influx, in the late '70s / early '80s, of activists with a black consciousness background into the congress movement the non-collaborationist position, and hence the condemnation of Buthelezi, became more influential within the mass democratic movement.

According to Bonnin et al (1996:165) Inkatha's response was to deepen its power in three ways. Firstly, via the KLA; secondly, through alliances with white politicians and business interests; and, third through attempts to control and mobilise the people of KwaZulu and the Zulus in Natal. While it managed through the Buthelezi Commission¹³ and the *Indaba*¹⁴ to woo business and white political support, it was not as successful in its attempts with the African residents of Natal. The UDF and its affiliates boycotted the *Indaba* and Inkatha's

¹² The black consciousness (BC) movement encompasses a number of different political organisations. While activists might have been influenced by the exiled Pan-African Congress, it has its roots in the philosophy of Steve Biko. The slogan 'black man you are on your own' captures much of their philosophy. The Black People's Convention (BPC) was formed in the early 1970s. The banning of the BPC and other similar organisations in 1977 saw many of their activists in prison or exile. While the BC movement re-formed into other organisations (Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo) was launched in April 1978, and subsequently re-launched in September 1979) many activists subsequently joined organisations aligned to the congress movement (see Seekings, 2000:29-37).

¹³ The Buthelezi Commission was established through an Inkatha central committee decision in March 1980. Its brief was 'deliberate on the region' of Natal and KwaZulu. A third of its members were from business. The ANC refused to participate. (see Maré & Hamilton, 1987:163-167)

¹⁴ In 1986 a regional summit called the *Indaba* was convened by the Natal Provincial Council and the KwaZulu government in Durban. Its purpose was to negotiate a new legislative dispensation for KwaZulu and Natal as a single geographic, economic and administrative region. (Bonnin et al, 1996:167).

participation in local government structures was to result in conflict between it and urban Africans.

Given the close proximity of KwaZulu to many white urban areas, many of Natal's urban townships were administered by KwaZulu. The exceptions were the older townships around Durban and Pietermaritzburg. The Durban townships were administered by the Port Natal Administration Board. In the early 1980s residents embarked on a series of campaigns firstly, against increased bus fares and secondly, against rent increases. Neither of these involved confrontation with the homeland authorities or the community councils and initially Buthelezi lent his support. What did occur though was the formation of civic organisations and the mobilisation of many residents. In 1983 the state decided that in order to further the consolidation of KwaZulu the urban townships surrounding Durban should be incorporated into KwaZulu. This won the immediate support of Inkatha and the KLA. Concerned with losing their urban rights¹⁵ residents opposed incorporation. Non-Inkatha councillors and those against incorporation withdrew from the community councils and aligned themselves with organisations affiliated to the Joint Rent Action Committee,¹⁶ which was in turn affiliated to the UDF. Inkatha interpreted the anti-incorporation stance as being anti-KwaZulu and Inkatha. The state soon withdrew its support for incorporation but the clashes between anti and pro incorporation factions became clashes between Inkatha and the UDF. Lamontville was threatened with 'invasion' by Inkatha *impis*, and members of the Hambanathi Residents Association had to flee their homes (see Bonnin et al, 1996).

The dynamics in Pietermaritzburg were a little different. In a finely textured article Gwala (1989) outlines the politicisation of communities around Pietermaritzburg. He argues that before 1985 there was scant evidence of political

¹⁵ Section 10 rights guaranteed access to jobs in white South Africa.

¹⁶ The Joint Rent Action Committee (Jorac) was originally set up to co-ordinate opposition to the rent boycotts. It had affiliates in Chesterville, Clermont, Hambanathi and Lamontville – the townships threatened with incorporation.

or community organisation in Pietermaritzburg's townships. National campaigns, without local connections, he suggests, have little resonance for communities. This changed with the 1985 stayaway demanding the reinstatement of the Sarmcol workers. The stayaway was swiftly followed by a consumer boycott on the same issue and in 1986 the first major rally in the Pietermaritzburg area since the 1950s. Compounding the threat associated with the mobilisation of Pietermaritzburg's residences under the broad umbrella of UDF-aligned youth organisations and the trade union movement was the specific institutional arrangement governing Pietermaritzburg's townships. Falling outside of Inkatha's control Sobantu, Imbali and Ashdowne were administered by the Pietermaritzburg local authority while Edendale, formerly a mission area, was privately owned by African landowners. Only Vulindlela, a traditional authority under the *amakhosi* provided Inkatha its normal bureaucratic entry points. Support for Inkatha had always been weak and now it was being weakened further.

Ironically, given Inkatha's concerns, the UDF¹⁷ in Natal was weak. Outside of the older Durban townships there was little history of charterist organisation. The majority of the UDF affiliates were from the Durban area (Seekings, 2000:77). According to Bonnini et al (1996:163) the UDF was controlled by relatively few activists most of whom were based in the Natal Indian Congress. Youth organisations that had emerged in the wake of the UDF's formation were active amongst the African urban youth. Their membership 'gave [the UDF] a political presence and the illusion of vibrancy' (Bonnini et al, 1996:163). But there was little relationship between organisations based in Indian and African areas (Bonnini et al, 1996; Seekings, 2000). The Natal UDF organised a few high profile campaigns but most of its organisational energy was utilised in national campaigns and agendas and it did not develop a coherent grassroots approach to consolidate a base in Natal or KwaZulu. Nevertheless, Inkatha began to perceive the UDF as an increasing threat to its hegemony in the province.

This threat was starkly illustrated in the events surrounding Victoria Mxenge's assassination. Victoria Mxenge was a popular Durban lawyer, a member of the Natal regional executive of the United Democratic Front and a leader in the Natal Organisation of Women (affiliated to the UDF). In August 1985 she was assassinated outside her house in Umlazi. In response the youth of Durban took to the streets protesting her murder. Political protest soon involved the burning of premises associated with both the apartheid state and the KwaZulu government. In response Inkatha marshalled its *amabutho* to restore law and order. Many of Durban's residents regarded Inkatha's interventions timely, if a little excessive (see Sitas, 1986), as shown in the previous chapter in Mpumalanga residents tightened access to the township in order to stop these influences reaching them and the protests has little effect in Pietermaritzburg.

5.5 State Involvement in Fomenting Political Violence¹⁸

In November 1985 Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chief Minister of the KwaZulu Homeland and President of Inkatha, approached the state for military support that would include an offensive or attacking capacity. Earlier that year, in the light of increasing support for the UDF Inkatha had taken a decision 'to turn the whole of KwaZulu and Natal into a 'no-go area' for the UDF' (Varney, 1997:8).

¹⁷ The Natal UDF was formally launched in May 1983.

¹⁸ This section is primarily compiled from the transcripts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission special hearing into the Caprivi Trainees, held in Durban 4-8 August, 11 August and 14 & 15 August 1987. I also rely on Howard Varney's (previously attached to the Investigation Task Unit (ITU)) submission to that hearing. These activities were also the subject of a number of other legal proceedings - various commissions of enquiry into hit-squad activities, The Goldstone Commission and the Harms Commission; criminal trials - *S v Mbambo* (NECLD Case No CC123/94), *S v Msane* and nineteen others (unofficially known as the 'Malan trail'); and, TRC amnesty hearings (see various amnesty hearings, TRC, 1998). The evidence is lengthy, frequently technical and repeatedly contradictory. The controversy surrounding the Malan trial judgement is well known (see Amnesty International, 1998, 2003; Helen Suzman Foundation, n.d.), as much, I would suggest, the result of the political forces surrounding it, as was the trial itself. The judgement makes my task a little more difficult, but I don't think is sufficient to suggest that I should not explore the arguments I shall be making in this chapter. The TRC affidavits are used in the same way as one might use any interview transcript. I concede that issues of 'interviewer bias' might be more pronounced, but I have sufficient verification of events through other interviews and newspaper reports to be confident that these are useful and accurate sources.

Buthelezi's request was promptly processed through military structures to what had become in the light of the state's reorganisation the key government decision-making body - The State Security Council (SSC). Major-General T Groenewald, the director of Military Intelligence was tasked with developing a plan for government consideration. The plan was first outlined in a memo of the 19 December 1985. From the start it was recognised that the actions would be unlawful and a structure to act as a cover for offensive operations was formulated.

An extra-ordinary meeting of the State Security Council considered the memo on 20 December 1985. By 10 February 1986, in less than two months, approval 'at the highest level' (Varney, 1997:12) was granted. Responsibility for establishing this security force was given to the ministers of defence (Magnus Malan), constitutional development and planning (Chris Heunis) and law and order (Louis Le Grange) – locating the project firmly within the state's total strategy thinking. From the beginning a close working relationship was established with Ulundi. The state security council delegated the practical investigations around implementation, to a sub-committee that met in Ulundi. Constant consultation ensured this close working relationship was maintained throughout the operation.

Reflecting the debates within the state there were tensions over both the kind (clandestine) and form (military) support to be given to Inkatha. The sub-committee's report (of 15 January 1986) outlined seven elements (i) personal protection for Buthelezi, (ii) protection for other selected VIPs, (iii) offensive para-military elements, (iv) the enlargement of the existing KwaZulu Police Force, (v) a conventional /ceremonial force, (vi) an intelligence service, and (vii) the authority to issue firearms licenses. A distinction was drawn between protective and offensive capacities. It was proposed that the South African Police and National Intelligence would supply the protective measures while the SADF would build the para-military element and the conventional / ceremonial force. The decision-making process around the exact nature of the support to be offered

to Inkatha dovetailed with the debate within the state over the future of the total strategy thinking and what, if anything should replace it. These recommendations were the subject of fierce debate in the inter-departmental committee. Both National Intelligence and the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning objected to the provision of an offensive para-military element. However, those in favour (Commissioner of the SAP and the KwaZulu representative) argued that Inkatha was already taking para-military steps, which were being conducted unprofessionally and thus carried high risks. Without para-military capacity Buthelezi's requirements would not be met.

The sub-committee's final decision was to recommend that the SSC investigate 'the creation of a para-military element ... at the highest political level and clarify it with the Chief Minister' (Varney, 1987:12). The SSCs approved the recommendation (at their meeting on 3 February) referring the final decision to the 'highest level' and tasking Malan and Heunis with contacting Buthelezi. Once final approval was granted, with responsibility for working out the final details assigned to the military, it became clear that the securocrats had the upper hand.

The SADF was instructed by Malan to draw up a detailed implementation plan. A task-group was appointed under the Chief of the Army, General Liebenberg. Their report (The Liebenberg Report) of 27 February 1986, set out the details. Central to the implementation plan was the inclusion of contra-mobilisation, defensive, offensive, the protection of Inkatha leaders, intelligence and the future establishment of a military force under a para-military unit. The offensive element was 'described as a small full-time offensive element that could be used covertly against the UDF (about thirty)' (Varney, 1997:14). Also included was the extension of the KwaZulu Police which included the training of an additional five hundred police. Support to the KwaZulu Police was delineated from support to Inkatha. MZ Khumalo, Inkatha secretary-general and Buthelezi's right-hand man, was placed as commander of Inkatha's para-military and offensive groups.

The establishment of this force served the interests of both Inkatha and the South African government. For Inkatha it would enable them to ‘wipe out the UDF’ and reassert their hegemony in KwaZulu-Natal, for the South African state it fitted neatly with the emphasis on ‘restoring law and order’ as laid out in the newly adopted ‘counter-revolutionary’ warfare position.

Inkatha’s intention was not just to insert a military capacity into communities. This capacity was to be integrated into its existing political networks to bolster and strengthen them. From the first stage, recruitment, the existing networks of patronage were strengthened. The task of recruiting Inkatha-supporting men fell to MZ Khumalo. He, in turn, relied on militant Inkatha members, in many respects embryonic warlords, to select men on the ground. Bhekisisa Khumalo, a Caprivi trainee, from Gezubuso (in the Pietermaritzburg area) explained that he heard that

KwaZulu police members were being recruited and I went to Mr Ntombela’s¹⁹ house and I found a group of people there. Mr Ntombela transported us to Ulundi to the Hlongwane [or Nhlungwane]²⁰ Camp. (TRC amnesty hearing, 11 August 1998, p.2)

Brian Gcina Mkhize (20 years-old at the time), another Caprivi trainee, was from Mpumalanga Township. Unlike Khumalo who had not been politically active, he had joined Inkatha while still at school. He was directly recruited by Zakhele Nkehli.²¹

¹⁹ David Ntombela, from the Vulindlela area near Pietermaritzburg was a notorious Inkatha warlord. It was alleged that he was a central force behind the ‘Seven Day war’ in 1990. He is now a member of the provincial legislature for the IFP.

²⁰ In some places in the transcripts it’s called Nhlungwane Camp. The spelling of *isizulu* names in all the TRC transcripts is so appallingly bad that it is difficult to rely on either of these being correct or determine the correct place name.

²¹ Zakhele Nkehli was a Mpumalanga Township councillor, chairman of the Mpumalanga Inkatha Branch and a member of the central committee of Inkatha. An Inkatha warlord he was feared and dreaded by UDF-supporting residents of Mpumalanga. His appearance was synonymous with death and residents believed that even whispering his name was to tempt fate. Many failed attempts to kill him led credence to the belief that he was invincible and protected by very strong *umuthi*. An ambush on his car on the 19 December 1989, which killed his sister, injured his wife and left him paralysed and fighting for his life in Edendale Hospital, resulted in street parties as residents initially believed him to have been killed (The Natal Witness, 21 December 1988). He died from pneumonia, without leaving hospital, on Wednesday, 3 May 1989 (The Natal Witness, 13 May 2000).

One of my cousins [Nkehli], who was a member of Mkwamanda (the Central Committee) in Inkatha asked me what am I preparing myself to do, since I have already completed my standard 10. ... he had been asked by the leader of the IFP, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi to go and find out or recruit young members - trusted members of the IFP, who wish to be members of the Police Force in KwaZulu-Natal. ... I accepted the offer from my cousin to become a policeman. Even if it wasn't the kind of work that I aimed to continue with, it was better to join the police than to sit down and not do any work, ... Zakhele Nkehli talked to one of his brothers who was supposed to take me to Ulundi. (Special hearing into the Caprivi Trainees, 4 August 1997, pp.24-25)

Zwele Dlamini (17 at the time) also from Mpumalanga Township was a member of Inkatha and active in the Inkatha Youth Brigade. He was also approached by Zakhele Nkehli.

He is the person who approached us and he was recruiting for people who were coming to join the police, the KwaZulu Police. ... He told us that he needed people to be trained to become KwaZulu Police. He wrote down my name and told us that he's going to come back and we'll be taken for training to become KwaZulu Police. ... A kombi from Ulundi came. They took us to Ulundi. ... We went to a place called Nhlungwane. (Special hearing into the Caprivi Trainees, 6 August 1997, p.6)

At the Camp, they found themselves in the company of approximately four hundred other men all in their late teens / early twenties. Further selection took place on the basis of their physical health and political affiliation.

There are certain types of questions which we used to be asked, to determine our success. Questions like, 'what is the Mkwamanda of Inkatha?' by Mkwamanda means the central committee of Inkatha. We would be asked, 'what is a pathfinder?' and also, 'what are the policies of Inkatha?', and other things which - kind of questions which will show about how trustworthy you are within the Inkatha organisation. (Brian Gcina Mkhize, Special Hearing into the Caprivi Trainees, 4 August 1997, p.26)

In June 1986, the two hundred selected men were secretly transported to Durban and flown to the Caprivi Strip in Namibia. They received training at the Hippo Camp by the Special Operations component of Military Intelligence and the Special Forces. Here they were introduced to Dulaxolo Luthuli²² initially their

²² Dulaxolo Luthuli, often known by his clan name Madlanduna, was born in the mission area of Georgedale, Mpumalanga. His family, related to the late Chief Albert Luthuli was well-known for its ANC sympathies. His father, Reverend Jafta a travelling preacher, owned land in Georgedale and was a respected figure in the community. Luthuli was a member of the ANC and later its military wing Umkonto weSizwe. He was trained in the Soviet Union, fought as part of the MK contingent in the Wanki Campaign, was later captured and sent to Robben Island. On his release from prison in the late 1970s he returned home, found his father had become a member of Inkatha and joined as well. In the early 1980s he considered himself to be both a member of the ANC and Inkatha. He claimed that discussions on Robben Island had not identified Inkatha as an enemy organisation to the ANC. (This view is in contradiction to that of Harry Gwala, who in the early 1970s, was warning workers to be suspicious of Inkatha and Zulu nationalist politics.) He travelled, with his father, to Lesotho to make contact with the late Chris Hani and discuss the recruitment of members for MK.

political commissar, but later to become their military commander as well. All trainees received basic training; they were then divided into four operational groups - offensive, contra-mobilisation, defence and VIP protection - and received specialised training. In addition to these military skills they also received 'educational' training

Yes, that's correct [they explained the purpose of this teaching] ... there is only one purpose, it was that as soon as we came out of the training to go back and fight and eliminate the ANC ... (Mkhize, Special hearing into the Caprivi Trainees, 4 August 1997, p.34-35).

They were indoctrinated using visual material showing poor conditions in communist countries with the suggestion that this was the fate that would befall South Africa if the ANC were to 'take over'. It was emphasised that the UDF was an underground structure of the ANC and the UDF had only one aim, to eliminate Inkatha supporters through inhuman and violent means. This was reinforced through visual material showing people being necklaced, elderly people being stripped and made to drink cooking oil, councillors being killed and schools being burnt (Mkhize, Special Hearing into the Caprivi Trainees, 4 August 1997, p.36). The training lasted six months, until December 1986. The groups then returned to South Africa where some of them were given further specialised training.

Using networks similar to those through which they had been recruited the trainees were infiltrated back into different communities throughout the province. For example Gcina Mkhize, who was assigned to the contra-mobilisation group, after additional training in Venda, was deployed on the south coast of Natal.

We arrived in the office of Chief Khawula. We were using his old offices. There was an old office for Inkatha in that area and we were using it as a base. We always go out to have rallies and also come back to the place and we used to visit many chiefs' areas, asking them to give us permission to go to the people and talk to them and we managed to address people mobilising for Inkatha. We also went to high schools, warning children that they shouldn't be influenced by the UDF spirit and that's how we tried to build our organisation. We visited many places at South Coast and we stayed there for about three months. (Mkhize, Special hearing into the Caprivi Trainees, 5 August 1997, p.5)

In 1985 he became an active member of Inkatha when he was approached to become political commissar of the para-military wing of Inkatha. He accompanied the two hundred recruits to Caprivi where they underwent six months military training (including unconventional warfare). On their return he was asked to take on the position of commander as well as that of political commissar. (Luthuli, Amnesty Hearing, Durban, 7 April 1998.)

Zweli Dlamini who was allocated to the offensive group was sent back to his home in Mpumalanga and told to report to the Mpumalanga Police Station daily. He was provided with a KwaZulu Police appointment certificate at the rank of detective sergeant and posted to the Pietermaritzburg area to guard chiefs in the area. He claimed that trainees were allocated to different chiefs.

We were given firearms and we went to Pietermaritzburg. That's the place where we were supposed to work. We stayed there, because there was a fights, people were fighting. At night if there was a chance, we will go out to hit or attack the UDF people. ... We entered houses and shooting people inside those houses and then you have to run and go back to your place after doing that. (Dlamini, Special hearing into the Caprivi Trainees, 6 August 1997, p.10-11)

One of the first offensive operations undertaken by the Caprivi Trainees on their return was the KwaMakhutha massacre in January 1987. As argued above this signified a new measure to the violence. MZ Khumalo played a central role in launching offensive actions including identifying the targets for elimination. He instructed Dulaxolo Luthuli to lead the fight against the UDF in Mpumalanga township (see chapter six) and supplied the trainees with arms and ammunition.

Despite these interventions Inkatha was still under pressure from the UDF. At the beginning of 1988 there was another meeting between Buthelezi and Operation Marion staff. Buthelezi asked for additional clandestine training. Furthermore, there were problems with the existing trainees in terms of discipline, command and control. According to military documents (cited in Varney, 1997:19)

Buthelezi argued that it was necessary for more Inkatha members to be trained in order to swing the conflict in the townships in his favour. On 21 March 1988 Buthelezi and Khumalo met with General Malan in Durban. Once again the urgency of the situation and the need for more members to be trained was stressed.

Bases for the Caprivi trainees were set up at Port Durnford (for the offensive group) and Mkhuze (for the others), it was hoped that this would redress the discipline problem by providing a place where they could 'plan and take action' (Varney, 1997:19).

Responding to this pressure and Inkatha's complaints that the South African Police were biased in favour of the UDF, special constables were recruited into the SAP.

... in Pietermaritzburg most members of Inkatha were getting killed and they were conquered by the ANC and other structures of the ANC like UDF. ... It was the structures of the ANC which were helped by the SAP to fight against Inkatha. Khumalo told us ... Buthelezi has met with the seniors of the SAP about the assaults and killing of Inkatha people in Pietermaritzburg and senior people in the South African Police told him that he should bring his own people, if he doesn't trust the South African Police personnel working in Maritzburg. (Mkhize, Special hearing into the Caprivi Trainees, 5 August 1997, p.8). The recruitment and training of special constables took place in January 1988. As with the Caprivi Trainees only loyal Inkatha men were considered. The special constables came from two sources - new recruits and the Caprivi trainees. Some, like Israel Hlongwane²³ from Mpumalanga were amongst the new recruits. Once again, Inkatha used its networks to source suitable candidates:

I got a message at home that Nkehli wanted to see me at his house. I went there to find most of the Inkatha youth already at Nkehli's house. Upon my arrival Zakhele started to address us. He told us that there was a job opportunity. He insisted that only brave and reliable Inkatha people were needed. Nkehli told us that educational qualifications were not important. He told us that the required people would be trained as policeman who upon passing out would come and protect the community from the UDF. ... I think the following day we were taken by Inkatha vehicles to Pietermaritzburg Riot Unit. ... On the same day we were all loaded into privately hired busses and conveyed to Koeberg for Special Constable training. (Hlongwane, TRC amnesty application affidavit, S26)

Others like Gcina Mkhize and Zweli Mkhize were Caprivi trainees. The intention was for the Caprivi Trainees to infiltrate the special constables.

It was during January 1988 ... they came to fetch us saying that we are wanted at Ulundi. ... Four of us left the South Coast to Ulundi. When we arrived at Ulundi it was explained to us by MZ Khumalo that we will be taken to Cape Town where we were to be trained as special constables. That did surprise us, because we knew that we were very advanced with the knowledge, the military knowledge and we didn't understand why do we have to be taken back to be trained as constables and we asked Khumalo ... Khumalo explained that they were not degrading us or giving us a lower position, however, it wasn't a demotion. However, they wanted us to help in the police service. ... Mr Khumalo told us

²³ Israel Hlongwane was born in Mpumalanga Township, Unit Two, in 1968. He was to complete his schooling to standard six level before leaving school and getting employment at Glacier Bearings in the Pinetown industrial area of Westmead. After his recruitment by Inkatha he was to become one of the notorious boys associated with Inkatha central committee member and warlord Zakhele Nkehli. In 1988 he was recruited as a special constable and sent for training at Koeberg. He was then stationed in Pietermaritzburg before being whisked into hiding by Inkatha. He was then drawn into the activities of the Caprivi Trainees and operated in Northern Natal and Ermelo. He was sentenced to prison for the rape, murder and attempted murder of two Mpumalanga schoolgirls. He applied for amnesty from the TRC, he was successful on all accounts except for those pertaining to the rape and murder of these two young women (TRC AC/99/0332, November 1999).

that our task is to infiltrate the special constables; ... we will be able to further our aims to hit directly at the ANC. At the very same time we will be able to protect our people. ... We were also warned that we're getting training and also to hide that we know anything about military. (Mkhize, Special hearing into the Caprivi Trainees, 5 August 1997, p.8)

No checks were done to ensure that the recruits had a clear criminal record with no criminal charges pending. Only those whose loyalty to Inkatha was assured were accepted. The special constables or kitskonstables as they were sometimes known, received six weeks training at Koeberg in the Cape. The training involved the use of a shot-gun and 9mm pistols. As in the Caprivi training there was a large measure of indoctrination. Upon completion of their training they were integrated into the South African Police, the majority of them initially deployed in the Pietermaritzburg area, though some, like Zweli Dlamini, were sent to Mpumalanga township.

Towards the end of 1988 tensions surfaced between the SADF and Inkatha over the future of Operation Marion. Already they had deflected Buthelezi's demands for the military training of additional men. Due to an increasing number of covert activities, Inkatha was faced with the serious problem of concealing trainees who had been arrested and were facing court action. The security establishment had assisted in 'hiding' trainees, mostly at the Mkuze base, who were being sought by the South African Police. This situation was discussed at a series of meetings between Inkatha and SADF representatives towards the end of 1988. Inkatha complained of insufficient support in concealing the operatives, while the SADF regarded continued support 'as an unacceptably high security risk' (Varney, 1997:21). The South African Police were not prepared to assist in covering-up the crimes beyond arranging bail and then assisting in concealing the members from detection. In an attempt to find a solution, all Caprivi trainees, including those sent for special constable training and who had been accepted as part of the South African Police, were demobilised into the KwaZulu Police. Despite Inkatha's opposition to the withdrawal of military support for the offensive unit, by June 1989 most trainees had been placed within the KwaZulu Police.

Notwithstanding the relocation of the trainees to the KZP the military continued to be involved and it was another two years (July 1991) before the operation was completely terminated. During this period there were dramatic changes at the political level, from FW de Klerk replacing PW Botha as prime minister, to secret negotiations with the ANC, to the unbanning of the ANC, SACP and PAC, the release of Nelson Mandela and the multi-party talks and negotiations. The official yet slow disengagement of the military from these clandestine operations needs to be understood against this background. Officially the government moved away from 'Total Strategy' yet it was only in December 1992 (eighteen months after the final Operation Marion meeting) that President de Klerk took action against twenty-three senior SADF officers who 'may have been involved in activities that stretched beyond the call of duty' (Jeffery, 1997:451) and ordered all clandestine projects to be closed down.

In the interim Inkatha continued to pressurise the SADF for further support. On 31 October 1989 at a meeting with Brigadier Van Niekerk (a member of the interdepartmental sub-committee) and Colonel Van den Berg (a senior staff member for Operation Marion), Buthelezi expressed concern over the situation in Mpumalanga township and claimed that he was losing the armed struggle. He said that at the very least he continued to require 'cells which could take out undesirable members' (Varney 1997:22). Nevertheless, despite these requests the SADF felt that the 'security risks' of the 'violent option ... were too high' (Varney, 1997:23). Buthelezi was informed of these opinions at a meeting on 9 May 1990 (the ANC and other exiled organisations had been unbanned three months earlier on 2 February 1990). By the end of the year the SADF had decided to terminate Operation Marion, and Khumalo was informed on 4 December 1990. Van den Berg's last meeting with Khumalo was on 23 January 1991, with Major-General von Tonder's (chief director intelligence operations) final meeting with Buthelezi taking place on 16 July 1991.

Operation Marion had supplied Inkatha with a capacity for self-sufficiency. The transfer of the Caprivi trainees to the KwaZulu Police meant that the offensive actions of the Caprivi trainees continued under the cover of the KwaZulu Police in the early 1990s, with the activities of the eSikhaweni hit squad²⁴ being but one such example. As shall be seen in the next section these clandestine interventions were largely responsible for the transgression of the normative boundaries of everyday life.

5.6 Conclusion

The primary purpose of this chapter was to provide a further set of answers to the question ‘how in Mpumalanga township did we get from a situation of competing political organisations and political tensions to a situation of political violence’. What is argued in the thesis more generally as well as specifically demonstrated in this chapter is that political violence is the outcome of the articulation of multiple trajectories that operated at national, regional and local levels. This chapter traces two of these trajectories and demonstrates how they articulate.

Firstly, it examined the South African state in the late 1970s and 1980s. It argued that a key characteristic of the state in this period was the dominant presence of the military. The State itself was reorganised substantially, in the process marginalising the *verkrampes* and setting up new institutions of state power. Central to this process was the general acceptance of most within the inner circles of state power of the need ‘to defeat revolutionaries with their own weapons on their own battlefield’ (unsourced government document cited in Swilling and Phillips 1989a:143). These developments meant that the approach made by Inkatha president Mangosuthu Buthelezi in late 1985 for military support that would include an offensive or attacking capacity fell on fertile soil. Buthelezi’s request was seen to neatly dovetail with the state’s counter-revolutionary warfare position.

²⁴ It was the arrest and subsequent trial (*S v Mbambo*) of the members of the eSikhaweni hit squad Gcina Mkhize, Romeo Mbambo and Israel Hlongwane which brought the activities of the Caprivi Trainees to light.

Secondly, the chapter examined the regional politics of KwaZulu and Natal. From the time of his installation as chief Buthelezi occupied an ambiguous position taking full advantage of what Maré and Hamilton (1987) have terms ‘the politics of loyal resistance’. He attempted to utilise the institutional structures provided by the apartheid state in order to become a regional political force. At the same time he claimed he was part of the anti-apartheid forces and represented the ‘ANC at home’. However, as this section argues the embeddedness of Inkatha in apartheid-created institutions resulted in increasing contradictions from which there was little escape. Inkatha and the KwaZulu homeland could not avoid becoming the target of opposition. This opposition was interpreted as opposition to Inkatha, KwaZulu (defined as the Zulu nation) and Buthelezi. The section demonstrates how local township struggles in some of the older Durban townships hitched themselves to the flag of the UDF. Thus undermining Inkatha and Buthelezi’s wider project of being the regional political force. This led to Inkatha’s decision to ‘wipe out the UDF’ in the province and their approach to the state for assistance in this regard.

The consequences of the interception of these two trajectories was examined in the third section of the chapter. This section outlined the approach made by the KwaZulu government to the South African state for military support. It showed how Inkatha’s concerns resonated with those of the state. Therefore they were prepared to assist in providing Inkatha with the covert military capacity needed to ‘restore law and order’ in the province. The key point demonstrated here was the way in which these two trajectories articulated with local Inkatha networks. It is the coming together of these three trajectories – state policy under the militarised apartheid state, the regional politics of KwaZulu and Natal and the specifics of the local political dynamics (as discussed in chapter four) that allowed the conflict to become violent. Moreover, it indicates an argument that is amplified in the following chapter, that as important as each of these stories is in understanding why conflict became violent none of them are determining. They are all part of

the multiple trajectories that fed the process and transformed conflict into violence.