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THE ROOTS OF VIOLENCE ON THE EAST RAND, 1980-1990

Philip Bonner and Vusi Ndima

Between July 1990 and the first national democratic elections in South Africa in April 1994, the Witwatersrand experienced the most sustained blood letting of its brief 100 year existence. From July 1990 to April 1992 alone, 1 207 people died and 3 697 suffered injuries in a sequence of attacks, reprisals and counter reprisals between hostel dwellers, squatter populations and township residents. The East Rand was the epicentre of violence in this initial phase as it was in later ones, accounting for 36.3% of total deaths and 67.6% of total injuries. The preponderance of these occurred in the Katorus region (referring to Katlehong, Thokoza and Vosloorus) of the near East Rand.[1]

A variety of explanations have been advanced to account for the violence. Several early analyses tended to depict the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) as the villain of the piece. Independent Board of Enquiry reports traced the roots of the conflict to the launching of the IFP as a national political organisation late in July 1990 and its subsequent aggressive recruitment of members in the hostel complexes of the Reef.[2] The Community Agency for Social Enquiry found the IFP to be the aggressor in 66% of violent attacks recorded between July 1990 and May 1991.[3] Other investigators identified additional or alternative culprits in the form of police and third force operatives who either incited or lent support to IFP attacks.[4]

While those who confronted the violence directly on the ground sought to identify instigators or culprits, academic social scientists attempted to situate and to some degree explain the conflict in a wider sociological and structural context. Morris and Hindson located the matrix of conflict in the breakdown of apartheid laws in the late 1980's, especially those restricting freedom of movement, and the intensified competition to which they gave rise over dwindling or inadequate material resources.[5] Ruiters and Taylor pictured the protagonists less as contending ethnic of political parties, and more as separate sub-sets of those 'most severely exploited and disadvantaged by the apartheid system', and more particularly hostel dwellers and squatters who were competing for the few crumbs that fell off apartheid's table.[6] The most illuminating studies of all were those penned by Segal and Ndima. Both drew on testimonies provided by hostel dwellers themselves and plotted the mounting pressures on migrant life that eventually fed into the violence, notably, the slackening of controls over hostel life in the 1980s and the consequent overcrowding and degradation of hostel units, the estrangement of Zulu migrants from increasingly politicised trade unions, mounting political competition following the unbanning of the ANC, ethnic stereotyping and rumour, the frictions produced among migrants by mushrooming squatter camps, and police partiality. In addition, Segal, in her path breaking account, seems to suggest, without entirely committing herself to this proposition, that East Rand hostel dwellers initially reacted to violence inflicted by others rather than initiating it themselves.[7]

Two last accounts provide slightly different perspectives. Minnaar explains the conflict by reference to all of the above factors, placing especial emphasis on the increasing ostracisation and isolation of hostel dwellers from township communities, and locates its trigger (mainly via newspaper reportage not used by other authors) in the conflict between Xhosa speaking residents of Phola Park squatter camp in Thokoza, and Zulu speaking hostel dwellers in the adjacent Khalanyoni hostel.[8] Chipkin in an unpublished Master's dissertation

sees the fighting as the product of five overlapping or superimposed antagonism - a parochial conflict between Phola Park and Thokoza hostels, a taxi conflict, a political rift within trade unions on the East Rand, an IFP recruitment drive in anticipation of CODESA and ANC efforts to consolidate their political support in the area for the same purposes.[9]

This by now quite substantial body of research and writing on the period has identified many of the forces and incidents contributing to the eruption of violence in Katorus in the early 1990's. The picture that it presents, however, still remains in certain respects disjointed and incomplete. Structural and sociological accounts generally disdain a narrative chronological sequence. Narratives for their part often sidestep sociological considerations. This paper seeks to integrate more systematically both of these dimensions of explanation. It revisits interviews conducted by Ndima with hostel dwellers in Katorus and knits these together with testimonies of the residents of Phola Park squatter camp and township activists. It highlights the role of the taxi war in the gradual escalation of violence, and shows how this distilled many ethnic, and economic contradictions. It pinpoints more precisely the triggers of violence in August 1990 in which it sees the hand of the IFP *at this stage* as being largely absent. And it seeks via this discussion to relate more closely than has been done thus far the structural to the processual and contingent, and to provide a sense of proportion and narrative that is absent from existing accounts. It should be stressed that this remains work in progress.

THE HOSTEL MILIEU

Between the early 1960's and late 1970's hostels were laid out across the East Rand endowing the region with the second largest concentration of hostel dwellers in South Africa. By 1980 Katlehong hostels catered for 15 800 souls, Thokoza hostels for 13 000 and those in Vosloorus for 18 000.[10] Within their confines a set of migrant cultures were sustained and refined whose central elements are by now fairly well known - a gerontocratic social order in which younger migrants gave 'complete submission' to elders, which frequently involved even the handing over of wages for safekeeping; a rigid prohibition of contact with township women; and an absolute enjoinder to work and earn wages with which to support and stock a rural homestead (well captured in the phrase 'A Zulu works for home').[11]

The new hostels were nevertheless situated squarely in the heart of apartheid's new townships. Thokoza's dormitory complex on Khumalo Street, for example, was planted immediately along the main access road in and out of Thokoza. Hostel residents were, therefore, neither able, or for the most part inclined, to isolate themselves entirely from this encompassing urban world. Migrant elders would often enter the adjacent township to attend church, or even, on occasion to pursue clandestine relationships with urban women which their young charges could only suspect. Young migrant musicians joined bands playing *isicathamiya* or *maskandi* migrant music which staged shows for enthusiastic township audiences (Mtongeni Ngobese). The same musical styles were also popular with hostel dwellers, even though its practitioners were viewed with suspicion by the elder custodians of migrant values, as being too close to the fringes of migrant life and thereby liable to abscond. It was Johannes Sithole's firm belief, for example, that 'People who sang it [*isicathamiya*] were known to be absconders because they were exposed to township women in halls and were easy targets. They also spent a lot of money on clothes which made them attractive.' According to Zibuku Manyathi 'Most people visited the township, a practice

given its own name, "siyawela" (we are going across).' Township residents reciprocated, visiting hostels for a variety of purposes. Some came to buy meat and liquor (A. Njokwe). Others entered for water and hot baths (J. Msimang; A. Ngcobe). Hundreds attended *ingoma* and other traditional dances which were staged in hostel grounds each week-end.

Before the age of the minibus most migrant workers were only able to return home once or twice a year (S. Manyathi; E. Cebekulo). Many migrants broke the long periods of separation from their wives by inviting them to town during the fallow period of the agricultural season. Wilson Magubane's wife 'visited in winter because there were no fields to plough and no harvests to reap. She stayed two to three months, and returned home at the first rains'. Part of the purpose of such visits was to conceive a new child an aim which earned it the description 'ukuthata usana' (going to fetch the baby)) (Z. Manyathi). Migrant husbands would seek lodgings for their wives anywhere in the township, irrespective of ethnic group. The couple would often sleep in the kitchen, and would have to rise early each morning so that the wife could clean the toilets and the yard. Rent would also be paid. Relationships of this kind are remembered as being friendly throughout the 1960's and 1970's, as can be to some extent divined by the successful campaign waged by township residents against police harassment of migrant wives who had been unable to obtain permits to visit. Migrant wives who had previously courted arrest when they went out on the streets, because of their conspicuous traditional dress styles, were now routinely granted permits for three month stays (P. Mlambo, M. Sithole, J. Sithole, S. Manyathi, J. Mncube, Z. Manyathi).

Relationships between township residents and hostel dwellers are recorded almost universally as being 'cordial', 'good' and 'very good' in the 1960's and 1970's. Jimmy Msimango even goes as far as to aver that hostel dwellers 'were treated as part of the family'. Other hostel dwellers remember a slightly more ambivalent attitude being displayed to them by at least some part of the township community - most notably by township youth. Gabriel Ngcobo, who rented a room in a Vosloorus house in the 1970's recalls being ridiculed as a man 'from the plaas' and being looked down upon by children. Epithets routinely applied to Zulu migrants were 'omadlebe' (Zulu) or Kiritsebe (Sotho) which mocked their pierced ears (Sithole). Johannes Sithole and Sam Manyathi record Zulu migrants cosmetically suturing their pierced ears because 'those with them were victims of violence on the trains and faced social exclusion in the township'. Sam Manyathi's family failed to recognise him when he returned home after an absence of several years with his ears now delicately stitched up. The depredations and contempt of tsotsi youth were unquestionably the most negative side of migrant experience of the township, this group being repeatedly identified as 'the only problem', 'the thorn' (P. Nene, J. Buthelezi). Such sharp pin, thorn - or needle - pricks notwithstanding, a generally harmonious atmosphere prevailed. Between most hostel dwellers and most township residents in the 1960's and the 1970's. This would be further cemented in the late 1970's and early 19780's when both communities were recruited into the ranks of the same emerging trade unions.

HOSTELS UNDER SEIGE

In March 1985 the civil engineering company, Con Roux, wrote to the Vosloorus Town Council complaining about the conditions in Vosloorus hostels in which 644 of their

employees were housed. 'For some years now,' they complained, 'security at the gate had been almost ... non-existent' allowing all and sundry to gain entrance. As a result of lax control 'a large number of shop and shebeen owners' plied their trade in hostel rooms which led to constant invasion of privacy, 'theft, personal danger and lack of peace of mind'. General amenities in the hostel were also in a state of decay and disrepair; hot water systems were 'very seldom in working order'. Toilets and washing facilities were 'inadequate in number and more often not in working order'. Broken windows were 'left for months before they [were] repaired', rooms had not been repainted for years and grass outside the dormitories 'grew window high'. Residents were provided with 'a roof over their head [and] a rather precarious title to their beds' in return for their rents 'and very little else'. 'The attitude of the authorities' they concluded 'seems to have been that they have given up', and they demanded immediate remedial action on the problems they had pointed out.[12]

Vosloorus's hostels may have been in an unusually advanced state of neglect and disrepair but their plight was shared to varying degrees by all hostel complexes in the Katorus area. Few resources and little attention seems to have been devoted to maintaining the hostel blocks in the region for five or more years. The student revolt and the repoliticisation of the Witwatersrand's black townships in 1976-1977 had jolted the central government's Bantu Affairs Department and their East and West Rand Administration Boards out of their political slumber but the resultant programmes of township upgrading had been aimed primarily at servicing townships' permanent black residents, while the needs of hostel dwellers were largely ignored. The inauguration of self-financing Black local authorities such as Vosloorus' Town Council in 1983 merely exacerbated the problem. What few resources they had available were directed into the more politically vociferous and fully urban constituents.

The deterioration of the physical infrastructure of the hostels and of the general quality of hostel life accelerated further after the abolition of influx control in 1986. Now the huge reservoir of unemployed who had previously been dammed up in the small rural towns and the closer settlement areas of the African reserves flooded into the major industrial centres of South Africa, above all into the Witwatersrand. Katorus' industries, along with those of the rest of the country, had languished in deep recession since 1984. Hundreds of workers including large numbers of hostel dwellers had already been laid off. Many of these remained in the urban areas looking for work and surviving off of informal trading, theft and the accommodation offered illegally by their hostel dwelling kin. Once influx control was lifted the numbers of unemployed trying to eke out a living in Katorus and elsewhere on the Rand swelled to even more massive proportions. Municipal authorities who were no longer charged with the obligation or the authority to enforce influx control had much less need or incentive to raid hostels in search of illegal residents. Hostel managements in Thokoza and Katlehong which had maintained a higher level of security than was present at Vosloorus now went conspicuously slack. Hostel residents interviewed for Segal's study remark

> 'There was less security, less municipal police. This was especially after the comrades came and burnt down the pay office ... The municipal police ran away that time. It was much less strict ... Maybe this police were not well disciplined ... there was no more security ... so it's not safe'.[13]

These slackening controls re-enforced the spiral of neglect. To begin with hostel regulations were relaxed so that people without employment could obtain a permit and a bed provided they paid their rent. Maviyo Sithole recalls he was fortunate to move into BuyafuthI hostel when 'rules governing residence in hostels were relaxed due to high unemployed' and confirms that 'people could get accommodation as long as they paid'. Later, most notably in the Vosloorus hostel complex, even the payment of rental was not stringently enforced. By November 1988 the still more grandly name City Council of Vosloorus reported that the number of paying residents in council hostels had declined to 50% of the beds available. The other 50% were occupied illegally. In addition the number of women and children living in the hostel rooms had already climbed to alarming levels.[14] In May of the following year the Manager of Community Services spelled out the consequences of the imploding structure of control. 'Radios and electrical equipment such as fridges and deep freezers [were] illegally connected to the electrical system originally installed for lights only ...[the] result [was] overloading and numerous power failures.' The Town Engineer's Department also reported extensive water and sewerage damage over the previous two months as a result of 'generalised vandalism' along with the theft of water taps and fittings. 'Numerous complaints were being received from paying residents, especially new ones, that they cannot sleep in the beds allocated to them due to the occupancy of non-paying residents who pressurise them to find a place elsewhere'. In the face of such daunting problems, what little will the Council retained to face up to its responsibilities evaporated entirely, and they began to envisage a release from the tribulations at the hands of that late 1980's panacea - privatisation.[15]

A graphic glimpse of the steady unravelling of hostel life is offered by a letter written to the Vosloorus City Council by a hostel resident in August 1989. It reads as follows:

> 'Room Y34 of Sotho Hostel is a deserted hostel room because no-one is there who was brought by the municipality, other than the following persons (1) Sidwell, (2) Thelma, (3) Gobo plus two young boys under the age of 14 years.
> Sidwell resides at Gampu Street, Vosloorus Township and Thelma resides at Chere Street, Vosloorus Township. Gobo resides at Hattingh Drive, Vosloorus Township. One of the young boys is a relative of Sidwell and the other lives at Natalspruit. ... The previous occupants of Y34 had been our good neighbours for a long time being from homelands, not from the township.
>
> One of the former occupants of Y34 by the name of Jack became befriended with Sidwell. Because of friendship between Jack and Sidwell from the township Jack brought Sidwell to Y34. They stayed together at Y34. During their stay Sidwell brought his girlfriend to the room Y34. On one occasion Sidwell accused Jack of having an affair with his girl-friend.
>
> Sidwell went back to the township to fetch his other friends to attack Jack for having an affair with his girl-friend. They confronted Jack and pointed him with a firearm. Jack fled Y34 and reported the matter to Benoni Murder and Robbery Unit. The Unit came to Y34 looking for a firearm but they did not find it.
>
> Jack never returned to Y34 and Sidwell remained with the inmates of Y34.

> Sidwell wanted to start a shebeen business and decided to get out all the inmates of Y34 by bringing in a record-player, playing it at its fullest speed day and night. Because of that all the inmates of Y34 got out of the room and went away. Sidwell, the owner of the shebeen, broke the municipal cupboard to pieces and threw it into the dirty-bin. Sidwell also moved the stove and its chimney from its position by the municipality and placed it against the wall where the cupboard had been fixed to make a way for the shebeen dancers.
>
> From Friday to the end of the week-end the Hostel Room Y34 is fully packed. So much that one cannot go through the dancers easily because of jostling together. It is evident according to this information above that as it is not easy to move about in the kitchen of Y34, there is no chance to prepare any food or making of any tea. Besides that there is even no cupboard to keep the food left over, dishes, cups, glasses, spoons and table knives.
>
> We have investigated the matter ourselves because the other neighbours have been wondering why the residents of room Y34 allowed the owner of the shebeen to use this record-player day and night blaring at its fullest speed.
>
> We found that there was no worker who lived there except the three persons mentioned to you.
>
> There is some speculation that the shebeen of Y34 is owned by a black municipal-police because the owner of the shebeen says he works together with the municipal ...
>
> The shebeeners urinate against the walls of Y34 and the nearby rooms making the walls disgusting and filthy. When the sun shines the urine causes a bad smell and unhealthy conditions. ...
>
> The shebeen always comes on Friday afternoons to cause trouble by the noise of the record player. The small boys are always here keeping an eye on the refrigerator. The male owner of the shebeen is always there and the other male servant.
>
> We honestly ask the municipality officials ... to bring ... peace and order... Y34 is a really shebeen, is difficult to sleep under such circumstances.'

The letter concluded by asking quite reasonably 'whether the municipality is negligent or not'.[16]

Migrant life was also being assailed on other fronts, as, one by one its rural anchors came adrift. In the 1960's and 1970's millions of African labour tenants on white farms, and residents of the numerous 'black spots' still dotted around 'white' South Africa were expelled from their homes and relocated into the already overcrowded African reserves. In kwa-Zulu alone two million unwanted residents of white South Africa were dumped on African communally held land.[17] To cope with the resulting shortage of land the Bantu Affairs Department instituted a new phase of its programme of land resettlement, whereby scattered homesteads were grouped together in closer settlements, individual land holdings were

reduced and grazing areas were strictly demarcated from arable land (Joseph Buthelezi, K. Ngobese). One consequence of this policy in rural areas such as Nqutu was that grazing camps were often far removed from the homesteads to which they belonged. An unintended by-product of the new programmes was that cattle were also removed well beyond the watchful eye of the owner and his sons. From these circumstances a new kind of stock theft was bred. Previously single heads of livestock had been stolen by the more poverty stricken members of rural communities with the limited aim of alleviating hunger. Then, in the late 1970's, and with ever gathering momentum, in the 1980's 'a new kind of theft [began] to be practised' (P. Mlambo). Thieves now stole in order to sell. 'Whole kraals were emptied' and 'closed' (S. Manyathi, M. Sithole). The violence associated with theft also escalated to unprecedented levels. As Maviyo Sithole explains:

> 'both the community and the thieves solicit the help of hired killers ... There are areas like Hlazekazi and Qudeni where the stolen cattle and goats are kept. These areas have roads which are near to being impassable. The thieves in these areas are armed to the teeth when the conscientious police try to penetrate these areas they are attacked ... The problem is made worse by the fact that other police are involved in this side-line business ... The most common method is that of coming in the middle of the night. They knock at the door and tell the woman (where the father is at work) not to wake up if she still wants to live ... Another method is that of going to the grazing camps where they just drive the cattle to their desired destination. What also makes it difficult is that they are networked to the butcheries.'

Not all areas were subject to the same programmes of rural social engineering in Nqutu and were not as acutely vulnerable to the depredations of stock thieves. Nevertheless, the same broad trend is evident in may rural areas of South Africa. In other parts of Natal and Lebowa withdrawal of the labour services of young boys into schools had a similar outcome of leaving livestock unsupervised and exposed to theft.[18] In large areas of Lesotho and the Transkei, rates of stock theft soared.[19] Its impact was truly devastating for both migrant culture and rural life. As Nqaba Ndima explains, its vast scale:

> 'destroyed the social fabric of the rural communities whose major building block is livestock possession ... A homestead without livestock is a non-existent homestead ... There should be livestock in every homestead, and the absence of livestock is liable to alienate a man from his ancestors. The kraal is at the centre of the homestead, and without it the homestead is just a joke.'

The migrant lifestyle was thus being corroded at both rural and urban ends. Zulu migrants in particular were living lives of ever mounting violence and stress. An incendiary situation existed in the hostels. It would not require much to make it explode.

UNION SCHISMS

The unsettled and insecure atmosphere prevailing in Katorus hostels in the late 1980's was further disturbed by the increasing estrangement of Zulu migrants from the metal industry trade unions (MAWU later NUMSA) from whose efforts they had benefitted so much in the early 1980's. This can be traced back to the formation of COSATU in 1987.

Then at the worker rally held during the inauguration of COSATU at King's Park Stadium, Durban, Elijah Barahi, the newly elected Federation President launched an unscheduled and unauthorised attack on Mangosutho Buthelezi, the President of Inkhata. After pillorying Buthelezi as a Bantustan 'puppet' he urged his audience to 'bury Botha and Gatsha' and to secure the release of the peoples' 'real leader' Nelson Mandela. Ex FOSATU leaders gaped. They had spent years trying to prevent a total breach with Inkhata. Now, in an act of breathtaking and incomprehensible lunacy Barayi had issued a declaration of war.

Immediately after COSATU's launch Inkhata began planning the formation of a rival federation. Christened UWUSA this was launched on May day 1986. Shortly afterwards the new UWUSA President, Simon Conco, issued an all too prescient statement which observed that 'the battle with COSATU would be won on the Witwatersrand'.[20] UWUSA's main source of potential recruits were Zulu migrant labourers employed in the metal works of the East Rand and living in East Rand hostels. It made comparatively little impression on workers until 1987, when it succeeded in recruiting 600 members at MAWU's Katorus stronghold Scaw Metals.[21] The scene was now set for a descent into the inferno.

Up until 1987 and in most instances for considerably longer Zulu migrant metal workers remained loyal to MAWU and later NUMSA. The reasons migrants cite for initially joining MAWU were virtually identical. Nqaba Ndima joined MAWU 'when it started operating because it fought against ill treatment of workers and unnecessary expulsions. The union also fought against low wages paid to workers.' Petrus Mlambo 'joined MAMU when he was at Lash'. He joined 'due to the fact that [he] wanted to see wages increased as well as to fight unfair dismissal'. Douglas Manyathi signed up in 1982 because 'without the unions it was easier for employers to expel the employees without any valid reason. The arrival of the trade unions ensured that the workers were protected. The shop-stewards ... fought for the rights of the workers because they were workers themselves.' Johannes Sithole signed up in 1987 'because they were underpaid and the foremen used favouritism in the way they paid wages ... the unions [also] ensured there would be no unfair dismissals.' Simon Ndima joined MAWU in the late 1970's when he was working at Kros Brothers in Cleveland in order 'to protect himself against unfair treatment and expulsions which were common in those days.' He was once a shop steward. The list goes on.

In the late 1980's NUMSA's image in migrant eyes became progressively more tarnished. The reasons were multiple but interrelated. In the early to mid 80's MAWU leadership became gradually more remote from hostel dwellers. As Bernie Fanaroff, leading MAWU and NUMSA organiser, observes:

> 'Once unions became easier to join and more fashionable and more successful the urban workers started to join and took the leadership positions and migrant workers were pushed out of the leadership positions because they spoke English, and how could you elect a shop steward who couldn't speak English to the boss. Then (from 1982) we stopped going to the hostels and stopped having meetings there and hostel workers were members but they were ignored and general meetings were in places that didn't suit them and so on, and then Inkhata got into the hostels ... That was a major strategic error and we realised we were making it because at various times in the 80's we decided we must go back to the hostels and ensure that the migrant workers were properly catered for and we used to speak to the workers "Don't elect

> somebody because he speaks English. Elect somebody who is committed." But the workers often ... thought someone who spoke English would represent them better.'

Long serving Katlehong shop stewards' council chairman Richard Ntuli makes the same point:

> 'In the past in our meetings we were not using English. Mayekiso explained the agreement in African languages. Now, for example, in our REC's they use English - so you can see that those who are participating are those who are good in English - four or five workers within 50 people. That kicks the morale of the shop stewards and that's why at some of our meetings the shop stewards are not attending (28.5.97).

From 1986 onwards migrant workers also became alienated from COSATU by repeated stayaways and strikes. To begin with, claims Johannes Sithole 'The unions were doing us a great service. The employers could not just expel a person for no apparent reason.' However, in the course of time

> 'lazy and irresponsible people began to misuse the trade unions. A person expelled for late-coming and absenteeism had to be protected by the union which would order other workers to stay away from work or to go slow. It happens sometimes that the worker is caught red-handed ... stealing the property of the employer ... and the other workers go on strike for that. Some employers decided to expel all those workers and employ scab labour. This in turn would inspire those who had been expelled to attack the 'rats' as scab labourers were called. The employers would elect to close down their firms which created divisions in the ranks of the workers. We as Zulu do not believe in stayaways because we have come to the Rand for the sole purpose of working for our children.'

Nqaba Ndima re-iterates the point insisting that to begin with MAWU 'was working very well'. However,

> 'In the mid 1980's it began to fight for people who had been expelled for valid reasons such as absenteeism and the use of intoxicating liquor. People took advantage of this and started demanding more money which in turn forced some firms to close down ... It was the general view among migrants, Zulu in particular, that the firms were closing down due to trade union activity.'

Many migrant union or ex-union members repeat the same point, often citing a litany of individual firms that closed or moved out of the Katorus areas, Lash, Kros Brothers, and so on (Vusi Mlambo).

Many migrants associate this change in union practice with the formation of COSATU. In Zibuku Manyati's eyes, a change occurred 'when the umbrella body became COSATU. Then the workers were now divided along political tendencies. Most of the Zulu had been in leadership positions in FOSATU. This ... lead to UWUSA. This .. profoundly hardened ethnic relationships.' For Joseph Buthelezi 'it was only spoiled by its direct involvement in politics ... Most people from Nqutu left the union and joined UWUSA because COSATU preached disinvestment.' And of course, as the IFP and Inkatha endlessly re-iterated,

disinvestment cost jobs. Gabriel Ngcobo likewise observes 'In the course of time COSATU became more politically than economically oriented. Our problems were not given first as it was the case before.'

A major source of alienation for migrant workers were the repeated stayaways called between 1986 and 1990. As one Vosloorus migrant put it 'The Zulu said they came to the Rand for the sole purpose of working. They left their families behind them. They [now] had to down tools and stay in the hostel, while the township people downed tools to stay with their families'. Ironically many NUMSA officials agreed, claiming that the stayaway was too passive and did little more than deposit members in front of their televisions at home. It was the union, however, that bore the brunt of decisions taken elsewhere. Albert Sibisi left NUMSA when he realised that 'it was NUMSA that was fuelling violence by organising stayaways that led to death of many Zulu workers who were on their way to work'. Sam Manyathi left 'when it became clear that (the union) was being manipulated by the UDF which was the arch rival of the IFP.' Johannes Sithole, 'began to detest stayaways because the unions were beginning to say they hated Buthelezi.'

What is striking about many of these migrant experiences is that they maintained their membership right up to 1989-1990, generally at increasing personal risk. The vast majority were fully aware that UWUSA was toothless and incapable of defending workers' rights. Increasingly, however, they found themselves both pushed and pulled into its ranks. For many the final straw was the sadly misconceived stayaway called by COSATU in July 1990 against Inkatha's 'reign of terror' in Natal and Mangosotho Buthelezi's tenure as kwa-Zulu Minister of Police.

TAXI WARS

Stock thieves in Hlazekazi, and elsewhere commonly converted part of the proceeds of theft into taxis. Migrant workers who were denuded of cattle by thieves often gave up all hope of retiring to a conventional rural life, and also invested for their future security in the purchase of a taxi. Taxis were in some ways the logical alternative or supplementary investment since the migrants' distance from home ensured that there was a constant demand for transport on which they could travel to and fro'. In the 1960's and 1970's the granting of licences to Africans to run taxis was tightly restricted and closely controlled. The easing of high apartheid, and the loosening of some of its more senseless restrictions in the aftermath of the 1976 student uprising helped unfreeze to some degree the issuing of taxi permits. An important moment in this process was the appearance on the market of the Kombi or minibus which could carry eight passengers instead of the former four. Aspiring migrant entrepreneurs moved quickly to exploit the opportunity that this presented to set up taxi services between the homelands and the towns. Now migrant workers could be ferried back and forth between their homes and their work places several times a year, without consuming too much of their income, or jeopardising their jobs. The real 'take off' of the taxi industry came in 1986-1987 when transport regulation was effectively abandoned. In that short period numbers of Kombi licences leaped form 7 093 to 34 378.[22] Overnight taxis became the principal avenue of capital accumulation open to black South Africans. Almost as quickly taxi routes became saturated by new operators. Competition became acute.

Even before deregulation a number of local taxi associations had formed with the aim of protecting their routes from interlopers. It was estimated that between 38% and 60% of taxi operators at this time were pirates, operating without permits and encroaching on the preserves of those who were officially licensed.[23] In Germiston the taxi operators from kwa-Zulu who initially plied long distance routes between Germiston and kwa-Zulu-Natal, formed the Germiston and District Taxi Association with the same purpose of suppressing 'pirate' competition. Elsewhere on the Rand competition between legal and illegal taxi operators and between rival taxi association had already led to conflict and even killing.[24] In Katorus these rivalries assumed their own distinctive form, in this case between Zulu speaking migrant taxi-operators and those permanently resident in Katlehong. COSAS President and SASCO activist, Moses Maseko, places this development, within an equally unfriendly economic context for Katlehong's permanent township residents:

> 'You remember around this time, at that stage, a lot of people were retrenched, out of work ... Some, I would say ordinary citizens of Germiston, or Katlehong, some had to buy taxis because they see it as a mushroom industry.'

Throughout the Katlehong/Thokoza area tensions began to rise. A hint of the impending conflict is to be found in a letter written to *The Sowetan* newspaper in January 1988. Signed 'Worried Resident', it complained about the treatment Thokoza residents were receiving at the hands of licensed taxi owners, and gave a clear indication of the lines that future conflict would follow. 'The taxi operators,' he claimed 'have hired hostel dwellers to attack "pirate taxis", but to my surprise they cannot transport passengers to and from work on time. These drivers', he added, 'think they own the roads', and he concluded with an ominous warning. 'They must stop this or the residents will act'.[25]

At some point over the next months the rival Katlehong Taxi Association was formed being comprised of township as opposed to hostel-based taxi operators. The township association exploited their more intimate association and familiarity with the township community:

> 'At that time the township is getting tarred. Those guys from (GDTA) failed to recognise that.'

KATO drivers grasped the opportunity with both hands:

> 'Those guys opened new roads ... which the old taxi association didn't want to operate through ... and people started to behave like, look, there are taxis that can move close to us because they know Katlehong' (Moses Maseko).

KATO also courted the students with whom they were in any case linked. As Moses Maseko once again explains:

> 'You know that a number of young people who were not able to go to university, and all those things, there was no other option but to look at possible jobs around and they were employed within the taxi industry to be drivers and all those things. Because COSAS was a strong organisation, they met us, said, no we will reduce fees for students, give us one rand ... They are marketing themselves and obviously, once

> there are economic issues, there will be politics coming in at the end of the day ... If I remember well there was a situation where the Student Congress, we hosted a number of events and KATO supported us.'

The scene was now set for the most bloody taxi war yet to have broken out within the black taxi industry in South Africa.[26] Khoza believes that the two associations first crossed swords in November 1989 when a dispute flared up over the allocation of routes. A meeting was convened to try and resolve the issue but shortly before this took place a full-scale taxi war broke out on 24 February 1988, which lasted 2½ weeks and left 50 dead and a further 350 casualties[27]. These bare bones of an account can be fleshed out and to some extent reshaped by the personal testimonies of hostel dwellers and township residents in Katlehong. All hostel dwellers date the initial outbreak of violence earlier in 1989. For Sam Manyathi 'Violence erupted when two taxi organisations began to fight for routes. These were KATO and the GMB. KATO was supported by township people because it was a local organisation. GMB was supported by people from Kwa-Zulu-Natal ... KATO was able to manipulate the township youth to burn taxis that belonged to GMB.' In this explanation several other hostel dwellers concur.

COSAS leader, George Nkosi, provides a slightly different but nonetheless complementary account:

> 'What happened was that they (the two rival taxi association) were fighting over routes, and also the other thing that worsened conflict was students refusing to catch the taxis of the G and D because they claimed that they were dirty and the taxi drivers are basically full of shit, and most of these taxi drivers are from the hostels from G and D and that they wouldn't catch G and D taxis, they'd rather wait until the KATO taxi comes. KATO taxis were nice, they were clean and most of them were new Zola Buds, so the G and D had these old Toyotas, which were called in the township *inkomosophosa* and people really didn't like those kinds. The students ended up saying we'll stick on the KATO taxis, and they also had different hooters.'

To add the last glint to their lustre the KATO taxis had 'nice' music as well (M. Maseko)

Now matters of style and ethnic stereotyping were being allied to economic rivalry. It needed an injection of political intolerance to produce a truly combustible mixture. This ingredient was soon forthcoming. 1988 and 1989 were years of national stayaways and political turmoil. According to Simon Ndima:

> 'Violence began in June 1989 when children were on stayaway. Taxis were not operating that day. A taxi left from Kwesine (hostel) on its way to Nqutu (in kwa-Zulu-Natal). The children burnt it.'

Wilson Magubane places the major outbreak of violence early in 1990 but situates it within an identical context. It started

> 'when trade unions such as COSATU called for the 'Stick-away' stayaway. Hostel dwellers were still going to work because they did not know what was going on. There was a taxi that was full of people who were on their way to Nqutu. The owner

> of this taxi was Mr Ngobese. The driver of this taxi was afraid of getting out of the township alone because of fear of the township youth who had barricaded the roads. Another driver who was driving a taxi that was empty offered to accompany him to Boksburg ... The taxis left, driving along Khumalo Street. When they were about to reach Mnisi Section they were stopped ... petrol was poured on those minibuses and they were burnt to ashes ... The most painful thing about the burning of the minibus", Mr Magubane adds, 'is that one minibus carried a pregnant woman who was also travelling with a small child.'

Only one of the occupants escaped to tell the tale. The story of the burning of Mr Ngobese's taxi is corroborated by several other hostel dweller testimonies, who all see this as the start of the endemic violence that was to wrack Katorus over the subsequent four years.

The one distinctive element of Magubane's account, however, is his assertion of police complicity in the deed as they hovered over the area in helicopters equipped with loudspeakers inciting the youth to commit the atrocity.

Two final angles of vision are provided by Elias Monagi one time COSAS activist and later NUMSA and COSATU organiser and Moses Maseko, COSAS president and SASCO militant. Each linked economic rivalry to growing political and to some extent ethnic polarisation. To COSAS students KATO was politically sympathetic and GDTA the reverse. As Moses Maseko explains:

> '... if there was a stayaway, we call a stayaway it was easy for us to inform the other taxi association, no operation ... KATO were people who we were able to say to look, this is our situation, some of them will understand, but the other guys did not understand and they were calling us children of Atcha ... You know at those times some of actions that we took was to make sure that people like this come to our cause.'

KATO also maximised its political connections to gain economic leverage. As Moses Maseko goes on:

> 'I remember there was this first problem, I think there was a petrol increase at this time. KATO said to us look, we are not going to increase fees. G and T decided to increase their fees. I remember now, that's why even some communities supported them ... subsequent to that on Wednesday there was a big march. Sunday we have this harassment. Monday, Tuesday taxis were not operating ... We even organised hostels you know.'

Economic and political issues had now become completely intertwined.

Elias Monage, one time COSAS activist and later NUMSA and COSATu organiser provides a similar context, which is in one sense more specific, for the politisation of the taxi feud. It happened during the lengthy three day stayaway organised by COSATU against the Labour Relations Amendment Act of 1988. This was called in mid June 1988. As Monage explains:

> 'Youth have to monitor and discipline those who do not keep unity. Workers call for a stay-away but they drink beer and sleep and see it as a holiday; the youth are facing the problems of workers not monitoring. While the youth played a role on the first day, this receded on the second day. Taxis did not operate after the first day of the stayaway making it difficult for those who wanted to go to work. Youth wanted to burn the taxis for operating on the first day but only two taxis were attacked ... at Kwesine station a coach was burnt. There was no marching in the townships as that would be provocative.'

It is possible, but unlikely that these accounts are describing entirely separate events. The month matches in two accounts; in four others the contexts tally; where the number of taxis is specified it is two, and the general backdrop of events is more or less the same. What differs is the year mentioned (1989 in most accounts, 1988 in one), the weight assigned to particular causes, and the extent to which the episode is related to identifiable individuals (in the Zulu migrant accounts) or is wholly depersonalised as in the accounts of student leaders. This last feature is shared by the narratives of violence on both sides, depending on which side was victimised and which side perpetrated the attack. In itself it constitutes another chilling commentary of growing dehumanisation that produced the events of this time.

Wilson Magubane, who presents the most vivid account of the taxi burning episode resided in Katlehong township at this time. Along with other elders from both hostel and township camps, he attempted to broker a truce between the two sides. This eventually collapsed in the face of new provocations, although the time that this took may have been foreshortened in some migrant accounts and renewed competition for taxi routes may have also played a part. Once hostel dwellers and migrant forbearance broke, hostel dwellers 'were commanded (by the hostel induna) to take their spears and axes and then they attacked the township people' (Magubane). Nearly three weeks of violent blood-letting followed lasting from 24 February to 11 March 1990. In one particularly savage episode on 27 February six pupils and teachers were murdered in a Katlehong school. Hostel vigilantes hunted from house to house for township suspects and even raided a local hospital in search of wounded 'Komblese' (comrades). On 7 March, Katlehong residents organised a boycott of all taxis in an effort to curb the violence, an initiative which eventually led to the establishment of a new combined taxi association.[28]

In these early months of 1990 individual hostels were still multi-ethnic. As Wilson Magubane once again explains.

> 'At this stage the hostel-dwellers were speaking with one voice. There was no discrimination along ethnic lines. Zulu, Mpondo, Xhosa, Basotho as hostel residents gathered together (and) armed.'

This outward unity, that was by no means total during the course of the violence, was, however, about to fragment. The principal detonator of the chain reaction which brought this about was, ironically, the release of Nelson Mandela after 27 years of political imprisonment, and the unbanning of the ANC in February 1990. The main axis of conflict for the remainder of 1990 and most of 1991 was Zulu against Xhosa. Zulu migrants living in the Kathorus hostels speak of three distinct phases of the war which was so bloodily fought out

over the next four years: the taxi war; the ethnic war between Zulu and Xhosa; and the war between the IFP and ANC. Each stage ramified out more broadly than the one that went before. The taxi war was confined mainly to Katlehong, although it spilled over a little into neighbouring Thokoza. The war between the Zulu and Xhosa embraced Thokoza and Katlehong alike, with its storm centre being sited mainly in Thokoza. The war between the IFP and ANC which doubled up to some extent as a war between the hostels and the townships, engulfed the entire Kathorus region and indeed swept far beyond. The first and second stages of the war were the product of very specific sets of local circumstances. It is to the particular configurations of circumstances which set the scene for the second stage of war that this chapter now turns.

THE ZULU/XHOSA WAR

In the 1940's and 1950's the main axes of ethnic conflict on the Witwatersrand were the South Sotho on the one side and either Mpondo or Zulu on the other. There are almost no recorded group clashes between the Zulu and either the Mpondo or the Xhosa. On this evidence there has been no greater natural pre-disposition towards conflict between Zulu and Xhosa, than between either of these and any other ethnic group. In the 1990's by contrast, where group conflict had an ethnic component or inflection, the protagonists were almost invariably Zulu and Xhosa. What had happened in between? A major factor promoting tension between Zulu and Xhosa in the late 1980's and 1990's was the flood of Xhosa migration to the Witwatersrand, particularly after the lifting of influx control in 1986. This influx placed pressure on both employment and housing. Petrus Mlambo speaks of firms on the Witwatersrand being 'packed with Xhosa' adding that 'if you are a Zulu you won't get a job'. Sam Manyathi describes large numbers of Xhosa crowding into shacks. Many also sought accommodation in the hostels of Katorus. Here points of friction multiplied daily as living conditions in the hostels deteriorated apace. One particularly dangerous flashpoint of conflict was the growing numbers of women who began infiltrating the hostels, many of them recent arrivals in the shacks. Not only did the presence of women threaten to corrode the whole migrant ethic, but it also triggered a growing number of brawls. As one Khalanyoni resident bluntly put it 'where women are there's a lot of shit'.[29]

Ethnic stereotypes which had lain dormant in individual consciousnesses were now reactivated, collectivised and sharpened. Zulu speakers disparaged Xhosas as 'shrewd and treacherous', depicting them as thieves who 'live(d) by the saying "a person's property is also mine"'. The Zulu, conversely were known by Xhosa (and others) to be 'stupid and war mongers' and subservient to employers.[30] Such labelling could probably not by itself have generated the subsequent escalation of violence. What it did do, however, was to create an environment in which other interventions, some naive, some neutral, some consciously malignant, could more easily produce that result. The interventions which set this process underway were in the first instance political: the unbanning of the ANC, and Mangosutho Buthelezi's counter stroke of launching the IFP as a national political organisation.

Pickup Mtshali recalls 'and the jubilations that shook the whole country on the day that Nelson Mandela was released.' He emphasises that 'We of the Zulu migrants of Katorus' hostels were also happy because we heard that the President had spent 27 years in detention for the sake of the oppressed people of this country'. Within a matter of days the Zulu

hostel dwellers were having second thoughts. On the one hand Zulu migrants were being threatened with 'elimination' by ANC hotheads on the grounds that they 'did not want to be part of the political mainstream' (P. Mtshali). On the other they were being incited by IFP militants against anything associated with the ANC. Immediately after the release of Nelson Mandela, Douglas Manyathi remembers a meeting being summoned at Kwesine hostel.

> 'The speakers that day were playing on the ethnic sentiments of the people ... they insisted that they were not going to be ruled by a Xhosa. A few days later, after these inflammatory speeches the Xhosa in the hostels were attacked by the Zulu ... most fled to Phola Park ... When they arrived they influenced the Xhosa that were staying there to attack the Zulu ... residing in Phola Park.'

In these comments Sam Manyathi captures the general dynamic of ethnic cleansing that took hold of the Katorus region in mid 1990. His testimony nevertheless collapses into one a more extended chronology, and multiple levels of causation.

A number of developments moved in parallel in this period, some geographically quite remote from each other, before eventually intersecting or colliding to create generalised chaos and pandemonium. Shadrack Khumalo claims that 'the Xhosas started it all in Krugersdorp.' After the conflict (in Kagiso) 'the Zulus were forced to leave and flooded into the East Rand.' Following this conflict different groups of hostel residents looked increasingly anxiously over their shoulders at each other. According to Ndima:

> 'Tension began with rumours that the Xhosa used to go to Khutlala hostel where they held meetings and were planning to attack the Zulu there. Early in 1990 the Bhaca and Xhosa attacked the Zulu at Lindela hostel. Most Zulu were stabbed to death because they were caught off guard, even though there was a rumour that the Bhaca were sharpening their spears. Most Zulu then fled to Kwesine and other hostels that were predominantly Zulu ... This very same day we took the train to Crossroads (squatter camp) to attack the shack township which was predominantly Xhosa-Bhaca ... We arrived there at 4.00 am. We stayed till 1.00 pm. Many Xhosa died.'

The attack on Lindela hostel features prominently in the recollections of many Zulu hostel-dwellers (even though it does not feature in any published account of these events). Phineas Buthelezi angrily recalls 'Zulu being butchered in cold blood at Lindela immediately after the taxi war'. Pickup Mtshali has no doubt that this 'fanned the flames' of a general conflagration.

Rumour played a central role in stoking up conflict. Migrant testimonies repeatedly recount hearing of a rumour that the Xhosa or Bhaca were preparing to attack or indeed had done so, in Kagiso, Sebokeng or further afield. In many instances such rumours were false, and were deliberately circulated by the police or other third force operatives. Segal records a forged pamphlet bearing an out of date ANC crest being circulated in Soweto in this period. It read:

> We want to destroy the Zulus. We want to drive them out of the hostels as we did in Sebokeng ... We have to end their Zuluness of which they are proud about it [sic] ... There will be no peace as long as the Zulus are still powerful. Let us destroy

> them all in South African townships, hostels, and in the working places. Let us burn down their houses in townships and drive them out. Down with Zulus.[31]

The problem was migrants ignored such rumours at their peril. As Nqaba Ndima, one time resident of Lindela hostel exclaims 'I still live because I took seriously the rumour that the Bhaca were planning to kill all the Zulu who were staying at Lindela.'

A third set of developments that moved in parallel with those already described before overlapping and merging in a peculiarly destructive manner was the growing confrontation between township residents and hostel dwellers. Johannes Sithole recounts that after the resolution of the taxi war, violence re-ignited when hostel dwellers refused to honour a stayaway organised by the tri-partite alliance, and were attacked by township youth. The stayaway in question was called for 2 July 1990 against the 'reign of terror' being conducted by Inkhata in Natal and in support of a demand for the removal of Gatsha Buthelezi as Kwa-Zulu's Minister of Police. Here yet another parallel set of struggles and social forces far removed from the Rand came to bear on Katorus. An estimated three million stayed away from work nation-wide.[32] The decision to call for a stayaway on this issue could be construed as a grave miscalculation, although it was probably already impossible to escape from the spiral of violence that was by now well advanced. It certainly backfired on Katorus in a devastating way. Zulu migrants inevitably saw the call as an attack upon themselves. They accordingly took every step they could to prevent it being imposed on their community.

Both at this point and subsequently violence 'moved on to the trains' where people from the hostel were attacked by township youth when they were on their way to work (Jabulani Ndima). The collision that occurred between hostel dwellers and township residents in Vosloorus in August can almost certainly be traced to this cause. It was during these township/hostel contestations, according to several accounts, that the Xhosa were ordered to leave the hostel to join their brothers in the township (P. Mlambo). Depending upon when these episodes took place they may have fed into the violence at Lindela. The Kwesine hostel attacks on Cross Roads squatter camp certainly occurred at this time (TRC). In any event they all soon joined in the same vicious circle.

The violence which now swept over the Witwatersrand claimed the lives of more than 4 000 people in August to September.[33] In many instances the police and third force actively facilitated or even incited the killings. After the attack on Vosloorus hostel in November 1990, J.B. recalls 'police allowed us to invade the township. We killed 38 that day'. Savage and indiscriminate massacres also began to take place on the trains. These again were the work of Inkatha and third force. To many outside observers they appeared mindless and motiveless, at least beyond any other purposes than spreading blind destruction. It is sad commentary on the depersonalised character of the killings by this stage that they could be plausibly represented to migrant constituencies as acts of massive counter terror, in retaliation for the assaults and murders that migrants themselves were enduring on the trains.

SQUATTERS

The battle for space in twentieth century South Africa has been both ceaseless and cyclic. In the urban areas influx control, the pass, and urban segregation have had as their central concern the prevention of blacks invading white areas. Between the early 1960's and the mid 1980's the local administrations of black townships along the Rand used housing, or more specifically the non-provision of housing, in an effort to deter black immigration into the towns. Since industry and the general volume of employment expanded rapidly over these years a massive backlog of housing built up. By 1987 Katlehong had 19 000 families or 95 000 people on its official waiting list for housing and living in backyard shacks. There were possibly an equal number who had not bothered to register, creating a situation where twice as many families rented back yard shacks and then gradually spilled over into vacant parcels of land such as the Crossroads shack area just to the north of the railway line, as lived in proper housing units. By 1988 30 000 lived in Crossroads alone. In Thokoza in 1987, 24 000 shack dwellers had registered for accommodation, and another 45 000 lived in the township without being registered for housing.[34] These were spread across 14 000 families and vacant spaces like coalyards, meaning that the back yard shack dwelling population was three times larger than that living in formal housing units.[35] In Vosloorus approximately the same number of people lacked access to their own housing as those that did, while the building of shacks was much more tightly restricted.

Thokoza was thus by far the most congested township in Katorus. Although plots were generally larger than in Katlehong more shacks were jammed on these slightly more capacious backyards. A survey conducted in April 1988 found 16-20 households on some stands in Thokoza. Rents charged by siteholders to shack dwellers ranged from R40 to R100 a month.[36] One factor prompting rack-renting on this scale was 'the great sale' of township housing under the 30 year and 99 year leasehold schemes launched by the local authorities in the mid 1980's. Site owners who were placed under pressure to buy their houses or face having them sold off to others passed on the costs in the form of raised rents. Others crammed ever more shacks into their yard. Simple profiteering also played a part. In 1988 an estimated 50% of Thokoza's site occupiers were failing or refusing to pay rent. They nevertheless continued to charge ever escalating rentals to helpless shack tenants, producing in the process a great deal of resentment. Shack dwellers were subject to the same restrictions and obligations as those in the old Katorus location in the 1940's, which produced exactly the same inter-household tensions. Single toilets were shared between 11-15 people, a single tap served up to 150. Disputes over toilets, cleaning and children were rife.[37]

In reaction to these conditions a squatter camp was established next to the water tanks in Thokoza in June 1987, after 500 shack dwellers in a Thokoza coalyard had their shacks demolished by Council order. At this point the Council took fright and after the intercession of the Red Cross allocated a third site, which would ultimately become known as Phola Park. Council officials gave a verbal undertaking that this site would be permanent but his was probably proffered in bad faith as the new site was already zoned as industrial land. Some of the newly installed shack dwellers now living at the tanks (*'Etankeni'*) agreed to move but many remained. These were forcibly expelled to the new site in November 1987.

By mid 1988 Phola Park grew to 2 350 shacks with a population of 15 000.[38] The bulk of its residents were ex shack dwellers from Thokoza, who had either been evicted by

landlords or who could not afford to pay rents. In 1989 new additions to the Phola Park community were forced out of Thokoza's back yards by a R20 levy that Thokoza Council imposed on each shack in a siteholder's yard (March 1989) which they immediately passed on to their tenants, and by the ethnic violence that began to grip Thokoza.[39] A survey compiled in July 1991 recorded a population of between 24-30 000 occupying over 3 500 shacks (Crin, Development and Resistance). At this point nearly four years after its founding Phola Park was extremely poorly serviced possessing only a couple of dozen toilets and almost no access to water supplies. The name given to it, quite appropriately up until 1990 was Dunusa - which translates into English as bare-arsed, or in some renditions 'behave rudely with your 'arse up'.

Up until mid 1990 Phola Park was multiethnic although a large majority of its population appears to have been Xhosa. Of these, however, only 9% had arrived direct from the Transkei most having in the interim spent several years in backyard shacks, hostels, mines or peri-urban settlements. According to a much cited figure 75% were long term residents committed to a future in Phola Park.[40] This figure requires some commentary and unpacking. The balance of 25% was made up by fully migrant Transkeians whose goal was to invest all the resources they accumulated back in their rural homesteads. Beyond that a survey conducted in mid 1991 suggests a considerably larger percentage were rurally oriented than this bare statistic suggests. Of the total number surveyed 47% identified themselves as permanent residents while 51% claimed to be temporary: of those temporarily resident 75% gave Transkei as their main home. This disposition may well have been comparatively recent however since a study conducted by Sapire suggests that large numbers of still migrant Xhosa flooded into Phola Park after the violence of late 1990-1991 either to take up space vacated by Zulu squatters or as refugees from elsewhere.[41]

Late in 1989 the Zonkeziswe/Rietfontein site and service camp opened up in an area south of Katlehong and 4 000 sites became available. Squatters from Katlehong's Crossroads camp were the first to be moved but in December 1992 the Thokoza Town Council and SAP began demolishing shacks in Phola Park and insisting that its residents shift to the new camp ten kilometres away. Several reasons explain this about face on the part of the Council. The first was a change in the legislative framework. In 1988 the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act, which had remained unchanged on the statute books since 1952, was amended to give local authorities extended powers of forced removal and demolition, and also to create designated areas in which site and service camps could be placed. The latter provisions expedited the establishment of Zonkesizwe [CONFIRM]; the former permitted the destruction of Dunuza/Phola Park. The second reason propelling the Thokoza City Council in this direction was shortage of revenue. In May 1989 the Thokoza Civic Association, in response to a call from the Mass Democratic Movement for non-racial democratic local government had organised a rent and services boycott in Thokoza. The following month the TCC tried to make up some of the resultant shortfall in income by imposing a R50 charge on Phola Park shacks for still non-existent services. This was successfully challenged in the courts.[42] By late 1989 the Thokoza Town Council was 4.8 million in the red. As Town Clerk, H.A. Combrink, observed in an affidavit submitted in support of Phola Park's removal, the Council required income from that land 'as a matter of urgency. The sale of the industrial land upon which the squatter camp is situated has become a necessity.'[43] After a Supreme Court ruling in January 1990, the TCC was prohibited from continued shack

demolition but by that stage many had been razed to the ground, and close to 2 000 souls had been dumped in Zonkesizwe.

A distinct shift can be discerned in the political demeanour of squatter camps like Dunuza/Phola and Crossroads between 1986 and 1990. Through most of this time the profound sense of insecurity felt by their inhabitants drove them to seek the protection of imagined patrons or protectors, on virtually any terms. This left them acutely vulnerable to exploitation. In 1988 TCC officials illegally sold plot numbers in Dunusa for R70 each. In late 1988, in both Crossroads and Dunuza/Phola Park aspiring Councillors in the Black Local Authority election promised houses to squatters or the abolition of levies in return for their vote. Once their votes were duly cast and the councillors elected they were heard of no more.[44] In 1989 Ma Dlamini, ex Tiger Camp squatter leader, who had been detained for nearly a year under the State of Emergency of 1986 took up residence in Phola Park and began extracting rents as a kind of protection money part of which she passed on to her newly found guardian in the police. During 1989 these two squatter camps especially that at Phola Park began to display a more combatative spirit. This was partly under the pressure of compulsion as the two Councils moved to demolish the two camps. An additional influence however was the revival of the Mass Democratic Movement after its more or less total repression between 1986 and 1988. In a critical intervention, for example, in December 1989, the Thokoza Youth Congress, appeared in force to resist the Council's demolition of Phola Park's shacks.[45] This was a development of the utmost future significance since it sealed an alliance between one section of Phola Park's residents and Thokoza's militant youth.

HOSTELS VERSUS SQUATTERS

Up until mid-1989 the Phola Park community had no services at all. Then the Alberton Industries Association installed one water point with seven taps (one for 3 214 residents). The proximity of the camp to Khalanyoni hostel allowed that many residents obtained water from its grounds. Town Clerk Combrink complained squatter residents broke holes in the hostel walls to gain access to water and other facilities. Other forms of interaction also occurred. According to a former Khalanyoni hostel resident interviewed by Segal:

> 'When Phola Park started to build up more women started popping in. They would come and get water ... I didn't like it at all because a lot of women would stay and there would be a lot of corruption. They'd come for water but relationships started ... Only young guys like such style ... The feeling of the hostel changed.'[46]

Frictions mounted. In December 1989, the Thokoza Youth Congress threw its weight behind the Phola Park resistance to eviction. In June the Tripartite Alliance called its stayaway against the IFP, which necessarily inflamed hostel dweller feelings. In July the IFP announced its intention of relaunching itself as a national political party[47] and embarked on a campaign of intensive recruitment. The political temperature began to rise in hostels all over the Park. In late July and early August clashes broke out between IFP and other supposedly ANC aligned hostel groups in Kagiso and Sebokeng.[48] It is possible that even at this stage Xhosa speaking and supposedly ANC residents of Khalanyoni hostel were under pressure to vacate. On Sunday, 12 August, a fight broke out between a Zulu and a Xhosa

hostel resident allegedly over a woman. Two Xhosa residents of either the hostel or Phola Park were killed in the subsequent fracas. On Monday 13 Phola Park took revenge attacking certain hostel residents. At this point according to Nelson Mbombatha:

> 'Zulus started to force people to join them at Khalanyoni. Most of us ran away from the hostels and we lost our properties ... Some decided to return back to their homelands and rural areas. But the majority went to Dunusa. We then decided to meet at Kuthatha hostel. This hostel was in Germiston. We then started retaliating at Crossroads (the Katlehong squatter camp). We killed people there. We then proceeded to the Lindela hostel and attacked it. We surrounded the Lindela hostel. It was during the night. Our sign to see each other was to fold up a trouser on one leg and to leave the other. We killed many people in that hostel. We mainly used pangas and assegai weapons. After Lindela we proceeded to Madala hostel. In the middle of our journey we were joined by the comrades from Thokoza. We arrived at Madala hostel. We found soldiers of the government defending the hostels. This made it hard for us to attack Madala hostel. We then proceeded to Khalanyoni hostel. We then decided to sleep and the decision was that we would attack the Zulus in the morning. In the morning the fight started and we then attacked the Zulus and defeated most of them ... We decided to proceed to Kwesini hostel ... in Katlehong. We were blocked by the defence ... We came back to finish the Khalanyoni hostel and destroyed it to the ground.'

Mbombatha's testimony matches and complements the testimonies of Zulu migrants in a number of key respects, most notably, the almost simultaneous attacks on Crossroads squatter camp and Lindela hostel, and the role of Khuthata hostel in planning these attacks. It also gives an exact chronology lacking in Zulu accounts. It is striking that no element of this common account appears in published texts of these events.

The dismantling of Khalanyoni hostel which was only fully accomplished late in 1990 must have seemed to Zulu hostel dwellers like a vindication of their worst fears. Many shared the belief that township residents and more particularly the comrades wished to obliterate the hostels and the migrant culture they contained. When squatters removed Khalanyoni hostel brick by brick to refurbish their shacks in Phola Park every phobia and paranoia was confirmed. Less predictable but no less disheartening was the attitude of some local authorities. On 12 September the Vosloorus City Council itself physically broke down another which had been used as a base for Zulu attacks.[49]

During the two day orgy of violence at Phola Park 150 people lost their lives. Thereafter violence escalated and spread. On the 15th Zulu hostel dwellers drove out 1 000 Xhosa fellow migrants from the hostels at Vosloorus. Between 10-13 September Zulu migrants retaliated en masse at Phola Park. In a manner which was to become standard they sported red bands, which in a depressing re-enactment of the banality of evil, were fashioned out of red plastic Checkers supermarket bags. On successive days they mounted two major attacks, burning 600 shacks and killing 80 people.[50] Among the new disturbing features of the conflict was the assistance rendered to the Zulu attackers by police. This had already happened elsewhere in Katorus but this was the most blatant example of it yet. White men dressed in balaclava hats and with their faces somewhat absurdly covered in black boot polish fired gunshots and grenades into shacks, torched others with flares, shouting 'Kom Zulu,

kom'. Police Casspirs escorted the attackers and stood by throughout. At least one white combatant was killed, his body later being removed along with others by police hippos and caspers.[51] On 25 September a curfew was imposed on Reef townships which had the immediate effect of damping down violence. Conflict returned with a vengeance in mid November when IFP supporters drove out all ANC sympathisers and neutrals from Zonkesizwe squatter camp. This was followed a week later by an attack on Holomisa squatter camp which had been established to house mainly Xhosa refugees from Crossroads. Many of the 3 000 fleeing Zonkesizwe settled at least temporarily in Phola Park. In April Xhosa residents of Holomisa Park camp expelled all Zulu speaking residents of Mandela View camp perpetuating the cycle of ethnic cleansing.[52]

Violence between the IFP and either Xhosa or township dwellers continued at varying levels of intensity through 1991 and 1992, claiming as one of its victims ERAPO and CAST Secretary, Sam Ntuli. Increasingly it assumed the tit for tat form of reprisal and counter reprisal. As the political stakes were raised in 1993 in anticipation of the 1994 elections violence exploded with unprecedented ferocity. At its height in July and August 1993 hundreds were driven out of their properties and lost their lives. In the process entire districts like that of Phenduka which bordered Thokoza's hostel complex on the far side of the notorious Khumalo street were cleared of their inhabitants and commandeered by IFP warlords. In areas adjacent to Phenduka SDU's evicted all Zulu speaking shack dwellers living in the yards.[53]

Many Zulu speaking residents of Katlehong abandoned the homes that they had bought in the township either to take refuge in the hostels or to return home to kwa-Zulu-Natal. Those that remained found themselves stuck on a knife edge of insecurity, suspected by all sides. Douglas Manyathi was accused of being a sell out by his fellow Zulu at work and had to pay a donation for firearms 'to show that he had not forsaken them', Enoch Shoba survived 'by attending ANC meetings', Barnabas Buthelezi, despite being a street committee member found that 'he was always under the surveillance of his neighbours as to whether he still visited or was visited by hostel people.' To display any outward signs of traditional Zuluness such as wearing bracelets of animal skins (iziphandla) was to court death (Vusi Langa). Zwenke Mthembu 'survived by changing masks; when he was with the Zulu he behaved like Inkatha and when with the township people he became a comrade.'

Among the refugees who flooded in to the hostels were vast numbers of Zulu women (izicholo). Hostel dwellers gave them sanctuary 'because we would not forsake our own people.' The massive intrusion of women decisively tore away what had already become an unsteady cornerstone of migrant life - a bachelor existence in the hostels. Interpersonal conflict, triggered by competition for women, became rife. The authority of elders over youth became progressively undermined (Nqaba Ndima). 'Youth were no longer so submissive. They dictated to elders, especially over war issues' (Joseph Buthelezi).

As violence escalated, and the entire character of hostel life began to change, many migrants either returned home or sought accommodation in the squatter camps or the white suburbs.[54] Their places were taken by young unemployed migrants from the rural areas, many of whom came with the prime objective of fighting and looting. Rumours abound, which appear to have substance, of the IFP bussing in large numbers of fighters from Natal. Some slipped into their new roles with comparative ease. 'People from (the stock thieving

areas) of Qudeni and Msinga played a leading role (in the violence) because gun fighting was their daily bread (Joseph Buthelezi). *Izinduna* who organised regiments and financial levies to buy guns, displaced the authority of elders and *isibonda* (N. Ndima). Burial societies were now reconstructed so as to cover every resident in the hostel and to guarantee a payment of R4 000 upon death.

As the war entered its final most vicious phases in 1993 and 1994 both sides engaged in more and more indiscriminate slaughter. This was when the conflict turned decisively into one between the townships and the hostels. Following the killing of Bheki Sokhele on the eve of Good Friday 1993, IFP vigilantes 'cornered township people in Mokoena' and later 'ambushed the ANC' at the Hokai taxi ranks in Wadeville (S. Ndima). This latter episode, NUMSA shop steward leader, Richard Ntuli, recalls as:

> 'one of the most terrible moments for me in my whole life ... It was knock off time, 4.45. Then the guys came from the railway line at the back of the shops, and others were across the road, and the shooting happened from both sides ... it was all working people. In ten minutes 32 people were killed ... and 17 were NUMSA members'.

The youthful self defence units, for their part, did everything in their power to extinguish hostel life. Migrants were regularly attacked on their way to work and a key railway line between Natalspruit and the industrial areas was uprooted and closed. Authentic job seeking migrants were 'cut off' and had to travel long, circuitous, expensive routes to work, which sometimes led to their dismissals (J. Ndima, N. Ndima, F. Mncube). A profound sense of isolation and embattledness descended on hostel dwellers. Many likened their situation to that of a prison. One nightmarish occasion, when hostel residents were 'holed up and starved' one group of residents eventually dissected a dead body in search of a liver to eat (Ngobese).

END NOTES

Interviews cited were collected by Vusi Ndima in 1996 and by researchers for the Kathorus History Project in the course of 1999. My thanks in this connection are due to Jeffrey Ndumu, David Monyane and Noar Nieftagodien and to Kallie Forrest for *History of NUMSA*.

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