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Violence in Inanda, 1985

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Early in August 1985, the urban incendiarism which had been sweeping much of South Africa for some 18 months erupted in Durban, just at a time when local researchers and other interested observers were trying to understand why Natal was so 'quiet'. Despite much evidence of regionally generated conflict in that province, the widespread anti-government resistance witnessed in the Transvaal and Cape had not manifested itself to anything like the same degree in Natal. When it did break out, sparked by the assassination of Victoria Mxenge outside her Umlazi home on the 1st August, (1) many were surprised both by its suddenness and intensity. Within a week, hardly a shop or government building in African areas of the city was more than burned-out shell.

Inanda was caught in this upsurge in a way few in the democratic movement could review with anything but regret: events there seemed to culminate in a confrontation between Indian and African people. The media were quick to raise the spectre of the 1949 'race clashes' in Durban, while many denied any racial friction whatever, claiming that to admit such would be to play into the hands of government-confected policies and propaganda. Clearly, the issue of race within the ranks of the oppressed classes was a sensitive one. The main theme of this paper, then, must be the "complexities and ambiguities" arising from the "profound racial dimension" (2) of class conflict in Inanda up to and in 1985.

In Inanda, no less than in any other unenfranchised and economically deprived area of South Africa, there were local causes enough to threaten instability and a breakdown in the social order. It is doubtful whether the onset of violence, finally, would have been so intense or widespread without the stimulus of revived political activity in the country over the past few years; the point remains, however, that the underlying causes, course and outcome of violence must be sought in Inanda's particular, local history. Since this paper is concerned with the immediate past, the greater part of Inanda's development can be dealt with only very briefly. Emphasis is necessarily laid on the period from the 1960s onwards, when Inanda became rapidly incorporated into metropolitan Durban as an 'informal' shanty town.

A brief history to the 1960s

The name 'Inanda' applies to several areas or places, whose boundaries sometimes but not always overlap. It was originally given to farms of the Natalia Republic period. In 1847, the African location to the north west of Durban was gazetted as the Inanda Location (it shared a border with the farm Inanda), and the stretch of colony between the location and the sea - some 180 square miles - was known as the Inanda Division of Victoria County, a coastal strip which was to become the centre of Natal's sugar industry. 'Inanda' was also the name given by Daniel Lindley to his mission reserve, at the south eastern edge of the location, when he moved there in 1857. Nowadays, it is the officially designated 'Released Area 33' which is most commonly called Inanda. For the most part, it consists of privately owned land in the Inanda Division adjoining the eastern side of the old mission reserve (now incorporated into KwaZulu), and is the place which is the subject of this paper. (3)

In the 19th century, only three farms, or parts of farms, covered the area which would become Released Area 33: Piesang River, Groeneberg and Riet Rivier. (4) All date from the short-lived Natalia Republic. By the 1870s, all were in the hands of speculators, both company and individual, rather than producers. African people on this land experienced a rapid transformation in their status, once colonial rule gave some meaning to the notion of private property: independent producers became tenants, paying cash as rent. (In some cases, a labour requirement was attached; if not fulfilled, rent was simply raised. (5))

From the mid-1860s, African producers began to be displaced by Indian workers who had completed their period of indenture, something foreseen and wholly disliked by Lindley and his Christian band at Inanda:

> The great majority of these imported labourers will never return to their native land... they are indescribably wicked, and seem to me hopelessly lost now and forever... I look upon these Indians as a growing cloud on our social horizon. At present there seems to be no friendly sympathy between the coolies and the Natives... (6)

Provision for Indians wishing to settle on the land was extremely ad hoc, making their entry into agriculture on their own account very different to that of African producers. The first Indian producers were tenants, leasing small plots on Groeneberg and Riet Rivier. (7) A common adjunct to farming activities was hawking, or keeping small stores, catering particularly for trade with Africans.

In a relatively short while, Indian producers were achieving great success. The Inanda magistrate noted in 1876, "but for them maize would be at famine price and vegetables strangers to our table". (8) What gave them an edge over their African counterparts was possibly differential access to credit (9) and different rent charges: it seems as if Africans were charged per hut and Indians per acre. The former could well have been more restrictive. (10)

There were not many African landowners in the Inanda area outside of the mission glebe. The most important was Dr J.L. Dube, who bought 200 acres of Piesang River - henceforward known as Dube's Farm - in 1901, for his self-help Christian Industrial School, Ohlange. Just before the Land Act of 1913 put an end to African purchases in 'white' South Africa, Isaiah Shembe also acquired a portion of the old Piesang River in the name of the Amanazaretha. He called his settlement Ekuphakameni, The Elevated Place, a country haven away from the evils of town.

But it was those few African landowners interested in more secular pursuits who were unsettled by the steady acquisition of land by Indians, untrammelled by legislation such as the Land Act. Some small plots were bought by tenant

producers, although the major purchases were due to restricitve legislation imposed on traders in town, which left land as one of the few avenues of investment for wealthier immigrants. In the first three decades of this century, the amount of land owned by Indians increased steadily, as speculators disposed of their holdings. (11) Indeed, even by the turn of the century, the Indian population of Inanda was sizeable enough to attract Mahatma Gandhi to establish his Phoenix Settlement there - again, on a portion of the old Piesang River.

From the early 1930s, economic conditions and discriminatory legislation conspired to cause agricultural stagnation in Inanda. Against the background of deep recession, the 1936 Land Act declared Inanda a 'released area' - that is, isolated from 'white' South Africa for incorporation into the neighbouring African reserve at some future date, once the state had acquired the necessary land. The declaration of Released Area 33 can be seen as a direct attack on Indian owners and producers there; in that year, Indian people constituted nearly 52% of the population of the Inanda Division, (12) a substantial proportion of whom would have resided in the released area. Although there were no immediate changes to the pattern of land ownership, further purchases by Indians were made extremely difficult. In the future, it would be African landowners, entrepreneurs, churches and those attached to power structures in the reserve who would buy land from Indian sellers. The state's sluggishness in expanding the holdings of the Native Trust was marked all over the country and Inanda was no exception. By 1969, for example, it had acquired only one piece of Piesang River farm. (13)

Alongside of these developments were the increasingly hostile proscriptions of Indian people. The Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act of 1946 was the first piece of legislation to apply to rural as well as urban areas, and its effect was "a sharp decrease in the number of farms acquired by Indians". (14) Thereafter, the trend was towards intense subdivision of holdings and the consequent decline of productivity and growth of population pressure. Despite the bucolic air of H.I.E. Dhlomo's 1947 poem about Inanda, where "deer and cattle mingle in the bushes,/ and rustic song and mirth rouse midst the rushes", (15) the agricultural prospect was growing bleaker. In the year before Dhlomo wrote his poem, the Inanda Division contained the second largest number of Indian people after Durban - 24 738 as against 115 833. (16) Again, it is impossible to know exactly how many were living in Released Area 33; it is known, however, that Piesang River, Groeneberg (notably, in an area known as Matikwe), and Riet Rivier formed the southern limit of the largest concentration of Indian-owned farms in Natal, the northern limit being Cotton Lands, to the west of Verulam. (17)

The 1950s were years of struggle to maintain footholds on the land, against mounting odds. When the promise of greater security presented itself in the 1960s, a decade of even greater squeeze on small producers with the beginnings of monopolisation in Natal agriculture, (18) in the form of 'shack farming', landowners willingly allowed human settlements to grow on their properties. In this way, the urbanisation of Inanda began.

The 1960s and 1970s

It was the clearance of another 'informal' settlement, Cato Manor, that gave a spur to the process. Shanty towns had grown on Durban's peripheries since the 1930s, a product of the acute shortage of more substantial workers' housing and the desire for greater freedom to shape their own lives on the part of residents. It is precisely the tension between these two factors which, according to Paul Maylam, has plagued local urban administrations over the decades: a cheap form of housing, requiring little or no capital outlay, but politically and socially uncontrollable. (19)

After numerous civil disturbances in Cato Manor, the City Council finally decided to opt for political control and to rehouse tenants in the new township of KwaMashu, begun in 1958. Situated to the north west of the city, KwaMashu

itself made a place like Inanda a viable option for daily or weekly commuting to work in the city, since the bus service was extended in this direction. Many either did not qualify for, or refused, housing in the township - they were among the earliest of Inanda's shack dwellers. Others tried KwaMashu but found it unpalatable and moved on to Inanda. (20)

This outward movement, the creation of a new periphery, demonstrated the rate of Durban's metropolitan dilation in a period of "rapid and unprecedented expansion in the decade 1963-73". (21)

The growth of Inanda changed its social complexion completely. For the few 'big' and several hundred 'small' landowners, tenants brought a steady income. Moreover, for those landlords who were also shopowners, tenants were also consumers. Whereas before, these had been country concerns with modest turnovers, profitable markets were now growing up around them.

Both African and Indian landlords and traders were represented in this emerging peri-urban class, and their dual source of income was to affect relations with tenant-consumers profoundly. But the class was divided, not only in terms of scale. Especially after the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959, African petty bourgeois interests began to make bids for a share in Inanda. Being a 'released area', they based their claims on the need for African advancement in African areas. Some, including A.W.G. Champion, a leading ideologue and active local Inanda resident, couched their class protectionism in explicitly anti-Indian terms:

> Here in Durban, when the Indians were very arrogant, the Africans took sticks to them in 1949. They beat them up and made them close their shops. Yes, the enrichment of Africans from stores and buses started in 1949, it started like that... (22)

Not only bantustan policy but also the Group Areas Act affected relations among landlords. At least one African landowner of very long standing has had land in surrounding areas expropriated on more than one occasion for the demarcation of Indian Group Areas. (23)

Unlike in the African and Indian townships nearby - the huge council housing scheme for Indian people, Phoenix, was constructed in the mid-1970s and the new township of Ntuzuma was begun in 1973 - no group of interests associated with local bureaucracy has arisen in Inanda. This is because until 1979, no authority in the country was willing to admit responsibility for it, and the ever more populous settlements there grew over two decades without any form of local administration. This situation has given the landlords - or shacklords, as they have been called, signifying their power over the thousands of tenants - added importance, particularly those who have had direct links with the KwaZulu government and Inyanda, the African traders' association which affiliated to Inkatha in 1978. In this way, since there has been no local authority to do it, (24) attempts have been made to protect trading licences against competition - particularly as the licensing authority is the Verulam magistrate and because of administrative red tape, it has been easier for Indian traders to obtain licences. (25)

For many reasons - demographic, social, political, economic - most tenants were to be African people, dotting the hillsides with their shacks, or 'imijondolo', lacking all basic services and dependent on rivers and rain for their water. A substantial proportion of the tenantry is made up of "people who have spent all or most of their lives in the urban area", (26) unable to find housing in the formal townships, or escaping single-sex hostels to be with family, or perhaps evicted from another shanty settlement. A growing proportion must be coming from rural areas, as conditions there steadily deteriorate: "conditions in the bantustans are so poor that people are forced to go to urban areas to survive". (27)

Schlemmer recently calculated that the overall increase in the number of 'informal' dwellings around Durban was 137% between 1966 and 1979! (28) clearly, Inanda, as home of the largest number, was subject to massive pressures with such a rapid growth rate in so short a period. Available figures show the following increase in Inanda's population over the past decade:

1977	68 000
1979	88 000
1982	100 000 - 200-000
1985	250 000 (29)

As settlement has become denser, so opportunities for growing maize or vegetables or keeping small stock have diminished. In the early 1980s, densities of 100 to 230 people per hectare could be found. (30) Household size now averages 9.5 people, according to the most recent survey. The vast majority of tenants are semi-skilled or unskilled workers, educational levels are low (about six years of schooling on average) and there is a sizeable lumpenproletariat - 15% is a recent estimate. (31)

Levels of crime, especially against the person - mugging, assault, rape, murder - are high, and in this sense at least, Inanda is seriously under-policed, with one small police station in upper Inanda. When it is considered that unemployment stands in the region of 45%, (32) a result of the severe economic downswing beginning in the early 1980s, one has a partial explanation for the fragility which characterises social relations in Inanda. The degree of youth unemployment is particularly high, leading to the creation of a "bitter generation" (33) amongst a tenantry caught in a downward spiral of poverty, aggravated by inflation and a burdensome general sales tax of 15% on all commodities. In order to make ends meet, many have turned to the 'informal sector', selling goods such as food and clothing, or to 'illegal' employment (that is, bypassing all official allocation channels), which is very widespread in Durban. (34)

In some areas, tenants cluster together for a specific purpose, such as religion or relation to landlord. Some of the Indian tenants, numbering about 2 000 individuals before the August violence, would fall in the latter category. The most prominent of the religious centres is that of the Amanazarethe, for some years wracked by division over a succession dispute. Other religious groupings include the independent congregationalists around their church in an area called Afrika.

Apart from the collectivities with common linkages, one gains the impression of a generally fractured community, in which welfare and political organisations have found it hard to mobilise support. Since its formation in 1983, the United Democratic Front (UDF) has had negligible presence in the area, and even Inkatha has not mustered noticeable support. This is another product of the lack of a local authority around which support could cohere. In addition, the most prominent African landlord, Mr Rogers Ngcobo, fell out with the organisation in the early 1980s.

Another form of fracture has been an 'ethnic' one, between Pondo and Zulu people. The former, a fairly large minority, have congregated together in shanty towns around Durban (being ineligible for township housing, which is nearly all in KwaZulu). In Inanda, there are several groups, in areas such as Piesang River and Bambayi.

Crises from 1979

The state has always regarded tenants in 'informal' settlements as 'illegal squatters', and therefore to be removed, since they have settled without official permission. As the Inanda population swelled through the 1970s, so the state took a more active interest in the area and acquired two further blocks of

Piesang River (35) from Indian owners, whose properties now housed shanty settlements. Before it took any further action, a series of local crises, beginning in 1979, brought tenant, landlord and state into a multilateral conflict, which served merely to worsen relationships within Inanda.

The first of these was the severe drought which ravaged Natal from 1978. All sources of water in Inanda dried up and through 1979, some shopkeepers began to sell water, while others gave it away. One storeowner sank a borehole for residents in the immediate vicinity, with financial assistance from Indian businessmen. The KwaZulu government had recently turned down his application for Inanda to be connected to the KwaMashu water supply. (36)

The Urban Foundation had been investigating a bulk water supply too, and calculated that its installation would cost about R1.5 million. (37) The Department of Cooperation and Development (CAD) was unwilling to pursue the idea - to lay on water would be to recognise the permanency of the tenants.

In early 1980, 30 people died of typhoid in Inanda. Official intervention could be delayed no longer, and an emergency committee was formed, consisting of the Departments of Health and CAD, the South African Defence Force, the Verulam magistrate (also the local CAD commissioner) and the Urban Foundation. It organised tankers to bring water to a number of points in Inanda. Only as a result of this crisis did the Department of CAD assume responsibility for Released Area 33.

Before water mains were finally laid in 1982, the state used the health/water issue as the pretext for a series of removals. First was a site-and-service scheme, in association with the Urban Foundation. It was planned in five weeks, and aimed at the residents of Amouti. Rumours there began to abound: residents were being moved to make way for the expansion of Phoenix; Section 10 qualifications would be granted; township houses would be built. Arrivals on the scheme found pegged-out sites, each with a pit latrine, and one tap for every four or so sites. They were issued with tents until they could build shacks, in turn an intermediate stage before they were able to construct more substantial dwellings to minimum standards. When Newtown was proclaimed a township in 1982, 25 000 people had moved there. A Surplus People Project survey conducted among new arrivals showed that one of the main reasons for leaving their old shacks was that "tenants (had) found themselves subject to the whims of the landlord". (38)

Other kinds of removals followed. From early 1982, the state began to number shacks, then prosecute tenants on Development (ex Native) Trust land, invoking the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1951. Amidst considerable differences of opinion at various levels of the Department of CAD hierarchy, tenants' protest and a vigorous defence which raised a myriad of technical arguments, the state backed down on many such cases. (39)

In a second line of attack, and in apparent attempts both to deflect attention away from the Department of CAD and to depoliticise the issue of removals, the Department of Health late in 1981 instructed several Indian landlords either to provide water and sewerage services or to evict tenants. A huge proportion of the Inanda tenantry was thus put at risk. No African landlords were issued with such ultimatums. For some months, the instructions were ignored, until in April 1982, random prosecutions began of groups of tenants, as well as of landlords, under the 1936 Land Act. Under such pressure, some landlords began to issue eviction orders and some called in officials to demolish shacks, actions which led to such bitterness:

> the Indian landlords should bear in mind that they have encouraged the squatters for a number of years to build and improve the dwellings on the said land. (40)

A few tried to withstand the pressure. One, however, after one conviction, bowed partially by allowing officials to demolish new shacks, saying at his second trial that he would "feel awkward" evicting established tenants. (41)

Indian landlords were being placed in a quite untenable position, for reasons soon made clear. Simultaneous with the first prosecutions was the release of a structure plan for the future of Inanda. It had been commissioned by the Department of CAD and devised by a private Durban consultancy. It acknowledged the logistical necessity of recognising the permanency of the Inanda population. It recommended upgrading accommodation on a planned basis, in a series of "neighbourhoods", including some in Released Area 33 but also new ones, stretching well into the less densely settled Inanda reserve. Judging by the plan, what was being mooted was a huge, 'do-it-yourself' township for over half a million people by the year 2000. It also recommended the incorporation of Released Area 33 into KwaZulu as soon as possible. On the very last page of the main report was the following advice:

> land owned by non-blacks (i.e. non-Africans) in Released Area 33 should be acquired as necessary in accordance with the approved implementation proposals. (42)

Evictions, and resentment, continued through 1982, 1983, and 1984, in a climate of increasing uncertainty.

Indian tenants too began to feel isolated and vulnerable. In March 1983, the Durban City Council announced that those Inanda families who had applied for housing in Phoenix could not be accommodated, because they were living beyond the Council's jurisdiction. (43) Verulam Town Board declared that it had no housing to offer, and in June, plans were unveiled to rehouse all Indian families in Roodekrans, a new township near Verulam, yet to be built. In the face of protest, the Department of Community Development decided to undertake a socio-economic survey of the Indian people of Inanda before taking further action. (44)

Other events fed the general sense of tension and uncertainty through 1983 and 1984. There was a renewed outbreak of cholera in the first months of 1983 (five people had died of the illness in the previous year) and problems over the supply of water persisted. Also in 1983, there was a prolonged boycott of PUTCO buses (over fare increases) occasionally flaring into violence between drivers and commuters. (45) There were also isolated incidents of students' protests - for example, towards the end of 1983, police dispersed demonstrations in the vicinity of Ohlange High School. (46)

At the end of the following year, Inanda's future seemed set along the course plotted by the structure plan, when the first Inanda township manager was appointed. (47) In January 1985, plaintive letters began appearing in the Durban press:

> Indian residents in Inanda plead that the housing authorities should give us alternative housing immediately, before the problem gets worse and before it's too late for regrets. (48)

Some African landlords appeared to be impatient at the rate of progess in Inanda's conversion into a township. In July, a meeting was held at which one speaker called for a renewed effort to take over Indian lands and shops. Some of those present were so disturbed at the tone that they reported the matter to the Inanda police station. (49)

By this stage, the state and its agencies had discovered and forcibly widened every faultline in the social makeup of Inanda.

The events of August 1985

> "On Monday, August 5, a rolling school strike and boycott began in most African townships to protest the assassination of Victoria Mxenge. Schoolchildren, especially in KwaMashu, Umlazi, Clermont and Lamontville, started marching from school to school, gathering more and more pupils, until thousands of them were in the streets." (50)

There were reasons why, all over the country, African secondary school students were in the forefront of resistance to the apartheid policies of the state. Not only were they rejecting an inferior schooling but also "the closing horizons of their futures". (51) The added edge in Durban was that, with the important exceptions of Lamontville and Chesterville, all township schools were under the control of the KwaZulu government. In the past, as now, the Minister of Education, Dr O. Dhlomo (also secretary-general of Inkatha), was signalling his government's determination to keep the schools open and 'running normally', despite the boycott calls of the students. Not only was there a heightened ideological conflict here - the students' organisation, the Congress of South African Students, was the backbone of UDF support in the townships - but an overlay of generational conflict as well, as youth came to be identified with the UDF and adults with a more conservative disposition and Inkatha. Over the week beginning on the 5th August, in all Durban's African townships students came out on the street (attracting 'fringe' elements whose motives were less clear), attempting to assert their hegemony. They were met by vicious police action, followed by a counteractionary thrust from Inkatha, which seemed, in the bigger townships, to win back the initiative. While these battles left a trail of death, injury and arson in their wake - shops and 'hate' symbols such as administrative offices were the main targets - a more explosive chain of events was touched off in Inanda. For here, two disturbed streams merged into an uncontained torrent. The first was of local origin, the cumulative strife, deprivation and uncertainty of an unorganised poor; the second, the highly politicised revolt of the youth.

On Monday night, August 5th, one group of youths surrounded the house of a policeman in Ntuzuma. He opened fire, killing one of their number. The following morning, the 'rolling strike', now enraged, reached Inanda. Police dispersed the marchers with tear gas and bullets, but as they scattered, they lost all control of the situation. What can be described as 'lumpen' youth from Inanda took up and led where the students had left off. (52) At midday, two Indian-owned shops and houses were looted and burnt. One of these belonged to one of the most prominent landowners, Mr Laljeeth Rattan. He managed to remove his family before the attack. Police intervened to disperse looters but a crowd regrouped on the main road, where roadblocks were set up and cars and buses stoned. By late afternoon, hundreds of Indian people, having taken fright, had been turned into refugees. They congregated in the Greenbury Hall, Phoenix, (53) where a wrangle began to 'claim' them, involving the House of Delegates and state-sponsored civil defence groups on the one side and more popular housing action groups on the other.

The same pattern - of looting and burning Indian-owned properties, and stoning vehicles on the main road - continued throughout Wednesday and for most of Thursday, on which day one driver was killed and another injured as a result of the stoning. The Indian refugees felt that the police had been of little assistance. The latter in fact seem to have been very thin on the ground, concentrating their attempts on keeping the road clear. At scenes of looting, their response seems to have been very much of a 'hit and run' type: firing on crowds, making arrests and moving off again. (54) Medical evidence confirmed eyewitness accounts that up to Thursday, it was mostly people in their teens and early twenties involved in arson, and that police were inflicting the casualties, being bullet wounds. (55)

One account of the unrest in Inanda tells as much about domestic relations and unexpected opportunities as it does of the attack itself. It was gathered by Prof. Fatima Meer not many days after the events described:

> We spoke to Beatrice, who has taken over the Govender house - six very dark rooms with a verandah. She had rented a room from them for the last fifteen years. That she had been close to them was reflected in her distinctly Indian-accented English. She said she was a member of Inkatha. "When they came to attack, I hid the Indians and I told them that this was my house". After the mob left, the Indians took what they could carry and went away. She says she will buy the house now because the Govenders will not come back. (56)

Late on Thursday afternoon, the character of attacks began to change. Firstly, increasing numbers of adults became caught up in the looting and burning of shops and houses. Secondly, stab and assault wounds were inflicted for the first time. The latter was indicative of a new element in all the African areas of the city: vigilante 'impis' (armed contingents) wielding spears, sticks, knobkerries and the like and acting in the name of Inkatha. From Thursday night, impis were being deployed widely, dispersing youths and searching for stolen goods. In Inanda, their entry caused the violence to spin off in a new direction, as became clear on Friday afternoon.

Meanwhile, as refugees crowded into the hall in Phoenix, panic spread throughout the estate, particularly in those units bordering on Inanda. As rumours spread of a 'repeat of 1949', men began to arm themselves and form into vigilante groups. (57) The Natal Indian Congress, senior organisation in the Natal UDF and for 18 months campaigning for the withdrawal of police and army from the townships, found itself in the awkward position of calling upon these same personnel for protection, and a limited army patrol was despatched to Phoenix.

Events reached their pitch in Inanda on Friday, 9th August. Incidents of incendiarism (including the setting alight of sugar cane on the fringes of Inanda) and stone-throwing continued, but the focus was on the area surrounding the Mahatma Gandhi Settlement. Both on the Phoenix and Inanda sides, armed crowds massed early in the morning. A small army contingent made feeble attempts to disperse the opposing factions, then withdrew. The Inanda crowd, estimated at about 300, charged into the Settlement and set numerous buildings alight. The Indian crowd, calling itself The Phoenix Boys, joined the fray. A group of refugees, left homeless after another township conflict, (58) was caught in the middle. Mewa Ramgobin, a prominent NIC and UDF leader and then standing trial for treason, nearly lost his life at the hands of The Phoenix Boys as he tried to remonstrate with them. In all the violence, Gandhi's home 'Savordaya' and the school which bore his wife's name, Kasturbai Gandhi, were destroyed.

The tragic symbolism of the burning of the Gandhi Settlement went far beyond the immediate act of the violent destruction of a 'place of peace'. It signified also the void of political organisation and ideas, on all sides of the Group Areas divide, which could have allayed, or at least toned down, the confrontations. One of the Hambanathi refugees was left to reflect, "It is a great pity. These people are uneducated and do not know what they are doing". (59) The other symbolism was that an area where some measure of Indian and African co-residence, if fraught in some of its aspects, had continued for more than a century, and the last of any significance in the country, had been torn apart.

As the sides were withdrawing on late Friday morning, a large impi from a nearby shanty town, Lindelani, arrived on the scene. It made repeated attacks on Friday and Saturday. They were repulsed, but there were a number of deaths.

The effect of this development was to turn the Inanda shanty town against the Lindelani one (whether as part of some competition for dominance on the part of landlords is unclear) and to turn many against Inkatha.

By Saturday, there were 2 000 refugees in Phoenix, while in Inanda isolated incidents continued. Armed vigilantes patrolled the Phoenix side of the border and the atmosphere along it remained tense. On Sunday, Inkatha held a 'peace rally' near to the shell of the Gandhi Settlement, to signal reassertion of its position in the townships. In addition, announced Dr Dhlomo,

> we have come here to reassure our Indian brothers
> and sisters of Inkatha's willingness to co-operate
> with them in all efforts that are aimed at
> restoring peace, law and order in the area. (60)

Some Indian shopkeepers declared that unless they had a firm guarantee from the KwaZulu government that they would be secure after incorporation, they would not rebuild their premises. Some, however, did venture back - those whose only livelihood and investments had been thir land and their buildings. "My house and farm is worth a lot of money, therefore I decided to return to Inanda", said one. (61) After the violence, even lower compensations were being offered to them. (62) And after long, drawn out disputes with authorities, the Indian tenants have been rehoused in Phoenix and Verulam. (63)

At the end of the week of violence, 42 Indian-owned shops and businesses, as many houses and three surgeries operated by an Indian doctor, had been destroyed. The only Indian shops left intact were in upper Inanda, near the police station, and in the Matikwe area.

The last incident of violence, identifiable as part of the August upsurge, came exactly a week after it had begun. On Tuesday, 13th August, the bodies of three Indian men were found burnt on the Phoenix-Inanda border. They were all from the same family: a father, his son and his brother-in-law. The father had fled his house in Inanda a few days before. (64)

In September, renewed clashes occurred in African townships as Inkatha impis searched out suspected or known UDF supporters and threatened scholars. Inanda escaped this violence, but the more basic economic insecurity persisted. At the beginning of September, clashes over access to water assumed an 'ethnic' dimension. People from Piesang River, allegedly Xhosa speaking, had been using the taps in Newtown (all Zulu speaking). The occupants of Newtown barred them from the privilege and the shanty dwellers retaliated by preventing buses from entering Newtown. Talks between the leaders of the opposing parties, arranged by members of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, averted fresh violence, but the conflict still simmers, with Lindelani people also becoming involved in 'anti-Pondo' actions. (65)

In late September 1985, the state released its consolidation proposals for KwaZulu. As if to underline its continuing commitment to divisive policies and strategies, its recommendation for the Inanda region was that three more farms to the north of Released Area 33 - Groeneberg, Buffelsdraai and the original Inanda, all housing stable Indian communities, be incorporated into KwaZulu. (66)

Responses to the August 1985 violence in Inanda

While none of the political organisations directly concerned with the violence in Durban had any measurable presence in Inanda, what happened there was critical for all of them. The NIC and UDF condemned the violence as the work of "mobs of criminals looting and burning indiscriminately", while Chief Buthelezi of Inkatha blamed the general malaise on students, the UDF and the ANC, and held that there was "no anti-Indian sentiment involved in the attacks against Indian

homes and shops", but added that there was "a lot of resentment" that some Indians had participated in the new tricameral parliament. Smaller parties, such as those connected to the House of Delegates, also blamed students and the UDF for the violence. Y.S. Chinsamy of the Reform Party believed that it had not been racially motivated, citing as evidence that no Indian people had been assaulted or killed, and that they had been able to leave before the looting of their properties began. (67)

Generally, Inanda was perceived as suffering an overspill of the violence from its epicentres in nearby African townships; there was nothing particular or distinct about it at all. One exception to this view was Ela Ramgobin, a social worker in Inanda, NIC executive member and grand-daughter of Gandhi, who placed the responsibility for the events on the state: "One has to look at the history of Inanda to put it in perspective. People in that area have been asking for help for years..." (68)

The explanation for the more general political response is that all these organisations, in different ways, were locked into a political discourse the primary categories of which were racial ones. In the moment of crisis, it would have been inconceivable to admit to any form whatsoever of 'racial hostility', since the implications in the Natal region would have been deeply damaging to them, albeit for very different reasons in each case. In line with the UDF's vision of a nonracial and democratic future, stripped of all legally-enforced segregation, Inanda had been held up as an example of how Indian and African people could live in harmony. For Inkatha, appeasing racial fears and promising the ability to restore calm and to offer security would earn credibility among Indian people in Natal and cement alliances with reformist groupings against common political foes. In turn, such an option would appeal to the parties in the new Indian House. It would confirm their position that the way to ensure racial harmony was by the separate representation of minority rights.

None was able to go beyond 'African-Indian' relations, to examine instead relations of wealth and poverty and how race had been hitched to vested interest over many years in a place such as Inanda. For the 'Inanda mobs' could not be excused as criminals and hooligans, however obnoxious their behaviour had been. They were local people experiencing ever increasing degrees of poverty and deprivation and who had identified symbols of wealth and well-being (most certainly without the assistance of the police, as one African landowner had alleged) on the other side of a great divide. Coupled to this was the climate of insecurity engendered by the actions of the state. Two faultlines had intersected, and the structure gave way.

There was an identifiable pattern to the violence - it had a set of "rules" and a purpose, "the use of force being proportionate to that purpose". (69) That no Indian people were hurt or killed on their premises - though when they left in cars and trucks they had stones thrown at them - may perhaps have been good fortune. That nearly all of them left as soon as they could might also have minimised the possibility of injury (though Fatima Meer believed that their departure left their properties completely open to attack(70)). But more likely was the fact that the violence was not the result of any provocative of aggressive action on their part, which might have been interpreted as hostility towards the personal integrity of one of another race. The causes were altogether different. In this sense at least, one cannot talk of 'race riots', since racial differences themselves did not constitute the cause for conflict. (71)

Conclusion: A repeat of 1949?

"A repeat of 1949" was a sentiment carried in the local media and felt in some quarters in 1985. Reading Webster's anatomy of the 1949 violence, (72) one can find some uncomfortable similarities: competition for trading preserves, expressed in racial form; friction between landlords and tenants in shanty towns; the ambivalent position of Indians in the South African political order; the lack of synchronisation between leadership and ground floor levels in popular political organisations. Then, as now, Africans had to carry passes and could not proceed beyond a certain level of skill in the workplace, and urban experiences of Indian and African people differed in several respects.

One must not be persuaded by the similarities. There were differences, too, most notably perhaps in the "rules of violence" on the two occasions. Yet when the events of 1949 and 1985 are put into their broader context and approached historically, it becomes clear that superficial comparisons are of little use. In 1949, the Nationalist government was new; there was no Group Areas Act and therefore no Phoenix or Chatsworth; there was no bantustan policy and no Inkatha; there was no centralised urban policy towards Africans and no Umlazi and KwaMashu; there was no Inanda. The conflict in 1949 provided the state with justification to push ahead with its radical policies of segregation. The conflict of 1985 is an end product of that process.

Footnotes

1. Victoria Mxenge was a prominent 'political' attorney and treasurer in the Natal executive of the UDF. Her husband Griffiths, jailed for support of the ANC in the 1960s and also a 'political' attorney, was brutally murdered in 1981. His attackers have never been found.
2. The phrase is Eugene Genovese's, in The World the Slaveholders Made (New York, 1969) p. 103 and Roll, Jordan, Roll (London, 1975) p. 3.
3. For the background on Inanda mission reserve and location, see H. Hughes "The Inanda District during the Colonial Period: a Preliminary Overview" , paper to the Conference on the History of Natal and Zululand, Durban, 1985.
4. Map of Inanda Division 1873 (No. 831, Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg)
5. For a fuller treatment of land and labour in colonial Natal, see Slater, H. "The Changing Pattern of Economic Relationships in Rural Natal, 1838-1914" in Marks, S. and A. Atmore (Eds) Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa (London, 1980)
6. Daniel Lindley, 29th December, 1864. In Smith, E.W. The Life and Times of Daniel Lindley, 1801-1880 (London, 1949) p.378
7. Greyling, J.J.C. Problems of Indian Landownership and Land-occupation on the Natal North Coast: A Socio-Geographic Investigation volume I (PhD, University of Natal, 1969) p.23
8. Inanda Resident Magistrate's Report, Natal Blue Book, 1876.
9. See Swan, M. Gandhi - the South African Years (Johannesburg, 1985) p.23; Bundy, C. The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry (London, 1979) p.182-3
10. Evidence of John Swales, Natal Native Affairs Commission 1906-7 p. 489
11. Christopher, A.J. Natal: A Study in Colonial Land Settlement (PhD, University of Natal, 1969) p.331 and 350; Greyling op.cit. p.29
12. Buchanan, K. and N. Hurwitz "The Asiatic Immigrant Community in the Union of South Africa" in The Geographical Review 39, 3, 1949, p.444
13. Greyling, op.cit., p. 39
14. Ibid., p.34
15. H.I.E. Dhlomo, "Inanda" in Ilanga 2nd August 1947, reprinted in Visser, N. and T. Couzens (Eds) H.I.E. Dhlomo: Collected Works (Johannesburg, 1985) p.337-8
16. Figures in Alsop, M.H. The Population of Natal volume 2 of the Natal Regional Survey (Cape Town, 1952) pp. 61-2, 103
17. Greyling, op.cit., p.40
18. See J. Beall et al "Conceptualising Natal: Implications of a Regional Political Economy" Working paper, Natal, 1985.
19. Maylam, P. "The "Black Belt": African Squatters in Durban 1935-50" in Canadian Journal of African Studies 17, 3, 1983, p.413-428
20. See interview with Mrs M, cited in Surplus People Project Forced Removals in South Africa Volume 4: Natal (Cape Town and Pietermaritzburg, 1983) p.201
21. Sitas, A. "Inanda, August 1985: "Where Wealth and Power and Blood Reign Worshipped Gods"" in South African Labour Bulletin 11, 4, 1986, p.98
22. A.W.G. Champion "Repetition and Indication of Years" in Swanson, M.W. (Ed) The Views of Mahlathi (Pietermaritzburg, 1982) p.68-9
23. Interview with Dr M.V. Gumede, Inanda, 1st December, 1985
24. For an explanation of how community councils were meant to function, see Great, J. and H.Hughes "The Local State" in South African Research Service (Ed) South African Review 1 (Johannesburg, 1983)
25. Urban Foundation Natal Region Basic Planning Information on Inanda (Durban, 1980) p. 30
26. Surplus People Project op.cit., p.196
27. Platzky, L. and C. Walker The Surplus People (Johannesburg, 1985) p. 384
28. Schlemmer, L. "Squatter Communities: Safety Valves in the Rural-Urban Nexus" in Gilliomee, H. and L. Schlemmer (Eds) Up Against the Fences (Cape Town, 1985) p.169
29. Huge discrepancies exist in the population statistics, and these should be taken as indicative of a trend rather than as an accurate reflection of the

number of heads in any one year. The method on which most of these figures are based is that using aerial photographs and estimating population on the basis of the number of structures. Compiled from Surplus People Project op.cit., p.209; Inanda Support Group estimates and Sutcliffe, M. and P. Wellings Attitudes and Living Conditions in Inanda: The Context for Unrest? (Durban, 1985)

30. Urban Foundation, op.cit., p.27-9
31. Sitas, op.cit., p.101
32. Sutcliffe and Wellings, op.cit., p.33
33. Sitas, op.cit., p.100
34. Greenberg, S. and H. Giliomee "Managing Influx Control from the Rural End: The Black Homelands and the Underbelly of Privilege" in Giliomee and Schlemmer, op.cit., p.61
35. Urban Foundation, op.cit., p.52
36. Daily News 9th April, 1979
37. Inanda Support Group Minutes, 17th April, 1982
38. Surplus People Project, op.cit., p.396. The fullest available account of the scheme is in chapter 5.
39. Accounts in press; Inanda Support Group Information Dossier (Durban, 1982)
40. Mr M.T. Mbonambi to H. Hughes, 20th January, 1984
41. Mr K. Ramnarain, Daily News 5th August, 1982
42. Structure Plan for Inanda (Durban, May 1982) p.65
43. Post Natal 26th March, 1983
44. Daily News 27th September, 1983
45. Natal Mercury 28th January, 1983
46. Daily News 4th November, 1983
47. Daily News 26th October, 1984
48. Daily News 22nd January, 1985
49. Information from Ela Ramgobin, August 1985
50. Sitas, op.cit., p.103
51. Ibid., p.104
52. Accounts concur that students were not in the lead in Inanda. In charting the week's events, it would be tedious to footnote every item. The account has been compiled from the following sources: news coverage in the local press; F. Meer (Ed) Unrest in Natal August 1985 (Durban, 1985); crisis committee meetings; eyewitness reports; conversations with journalists and photographers. It must be pointed out that the local press, while covering events widely, contained very few firsthand accounts (for reason of the obvious difficulty of reporting them) although the Daily News was better in this respect than any of the others. Also, one has to be wary of local bias - "marauding blacks" and "rampaging mobs" as opposed to "groups of Inkatha supporters" (referring to the impis), for example.
53. Not all of those leaving made their way to the hall - though it is safe to conclude that the vast majority did so.
54. Certainly this is what appeared to be the case judging from aerial media coverage.
55. Medical report to crisis committee, 10th August 1985. It is impossible to work out a separate death toll for Inanda. For the whole of Durban, it rose to about 70, of which around half were police-inflicted fatalities and half the result of spear and assault wounds. The full death toll in Inanda is estimated to be between 15 and 20.
56. In Meer, F. op.cit., p.52
57. See Haysom, N. Apartheid's Private Army (London, 1986) p.125-7
58. In August 1984 and again in May 1985, the homes of several suspected UDF sympathisers were petrol bombed in Hambanathi, a township near Tongaat on the Natal north coast. Many were made homeless and there were a number of deaths. The township authorities threatened the residents concerned with eviction, on the grounds that houses were not being occupied and rent not paid. Many cannot return for fear of their lives.
59. Daily News 10th August, 1985
60. Natal Mercury 12th August, 1985

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61. Natal Mercury 23rd August, 1985
62. Meer, F., op.cit., p.43
63. The refugees, who early on were put in the hands of the House of Delegates, initially refused to move from the hall until they had been allocated housing in Phoenix. Pressure was put on them to move to a school in Verulam until housing could be arranged, and those who made this move were assured of preferential treatment. The refugees' committee claimed that promises had been made but not kept (such as waiving the normal required deposits). Problems were eventually sorted out and all families were housed by the end of 1985.
64. Natal Mercury 23rd August, 1985
65. Evidence to crisis committee, 5th October 1985
66. Full list of recommendations in Daily News 23rd September, 1985
67. Natal Mercury 8th August, 1985; Daily News 9th August, 1985; Sunday Times Extra 11th August, 1985; Post Natal 21st-24th August, 1985
68. Post Natal 21st-24th August, 1985
69. Hobsbawm, E.J. 'The Rules of Violence' in his Revolutionaries (London, 1977) p.212
70. In Post Natal 21st-24th August, 1985
71. See Webster, E. 'The 1949 Durban 'Riots' - A Case Study in Race and Class' in Bonner, P. (Ed) Working Papers in Southern African Studies (Johannesburg, 1977) p.5
72. Ibid.; see also Kuper, L. An African Bourgeoisie (New Haven, 1965), ch. 19

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