

DEATH AND DESTRUCTION

What the Courts are hearing

The Natal Courts are continually hearing numerous cases relating to violence in the Pietermaritzburg area in particular. What clearly emerges is the horrific hostility between certain factions and the tragic loss of so many lives which has resulted from these feuds.

What is also obvious is that there are deaths on all sides. Many victims have no known link with any organisation. It is time this was made clear to individuals and organisations in South Africa and abroad who have somewhat naively taken the word of certain of those involved who have set out to publicly present the issue as one in which only one side is responsible for the carnage.

This dangerous tactic has proliferated black disunity to an alarming degree and nowhere is it more evident than in the pronouncements of certain media and Church organisations.

Some journalists, politicians, church bodies and civic leaders have, in their statements, made it clear that they believe that one or the other side is solely to blame — in spite of ongoing peace efforts conducted by the leaders of organisations said to be involved and denials by them of complicity in any way whatsoever.

The obvious conclusion is

that violence in Pietermaritzburg is, for the most part, out of control and in the hands of instigators who are a law unto themselves.

Evidence points towards a certain degree of ANC involvement and this organization does have a stated policy of making South Africa “ungovernable” and “eliminating” political opponents as well as policemen, township councillors and others deemed to deserve a death sentence.

Within the complexities of the causes and effects of apartheid in Pietermaritzburg and throughout the country — appalling deprivation, black political disunity and the shackling of black democracy, crime and retribution, to name a few — the fact still remains that for some the lives of the ordinary terrified citizens of Pietermaritzburg are secondary to those who see the carnage as a chance to score political points.

Affidavits, many containing hearsay allegations often untested in the Courts and damning to those unfairly and not always justly accused, are given widespread publicity and heralded as “proof” of complicity of political opponents.

The following news reports and Court cases give a chilling account of what is happening and why no effort should be spared to stop the violence.

Natal epicentre of discontent

Political violence claimed 52 lives during October

MARITZBURG — At least 52 people were killed in political violence across the country during October — 50 of them in the Maritzburg and Durban areas.

In their daily reports, police have confirmed 34 people killed, but according to reports received by a local newspaper from members of the various communities, at least another 18 people died.

In the Hammarsdale-Mpumalanga area alone, 22 people were reported killed.

In the same period, at least 115 people — 73 in the Maritzburg and Durban areas — were injured in the ongoing violence which was exacerbated by the municipal elections on October 26.

In September, political violence claimed 40 lives — 30 of them in Natal.

A total of 208 acts of political violence were reported by police and the local communities in October. This is more than six a day.

Of these, 128 (61 percent) were reported in Natal, 48 (24 percent) in the Transvaal, 29 (14 percent) in the Cape and three (1 percent) in the Orange Free State.

In September, 151 incidents — five a day — were reported.

Police reported 101 arrests in connection with October's violence.

In the troubled Mpumalanga area, 48 incidents of political violence were reported, more than one a day. Ten of those killed have been identified by residents as Inkatha members and four as UDF supporters.

The most horrifying incident reported was the death of the 35-year-old son of the local induna, Mr Kweyama. According to reports, Mr Kweyama's son was kidnapped from his home and his headless body was found in the Umbumbulu area.

In the greater Edendale area at least 16 people died violently in October, including Mr Nqobisizwe Zuma (38) the brother of Inkatha youth leader, Mr Sichizo Zuma. Mr Zuma was killed in a gunfight at a service station in Edendale on October 25.

In the same area seven fatal stabbings and three shootings were reported.

In the greater Durban area, 12 people died and 19 were injured in this period.

Five were killed in a clash in kwamakhutha township near Amanzimtoti on October 8. — Sapa.

THE STAR, November 10, 1988

As already noted, ANC involvement has been raised as an important factor and introduced as evidence in various Court cases.

ANC operative on mission given transport, court told

MJITHA, an African National Congress operative engaged in a mission in South Africa, had been introduced to a driver who provided transport for him by Mr Alfred Muntu Ndlovu (39), second national vice-president of the Transport and General Workers' Union and regional chairman of Cosatu, it was said in the regional court here yesterday.

Mr Ndlovu, who is in custody, is facing terrorism and two attempted murder charges before Mr A. J. Barnard.

A witness, No 3, who may not be identified, said that while he, Mjitha and others were travelling between Tay-

Pietermaritzburg Bureau

lor's Halt bus depot and Pietermaritzburg, Mjitha put an AK47 rifle across his thighs.

Mjitha told them that if they were stopped at a police roadblock they should run away and he would shoot at the police. There was no roadblock that day.

On the trip Mjitha pointed out a spot and said he had shot children crossing the road there.

The State alleges that Mr Ndlovu drove Mjitha and other men to a point near Emzaweni School where an Inkatha Youth meeting was taking place.

After Mjitha fired shots with an AK47 at a group of people, Mr Ndlovu drove Mjitha and the others away.

Thirteen children aged 10 to 17 and a 22-year-old man were injured in the shooting.

No 3 also said that Mr Ndlovu lent him a home-made shotgun and gave him five cartridges for it. Mr Ndlovu showed him how to use it.

No 3 said that he had wanted a gun as he was being hunted by Mr Sichisi Zuma. Mr Zuma was a member of Inkatha and he a member of the United Democratic Front.

The case continues today.

ANC involvement says witness

THE NATAL MERCURY, November 10, 1988

Secret witness talks about school killings

Natal Mercury 10/11/1988

Pietermaritzburg Bureau

A SENIOR official of the Transport and General Workers Union and Cosatu, who is facing charges of attempted murder and terrorism in the Regional Court here, told a man, who is now a State witness, that he had been present when children were shot at an Inkatha youth meeting at Emzaweni School near the capital last year.

This was said in evidence yesterday by the third State witness testifying in camera at the trial of Mr Alfred Ndlovu, 38, of Imballi.

One of the attempted murder charges against Mr Ndlovu relates to the alleged shooting of 15 youths with an AK-47 rifle after an Inkatha youth meeting at Emzaweni School on August 6 last year.

Mr Ndlovu has pleaded not guilty to the charges against him before Magistrate Mr G J Barnard.

Dynamite

Yesterday's secret witness testified that he was first introduced to Mr Ndlovu last September when he was trying to obtain a gun in order to defend himself against an Inkatha member who was 'hunting' him.

The witness said he was a UDF supporter.

The witness said he had later been given a home-made shotgun by Mr Ndlovu who said he could 'use it for the time being until he could get his own'.

The witness said after he first met Mr Ndlovu he was

approached by three other people who showed him a parcel containing four sticks of dynamite which were joined by wire. He had suggested they show this to Mr Ndlovu and they did so.

Mr Ndlovu was pleased and asked where they had obtained it. One of them said the dynamite had come from his brother-in-law who worked on the mines in Johannesburg.

The accused asked if he could get more of these things and he said yes.

The witness told the Court of several meetings with Mr Ndlovu at the Sitanani Bus depot at Taylor's Halt near the capital. It was there, he said, Mr Ndlovu introduced him and his three companions to a man they called 'Mjitha'.

It is alleged in the State's indictment that Mr Ndlovu was a supporter of the ANC and that he assisted a trained terrorist known as Mjitha on a mission in South Africa.

The witness testified that on one occasion while in a car with Mjitha he pointed out a spot on the road near Emzaweni School and said that was where he had shot schoolchildren who attended an Inkatha meeting at the hall there.

The witness said on another occasion Mr Ndlovu had said he was present when the children were shot at Emzaweni.

The accused said he was present when the children

were shot at Emzaweni because the Inkatha people from higher up had nearly killed him and chased him and that was why they had taken revenge by shooting them.

The witness said on one occasion Mjitha had fetched a sports bag from the bus depot and while they were driving back Mjitha had opened it and taken out an AK-47 rifle. He had loaded it with a magazine. 'He said he did that so that if there was a roadblock he would fire and we could run away. We did not see the police along the way,' the witness said.

Another time, the witness testified that he and others had accompanied Mjitha to Stanger. Before they left however they stopped at Mr Ndlovu's house where they picked up a man named Bhek; Ngcobo, whom they left at a taxi rank in Umhlanga.

Mjitha told them Ngcobo was being looked for and that he would be hidden in Durban. He also said that the Kombi taxi where they left him 'was one belonging to their organisation' and that they had many more taxis. The witness said Mjitha had been referring to the ANC organisation.

The hearing is continuing.

Terror trial: Court told of burned homes and killings

Intimidation of witnesses and complainants has been cited by Judges. In one case involving the murder of 13 Inkatha Youth Brigade members, Mr Justice Page noted the following: "It is extremely difficult for the authorities to bring the perpetrators of this sort of crime to book . . . There was also danger to State witnesses who were to testify. Many potential witnesses did not give evidence in this trial, and I had to be asked to warn court spectators not to intimidate witnesses . . ."

ABOUT 12 complainants and potential court witnesses had been killed, or their houses had been burned down, in the past year in the Pietermaritzburg police district, the regional court was told here yesterday.

The witness, Captain A. Upton, of the Unrest Unit here, said that intimidation was so bad that even bereaved people were scared to be seen near the police.

Other potential witnesses who had made a statement to lawyers later denied having made it.

This fear of reprisal made it very difficult to prosecute perpetrators of political crimes here.

Captain Upton was tes-

Pietermaritzburg Bureau

tifying at the regional court trial of Mr Alfred Muntu Ndlovu (38), second national vice-president of the Transport and General Workers' Union and regional chairman of Co-satu.

He faces a charge of terrorism and two of attempted murder, one arising out of the wounding of 13 youths aged from 10 to 17, and a 22-year-old man, at Vulisaka near Edendale in August last year.

Captain Upton was testifying in support of an application made by State counsel Mr Peter Blomkamp that a witness be allowed to give evidence in

camera. The witness, No 3, said he wanted to give evidence in camera because the "UDF and Co-satu have said that if one of us betrays another he will be killed".

"By betray I understand any person who informs or testifies in a case.

"If one of a group is arrested he must not testify. I believe this is such a case.

"If people know I am testifying my family will be placed in danger."

Magistrate Mr A. J. Barnard granted the application for No 3 to testify in camera.

Mr Ndlovu has pleaded not guilty.

The case continues today.



Mr Justice Thirion, in sentencing youths who stabbed a political opponent 29 times and danced round him as he was dying, said young people "quite simplistically" thought that if they could intimidate a rival political group that they could eliminate it.

In this case members of the Azanian Student Movement were convicted of the murder of a member of the Sobantu Youth Organisation, an affiliate of the UDF.

THE NATAL MERCURY, October 29, 1988

6 youths jailed in stabbing murder

Bob Frea

Pietermaritzburg Bureau

SIX youths aged about 18, who were part of a mob which dragged a political opponent from his house, stabbed him 29 times and danced round him as he was dying, were jailed for a total of 33 years here yesterday.

A seventh youth, aged 16, sentenced to seven strokes with a light cane and given a suspended jail sentence, was told that he was lucky not to be punished more severely.

The youths, all members of the Azanian Student Movement, were convicted of the murder, with extenuating circumstances, of Mr Sifiso Bhengu of Sobantu, a member of the Sobantu Youth Organisation, an affiliate of the United Democratic Front, in June last year.

Mr Justice Thirion, who found seven of 10 accused guilty of murder, said young people were often introduced into politics without having any conception of what was involved or how to behave: "They think quite simplistically that if they can intimidate a rival political group they can eliminate it.

"The exact opposite is true. Violence breeds violence and both sides are the losers because both live in fear of each other and they spend their resources combating each other.

"The house of Mr Bhengu was invaded, he was stabbed while inside, he was dragged out and butchered in broad daylight, in full view of people.

"The accused were not content with killing him. He was stabbed at least 29 times and only two wounds entered the chest cavity. He was chopped on the head and suffered brain damage. As if that were not enough, the accused had to dance around and sing while he was dying.

"If these were the only facts to consider then the sentences would be thought lenient by some, but I take into account the personal circumstances of the accused and the reasons for committing the murder, however cruel it was.

"A second fact is that the accused believed that Mr Bhengu had taken part in violence by members of the Sobantu Youth Organisation against members of the Azanian Student Movement.

Two of the accused estreated their bail before the trial started and are still being sought.

The leader of the attack, Nkosinathi Majola (18) of Imbali was jailed for seven years; a 17-year-old youth of Sobantu for three years; Israel Mbambo (18) of Sobantu for six years; Xolani Ngubane (18) of Imbali for five years; Sibusiso Zulu (18) of Sobantu for six years and Tana Khanyile (18) of Imbali for six years.

The "vindictive savagery" and "jungle law" which plagued Natal was frequently caused by teenage youths, Mr Justice Squires noted in his comments on a recent murder trial in which an Inkatha man was attacked by a mob and stabbed.

THE DAILY NEWS, November 10, 1988

MAN JAILED, SIX FREED IN MURDER TRIAL

Daily News Reporter

AN Inkatha man was killed in a retaliatory attack which was part of the "savage circle of violence which has plagued Natal", Mr Justice Squires said in the Supreme Court, Durban, today.

Christopher Mandla Zuma (18) was sentenced to five years' jail for public violence when the judge and two assessors found he was part of a mob which attacked Mr Joshua Gcwabaza at his home in the Nqetho area of Hillcrest on April 17 this year.

A further two years' imprisonment was suspended for five years.

Six other teenagers charged with Zuma for murdering Mr Gcwabaza were acquitted.

The court found that a mob had formed with the intention of attacking Mr Gcwabaza and two other men. They were chased and the two other men escaped.

The mob then went to Mr Gcwabaza's house. The house was stoned but Mrs Gcwabaza and her children were allowed to leave.

Mr Gcwabaza was then overpowered and fatally stabbed and his house set on fire.

The court found that although Zuma was part of the mob, there was no evidence that he took part in the attack on Mr Gcwabaza, and he was convicted on the alternative charge of public violence.

Sentencing Zuma, the judge said there was a growing trail of destroyed homes and assaults frequently leading to death in many parts of Natal.

Most of the population desired to live in peace free of this sort of jungle law.

It was in the interests of the community that the courts do everything possible to stop this lawlessness.

It had been accepted that Zuma was 18 years old although he looked younger.

The court had to take into account that a good deal of the mayhem was caused by teenage youths.

In some circumstances it was not possible to treat youthful offenders leniently without causing outrage to the community.

Youths taking part in violence and those inciting them to it should not think that their youth would lead to them being treated lightly.

This was a cowardly mob attack on a single man pursued to his home and done to a violent death.

This sort of vindictive savagery could not be tolerated.

'Cruel, merciless'

Bob Frean

Judge's verdict on two men convicted

APPALLING, merciless cruelty. That was the Supreme Court verdict in Pietermaritzburg this week on the methodical execution of 13 Inkatha Youth Brigade members, aged 14 to 18.

Two men were convicted of the mass murders in a case which brought home the stark horror of the recent violence near here.

Former policeman Nkosinathi Hlengwa (46) and Robert Ndaba (36), both of KwaShange near Taylor's Halt, were jailed for 12 and nine years after they were found guilty of the 13 murders.

Mr Justice Page said there were extenuating factors in that Hlengwa, Ndaba and others had launched a preemptive raid on the youths as they feared an attack.

But their crimes remained acts of "appalling and merciless cruelty".

Five of the youths died of severe burns, six of burns and stab wounds, one of pneumonia associated with burns and one of head and stab wounds. Most of the bodies were unrecognisably scorched, with shin bones and skulls showing through the skin.

State counsel Mr Ross St art said during argument that the evidence gave one a picture of people trying to escape from a blazing house and being struck down one by one.

Mr Justice Page said that the attackers took the youngsters, who were inexperienced, less effective and probably outnumbered, by surprise. The attackers intended to kill them and they proceeded to execute them without a shred of mercy.

Evidence was that at about 1 pm

Man fired AK47 at singing children — witness

Pietermaritzburg Bureau

A MAN had fired short bursts with an AK47 rifle into a group of singing schoolchildren, it was said in a witness's statement handed into court here yesterday.

The children began screaming and running in all directions, the statement said.

The gunman had told the witness that he had "come here to help supporters of the United Democratic Front in their fight against Inkatha".

The statement, made to a policeman by a witness, was handed in during the Regional Court trial of Mr Alfred Ndlovu (38), second national vice-president of the Transport and General Workers' Union and regional chairman of Cosatu here.

Mr Ndlovu is charged with the attempted murder of the children; attempted murder of a bus driver colleague who left Cosatu to join Uwusa and terrorism.

He has pleaded not guilty to all the charges.

The witness said in a statement that Mr Ndlovu had driven a gunman and two others to and from the Emzawweni School, where the shooting was done, to shoot Mr Joseph Mabaso, an Inkatha Youth organiser, and others who were having an Inkatha meeting at the school.

Proceeding

The sheer horror of the manner in which youths die are exemplified in these Court cases in which a total of 20 youths were killed in separate incidents. In one of the cases Mr Justice Page noted that the "deeds" has sown a crop of hatred among parents, friends and relatives "the fruits of which were probably still to come"

It is worth noting that although there is overwhelming evidence that youth are the victims in many of the killings, much of the reporting on Pietermaritzburg by local and international reporters has claimed that the violence is a result of a "generation gap" between older "traditionalists" and "young people" and that there is an "ideological split" between urban and rural blacks.

This is clearly not the case and is typical of much of the muddled and misinformed reporting published about Pietermaritzburg.



The scene of the "cruel, merciless mass murder" of 13 Inkatha Youth Brigade members.

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of the execution of 13 Inkatha Youth Brigade members

September 25 last year a group led by Hlengwa attacked the house in which the youngsters and some men were gathered.

The house was encircled by Hlengwa's men and stones were thrown, breaking windows. Shots were fired and a door was smashed in.

When the youths tried to barricade the doorway with a mattress a fire was started and the house began to burn.

More shots were fired into the house

and some of the young men escaped. When some youths tried to break away they were attacked.

Their screams ceased only when a gas bottle exploded.

This explosion produced the final holocaust, the judge said.

Extenuating circumstances were that kraals of Hlengwa, Ndaba and others were probably under threat of attack and that the deceased had formed part of a group that had probably gathered to launch an attack.

The court also accepted that Hleng-

wa and Ndaba had asked the police for protection against threatened attacks. Protection was withdrawn after a short period.

Mr Justice Page said that people were allowed to act in self-defence, but there had to be limits to the force used. Hlengwa and Ndaba had grossly exceeded what was justified.

Mr Justice Page said: "It is vitally important that these limits be observed; to disregard them leads to lawlessness, which all too often lightly escalates into a situation in which

these crimes were committed.

"People not part of rival factions were swept into the turmoil, no one was allowed to remain neutral.

"There was also danger to State witnesses who were to testify. Many potential witnesses did not give evidence in this trial, and I had to be asked to warn court spectators not to intimidate witnesses.

"It is extremely difficult for the authorities to bring the perpetrators of this sort of crime to book."

The deeds of Hlengwa and Ndaba had sown a crop of hatred among parents, friends and relatives, the fruits of which were probably still to come

INTIMIDATION: 'Give evidence and you die'

THE DAILY NEWS, November 1, 1988

Teenager tells of pool horror

Howard Winson

THE sole survivor of eight Kwa-Mashu teenagers — who were kidnapped, stabbed and beaten, then thrown into a pool, stabbed again and left for dead — yesterday told the Supreme Court in Durban of his ordeal.

Nineteen-year-old Duncan Mntambo was giving evidence before Mr Justice Broome and two assessors in the trial of 11 men, most of them alleged to be members of Inkatha, charged with kidnapping nine teenagers, murdering seven of them and attempting to murder another.

The 11, Mr Emmanuel Khanyile (27), Mr Siphon Ndlovu (32), Mr Bhekani Phewa (30), Mr Lucky Mtshali (30), Mr Siphon Dube (31), Mr Morgan Mkhize (25), Mr Phillip Biyela (40), Mr John Khuzwayo (39), Mr Thami Ndlovu (18), Mr Lawrence Mavuso (18) and Mr Dennis Victor (40), have pleaded not guilty to all

Men killed seven youths, alleges survivor

the charges.

Mr Mntambo told the court that he was walking to his home at KwaMashu on March 16 last year when a kombi stopped near him. He was grabbed from behind. He tried to break free but was stabbed and hit.

He asked what he had done but received no reply.

Mr Mntambo said he was pulled into the kombi. Inside he saw a boy he knew as Kanda sitting on the floor.

One of the men said: "These are the people who kill amabutho (community policemen)."

Mr Mntambo said he was again hit and stabbed.

The kombi then drove on and

stopped again. Some of the men got out and then returned with two other boys. The boys were made to sit on the floor and were hit on the head. The men said they were taking the boys to Lindelane to kill them. They did not say why they were going to kill the boys.

At Lindelane the kombi stopped at a point where there was a big crowd in the street. The men in the street were armed with a variety of weapons. One of the accused, Mr Khanyile, who was armed with a homemade shotgun, entered the kombi and asked for the names of the boys. They gave their names.

Mr Siphon Ndlovu, armed with a bushknife, and Mr Phewa, armed with a knife, assegai and sticks, also entered the kombi. Two kombis drove to a cemetery and the boys were ordered out. The boys were marched to a pool.

Mr Mntambo said the boys were pushed into the pool and stabbed by the men surrounding them. He

felt himself being stabbed with knives and assegais.

He heard someone say: "Let us go. These dogs are dead."

When the men left he crawled from the water. He saw the bodies of some of the boys floating in the water. One boy was sitting in the water and groaning.

Mr Mntambo said he crawled to a nearby shack and asked for water but the people closed the gate. He lost consciousness. The next thing he knew he was in a vehicle. He heard someone swear and say: "You are not dying". Then he heard a shot.

He was thrown out of the vehicle and hid in the grass at the roadside.

He then tried to stop buses. None stopped. Eventually a taxi stopped and took him to a police station. From there he was taken to hospital.

Mr Mntambo said he was in hospital for more than three months recovering from his injuries.

Proceeding