

VIOLENCE, RESEARCH, AND INTELLECTUALS¹

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It is not a particularly good time for intellectuals, and hence the reporting on a small international conference in Oxford (England) during June 1991 might seem somewhat impertinent. Wasn't it Goering after all who said: 'Everytime I hear the word intellectual I reach for my gun'! Well things might not be that bad in South Africa, but over the last few years intellectuals and researchers have come in for a lot of criticism, some of it justified and some of it quite misplaced. The criticisms have ranged from accusing intellectuals of being unthinking 'servants of the struggle', on the one hand, to ivory-tower opportunists detached from the everyday struggles and suffering of ordinary people, on the other hand. Considering the urgency, and at times desperate solution-seeking with regard to the persistent social and human destruction of the political violence in South Africa, it might primarily have been the latter criticism which would have been in people's minds when they heard about the conference. It would be the rare intellectual doing research on violence that did not want their findings to contribute to the undermining of *violent* political conflict in this country or elsewhere for that matter. Intellectuals need not be apologetic of their social function, they merely need to specify their social location.

Since 2 February 1990 intellectuals sympathetic to the broad democratic movement have had to re-think their relationship with struggle organisations and the struggle itself. It seems that their social function has become 'dis-articulated' from the political formations of the 'resistance to apartheid' era. It is in this unsettled context that much research on political violence gets conducted. Political activists keen to make some impression on reducing violent political conflict in the country are often impatient with what they perceive to be the slow progress of researchers in producing answers to some of the central problems confronting the understanding of the current political violence. Many researchers sensitive to these urgent political pressures often feel caught in the tension, if not disjunction, between the demands of rigorous and scholarly research, and the (legitimate) demands of political urgency and expediency.

For example, the extent, persistence and often horror of some of the incidents of violence create a pervasive sense of urgency when it comes to questions concerning the ending of the political violence. This context is not conducive to

a scholarship that needs time to develop sophisticated explanations to complex historical, social and political problems. This is not to argue for a slow-brewed complacency on the part of researchers, but neither is superficial, quick-fix research likely to solve the immense political problems which underlie the current violence. I suppose what this points to are the range of motivations that researchers have in working on the area of political violence. Implicit in these motivations, because seldom are they explicit, are 'theories' of violence. The Oxford Conference² hoped to address the question of a *theory* of violence, albeit that none of the papers explicitly did this, outside of Terence Ranger's introductory paper. In this paper he argued for violence as a distinct 'problematic'. There is a dual danger in research on violence. One either reifies the notion of violence and it becomes the only thing to be explained, detached from other social and historical processes, or one relates violence to other social processes and realities such that the problem and 'problematic' of violence disappears. Violence then literally becomes a discourse about something else. In the good old days of Althusserian Marxism a case for the 'relative autonomy' of the problematic of violence would have been made.

Some further aims for the conference were proposed by Terence Ranger. He said that he hoped that the conference (in the papers and discussion) would deal with some of the omissions that were evident from the report of the Harare Conference of 1990. In particular he referred to an absence of a regional perspective; the neglect of anti-systemic violence, guerrilla struggles; and the lack of a *historical* explanation of the violence. As can be seen from the list of papers these omissions of the Harare Conference were dealt with in the Oxford Conference.

Although a highly sensitive issue, especially in South Africa at the moment, the question of guerrilla violence did receive a fair amount of attention. Guerrilla, or anti-systemic violence is not a single phenomenon, and hence the different papers by Howard Barrell on the ANC, Ari Sitas on the comrades in Natal, and Mark Orkin on activists on trial for armed struggle activities, raised a range of diverse issues. As Barrell points out the rationale for armed struggle and eventually (and for the ANC and SACP, inevitably) revolution is presented in highly rationalist and historicist terms. The good and just society *will* emerge from the violent overthrow of the current oppressive and repressive order. Inherent in this kind of thinking and in some of the interviewees' explanations presented to Mark Orkin is an implicit view of how society works and how society will be changed. The view is too ordered, too static, too teleological, and surprisingly academic coming from activists. It also contrasts with the view that emerges from Sitas' comments about the comrades movement in Natal over the last six years, and in the fascinating paper by Ken Wilson on cults of violence

and counter-violence in Mozambique.

Neither Sitas nor Wilson is implying that society is constituted like the 'anything-goes chaos' suggested by some postmodernist writers, but rather their work reflects the current thinking within social theory. To paraphrase, and take liberties with Marx's words, society is made up of 'an ensemble of social relations'. For example, the comrades movement, and their actions and the explanations of their actions, are complexly and contradictorily motivated. A rationalist and historicist account of the political struggle and violence will simply not do. It should not do for academics and researchers, and neither should it do for political activists. Too much has been lost - politically and intellectually - by adopting what Blackburn calls the 'simplifying tendency' (of Marxism) in explaining the course of development of political struggles, and the transformation of society. By getting 'inside' anti-systemic movements a much more adequate and complex account of their strategies and visions of a new society emerges.

Sitas situates the focus of his study of the youth as attempting to extend our understanding of the comrades movement in two ways: 'firstly, by capturing the "relative autonomy" of comrade mobilisation and its impact, the political folklore and emotive capital that it generates in the solidarities it has created. Secondly, to help the democratic movement in South Africa in finding the correct ways of translating these energies into a viable civic democracy'. And we need to remember that the energy which directs the anti-systemic violence was originally an energy directed at defending and creating democratic and decent modes of life. Given the 'relative autonomy' of some of the anti-systemic violence it is certainly a vexatious issue of knowing how to capture this 'energy' for peaceful and democratic purposes.

In this regard Wilson's discussion of the cult of counter-violence offers some interesting possibilities. In his paper he emphasises his argument by saying: 'Cults of violence and their associated magic can be countered not only by other cults of violence; they can be countered by cults of counter-violence'. The three 'cults of counter-violence' he discusses are the role of local chiefs; the Jehovah's Witnesses; and the Naprama cult of the 'warrior priest' Manuel Antonio. Ken Wilson's paper is one of the papers that is going to be published in the special number of the *Journal of Southern African Studies* at the end of this year, and hence I shall merely mention one further detail from his paper. Wilson quotes Mr Gamito (Nampula's Provincial Governor) as saying that the Naprama cult 'should be the subject of a profound analysis', since 'the people, tired of war, are embracing superstitious beliefs, in an attempt to find a way out of the war'. In South Africa we have also heard and read reports of (young) comrades, and Inkatha warriors, consulting sangomas and inyangas for 'medicines' to make

them invincible, and sometimes invisible, when confronting the enemy. These kinds of issues obviously raise a host of important questions which Wilson's paper starts to address. For example, the 'superstitious beliefs' of these cults - both cults of violence and cults of counter-violence - are attempts by ordinary people to exert some control over their lives in situations where more traditional controls have been disrupted and destroyed.

The question which Sitas raised about harnessing the energy of the comrades for the construction of civic democracy is also evident in these cultic movements. How do we translate these counter-violence practices of a superstitious kind into a project of and for civil society? These superstitious practices have to be taken seriously, as both Renamo and Frelimo have discovered, and especially so since the Naprama constitute an important ideological interpellation of invincibility, authority, and power *against* the ceaseless destruction and disorder of the war (against Renamo). When a settlement is reached in Mozambique between Frelimo and Renamo, the 'superstitious' and ideological practices of Naprama will not vanish into the thin air of peace.

The range of papers dealing with anti-systemic violence did take us further in understanding the complex and intricate relationship between political struggles (often violent), democracy, and the problems of social reconstruction. The success of this research is dependent on how close the researcher can get to the political formations of anti-systemic violence. This kind of 'insider's' view is essential if we are to avoid a superficial account of these social movements, and guerrilla struggles. There are clearly enormous problems both politically and methodologically in conducting this research, and yet it needs to be done. It seems that many of the researchers at the conference working in the area of anti-systemic violence have been able to achieve a closeness necessary for an 'insider's' view, while at the same time managing to maintain a (political) distance necessary for objective and rigorous scholarship. Some further explorations of this kind might have emerged if Jeremy Brickhill had not been forced to withdraw from the conference at the last moment. His paper - summarised by Professor Ranger at the conference - was entitled 'The war of the hyena: Rhodesian terror during the guerrilla war'.

Many of the papers on anti-systemic violence, as well as Anthony Chennells's paper on Rhodesian fiction during what he calls the 'Pax Rhodesiana', did enable the discussion to focus on a regional perspective in understanding political violence. Although Terence Ranger referred to the omission of a regional (southern African) perspective at the Harare Conference, I would contend that there was also a lack of a regional perspective at this conference. The champion or conscience of regional considerations was Terence Ranger. There were papers from southern Africa, and about southern Africa, but that does not constitute a

regional perspective. The predominance of South Africans, and South African scholars did tend to vitiate against a *southern* African perspective. Apartheid has successfully isolated South Africa from its southern African neighbours, and hence it is almost counter-intuitive for South Africans - even from radical intellectual and political traditions - to think regionally. It would seem that studies on the political sociology of the region are in short supply, and especially with reference to making sense of political violence in the countries of southern Africa. Hopefully this is changing as interchanges and exchanges in the region between scholars and politicians become more frequent.

The third, and final omission which Terence Ranger referred to was that there was little mention of the *historical* dimension of violence (at the Harare Conference). Historical analysis was certainly well represented at this conference. Many of the papers incorporated quite detailed historical analyses, which is not surprising seeing as the conference was organised by historians and many of the presenters were professional historians. The major focus of the historical papers was on understanding the relationship between violence and paternalism. This work was concerned to contextualise the 'problematic' of violence within the history of oppression and exploitation, and to point out the forms of struggle and resistance to regimes of domination and subordination. For example, Charles van Onselen's work on paternalism and violence focused on the maize farms of the south-western Transvaal between 1900-1950, whereas Allen Isaacman spoke about the Mozambican cotton regime during the period 1930-1961. The other interesting work on paternalism and violence were the two papers by Wilmot James and Dunbar Moodie on South Africa's gold mines.

As a non-historian I cannot comment on the details of the historical research, however I would like to raise a few issues with regard to the papers on the history of violence. I accept the concerns of historians of wanting to search for the material underpinnings of violence during particular historical periods, and yet it would have been useful to the other 'social scientists' at the conference if the historical trajectory could have pointed more directly to the present conjuncture. I missed the connections between the history of domination and struggle, and the current political violence. I hope this is not the naive quest for *the* historical answer(s) to present conflicts, but rather the more subtle and complex question of how the legacy of the past lives on and influences the present. What are the historical continuities and discontinuities in the maintenance, legitimation, and reproduction of political violence? Although there were a few jibes at the conference about historical research and empiricism, it seems that questions of social theory could meaningfully complement the 'empirical findings' of historical research. Is the concept of ideology totally anathema to historians?

It seems to me that cults, formations, and social movements of political

violence are immersed in ideological practices. And these ideological practices intersect with historical, economic, social and even psychological dimensions of people's lives and struggles. For example, in Wilmot James's paper on the erosion of paternalism on South Africa's gold mines he points to the (historical) shift in the Chamber's commitment to challenging racism on the mines. In effect the Chamber's commitment to a non-racial society was very narrowly confined 'to the erosion of "racial discrimination"'. It would have been very interesting to elaborate the ideological practices of this discourse in terms of the contradictions and tensions faced by the mining houses as they stumble towards the espoused ideal of a non-racial society. I am not trying to suggest that the main issue to be attended to in understanding paternalism (and violence) is its relationship to ideology, but rather that a focus on the operation of ideology, and ideological practices would be a further window on the 'demise'; maintenance, or transformation of paternalism. For instance what role does ideology play in the maintenance of subordination, violence, and paternalism? I would argue that approaching paternalism from an analysis of its ideological practices would open up a further perspective on the meaning(s) of paternalism and violence.

The interest among some of the participants that the conference would serve as a dialogue between historians and (social) psychologists might have borne some promise if there had been more common ground. Or if it had been more clearly articulated what was intended by a dialogue between historians and psychologists. My view about psychology, or rather what psychology should be, is that it is a study of historical consciousness. It seems that those who presented psychological analyses in their papers, particularly Jeremy Seekings and Catherine Campbell, do not have this view of psychology. In setting up the project for psychology as the understanding of historical consciousness, both the material and ideological underpinnings, determinants, and so on of that consciousness have to be studied. It seems that the 'social identity theory' approach of the psychological analyses was too *ex cathedra* for most of the historians and other social researchers. I don't mean *ex cathedra* in a way of implying that because social identity theory is/was unfamiliar to many of the conference participants that they did not understand it, but rather that it was not always clear what was being attempted by introducing a 'psychological level of analysis and explanation'.

For example, a concern of Seekings' was to ask 'Why does the individual protestor participate in a particular incident, rather than leave inevitably risky activity to others? And why does the individual policeman or protestor choose to use more rather than less violence?' Are these really questions for social identity theory? Lloyd Vogelmann, in his concluding remarks to the conference, suggested that social psychology does not explain the *origins* of why a person

engages in violence, and maybe clinical psychology might offer some help on this matter. And in concluding his paper Seekings suggested that '... the individual bases and interpersonal nature of intra-group relations needs to be analysed to provide more robust microfoundations for theories of collective violence'.

This whole question of the relation between the social and the personal has bedevilled social studies, social science if you will, since its inception in the late 19th century. Approaches have varied from the sociological reductionism and the consequent denial of individual motivations, to psychological reductionism and the consequent denial of the social constitution of the individual, to the syncretism of certain interactionist approaches. There is a profound epistemological and substantive problem which must not be underestimated in dealing with the individual bases of collective behaviour and actions, and the collective and social bases of individual actions. These are very complex and difficult issues to resolve, and who is to say that there isn't an ontological disjunction between the social and the individual. The social and the individual do imply different levels of analysis and explanation, and as yet there is no adequate theoretical language that can deal with this problem. I would agree with Foucault that the 'sciences of man' (sic) are conjunctural disciplines, and hence maybe we should not be too optimistic about the power of theoretical discourse in explaining all facets of human experience. This is not to retreat into a mysticism about the inherent inexplicability of the human psyche, but rather to critically examine what we think we are trying to explain, and how we go about it.

It seems that there are at least two major problems with social identity theory. Firstly, social identity theory tends to be ahistorical, and secondly it avoids the question of ideology. The social identity of social groups, social movements, political formations could be significantly accounted for by a detailed *historical* tracing of their formation, and changing conditions of existence. The problematic of violence is essentially a *social* concern, and not really effectively dealt with by reference to psychological explanations, even in the form of psychological group theory. I don't know if we can ever know why a person in a certain situation and context acted violently, because there are usually other people - similarly constituted in historical and psychological experience - in the very 'same' situation who did not react or act violently. However, social identity theory might get further with this dilemma if it incorporated a theory of ideology which was sensitive to the contradictory and dynamic nature of subject positions. There is no singular or unitary psychological identity 'residing' in each person - that is the fiction which bourgeois thought perpetuates about the autonomous ego - but rather the human subject, as a *social* subject, is always in a process of identity

formation, and this identity, or rather these identities are part of a multiplicity of determinations. While there is a consistency and stability to human identity formation, it is the subtle shifts, tensions, and contradictions in our subject positions which are interesting and often provocations to action. We act in accord with certain historically constituted *social* identities, as well as acting to (re-) constitute and (re-) establish our (social) identities at times when these are under threat. In this regard Lloyd Vogelmann posed a very important question: 'Why are the taboos around the commission of violence broken?' So an investigation of the relation between identity/identities and the 'rules of disorder' might take us some way to resolving the question of the (social) psychology of violence.

This whole issue of social identity theory, in the way that I have been discussing it here of course, begs another question. And that is, is social identity theory an attempt to deal with the question of human agency? In many previous conferences, symposia, and writings on violence there has tended to be a pre-occupation with the *victims* of violence. To some extent this is understandable as much of the earlier work on violence was concerned with state violence and repression, and hence the political imperative was to expose the effects of repression and apartheid on people. Another reason for the predominance of the 'victimology perspective' was the development of progressive health and welfare care for the 'victims' of repression, and especially for ex-detainees. However, it is important to understand people not just as victims, but as *agents* as well. The papers at the Oxford Conference tended mainly to deal with agency in relation to gender: women and masculinity. In Debbie Bonnin's paper on women and the war in Natal, she discusses how the dominant and 'normal' patterns of masculine and feminine gender roles are evident in men's and women's roles in the war. For example, she says; 'The male youth make up the defence units and fight while the women stay at home and keep things going - cooking, cleaning, fetching water and worrying'. This relative fixity of gender roles was also corroborated by Cathy Campbell's research data.

However, an interesting point which Campbell and Bonnin could have pursued (at greater length) is the extent to which the war, the struggle, opens up spaces for women to challenge their gender socialisation. Are there particular conditions and circumstances when women have more leeway to challenge traditional gender roles? When these challenges to gender roles are successful why are they so temporary, and what would need to happen to make them more enduring? I suppose some of the answers to these questions would come from a more detailed investigation of the patterns and processes of gender socialisation. And seeing as gender socialisation is not open-ended nor neutral, a specific focus on masculinity would unlock some of the problems of men as the main agents and perpetrators of violence. It seems that Catherine Campbell's investigation of

masculinity in the current context of political violence in the Durban townships where she conducted her research, jumps the gun a bit in her assertion that '... violence is one of the compensatory mechanisms whereby men have sought to reassert their masculinity' in the face of the crisis of African masculinity. This is a very bold assertion that requires detailed analysis of gender socialisation, both within the family and outside, and an unpacking of the many cultural meanings of masculinity.

I think William Beinart points us in the right direction in his paper where he says

Young men remain wildcards in a number of African countries and it seems to me essential that a method be developed to discover how they become available for, or incorporated in, violent enterprises by looking historically at patterns of socialisation, associational life and the breakdown of controls. Even in the urban areas, in highly politicised situations, important deep cultural markers may remain. It is important not then to resort solely to explanations of violence based on poverty, repression, exclusion from state institutions and under-policing when dealing with the urban communities.

This approach, or 'method' as Beinart calls it might be the meeting place of historical and psychological analysis which takes seriously cultural and ideological practices as 'markers' of who we are and how we become historical subjects and social agents.

A final point about agency relates to a consideration of the role of ordinary people in the process of healing and (social) reconstruction. Although Terence Ranger emphasised the importance of this in his introductory paper hardly much else was said about it during the conference. The only papers that touched on this aspect of healing and reconstruction were those of Majodina and Hayes. Majodina's paper tended to focus on the mental health implications of youth who had suffered severe repression at the hands of the state and security forces during the period of the mid-1980s. While healing certainly must include a mental health component, healing and reconstruction is a much wider issue than this.

The issue of healing is a critical one because in post-liberation southern Africa the effects of violence still linger on. It is not popular to contend that guerrillas and activists need healing in relation to their acts of struggle, resistance and violence. Ranger made the point that it was important for ordinary people to become involved in healing and (social) reconstruction, rather than a focus on the (new) regime and the party or movement orchestrating all this healing and reconstruction. This is not some romantic call for a humanistic 'healing movement', but rather an acknowledgement of the important practical work of

reconstruction. Social life and its formations are severely stressed and sometimes devastated through the course of the struggle, and hence it is a formidable task to achieve governability within ungovernability to paraphrase Ranger.

Surprisingly, and sadly, the conference did not really address the issue of reconstruction adequately. I would advance two possible reasons for this. The first has to do with an implicit view that healing, rehabilitation and reconstruction are psychological and welfare activities that can take place after 'liberation' and only raise practical and logistical problems. The other reason relates to the nature of the future society within which the healing and reconstruction is to take place. This requires that we prefigure the possibilities and constraints of a future social order. Healing and reconstruction for what? This question raises concerns of a fundamental kind involving economic, social, political, and ideological dimensions about the re-building of a new and different society. It is not surprising that academics as well shy away from these types of issues. The focus of the papers and the discussion during the conference was very much past and present oriented. If we are seriously going to address the problems of healing and reconstruction - personal, human and social - then we have no option but to talk about the future. If there is no hope in the future, however dim, then what do we say to people who have been devastated by the past to the extent that they find the present unlivable?

The need for healing does not imply that we adopt a 'victims' approach - this is the fallacy of a narrow psychological and mental health perspective. If the historical dimension of violence is introduced as part of a people's legitimate struggle against oppression and exploitation it becomes very difficult to see people predominantly as victims, rather than as agents and only sometimes as 'victims'.

Political struggle, albeit at times violent, is successful when it propels masses of people to actively fight for a better life. This commitment to taking part in the control of everyday life issues needs to be sustained when the 'political struggle has been won', so that ordinary people can continue to be actively involved in their own rehabilitation and the re-building of their communities and society. Years of political struggle, often violent, does take its toll.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude this discussion of the Oxford Conference on political violence by briefly mentioning some of the gaps and omissions. During the discussion of Seekings' and Sapire's papers, a call was made for more research on the 'urban anthropology' of township life and struggles. A concern was raised about how little of this work is currently being done, and hence we are not able to say with much authority what constitutes the everyday struggles and life of

ordinary township people. Hilary Sapire's paper, while it focused on the recent history of political struggles in squatter settlements, at least revealed, through a detailed analysis, many complex and interesting social features of these areas. An urban anthropology which includes a thorough investigation of socialisation processes, forms of associational life, cultural practices and so on would fill in many of the missing pieces in our understanding of the context of the current political violence.

In his discussion on the state and violence Alex Boraine pointed to the importance of understanding the unfolding of the struggle around *power*. He commented on the absence in this conference of a serious discussion on the relationship between power and violence. The current state is still very invested in maintaining power, and hence its strategies for maintaining the status quo cannot go unchecked given their violent nature: death squads; CCB; the inaction of the police in certain 'unrest' situations; the tolerance towards right-wing armies; and so on. The point that the South African government is a military government with a civilian face certainly merits some further consideration in view of the numerous accusations of the South African government's complicity in fanning the violence.

Related to this issue of the state, power and violence is the anti-systemic violence of a right-wing kind. Clearly the violence of the State is an instance of right-wing violence, but the other 'independent' far right-wing parties and their armed actions require urgent analysis if we are to understand the problems and difficulties facing any interim government in the period of transition and beyond. The most glaring omission concerning right-wing violence was the total absence of any work on Inkatha. Given some of Inkatha's recent actions, as well as the *Weekly Mail* exposés of their complicity with the SADF and SAP this was a serious lapse. A paper on the trends of political violence and an assessment of the different circumstances under which violence is committed would have added a useful overview to the context of the political violence. It is surprising then that the various groups *monitoring* the violence weren't present to give this necessary perspective.

The focus of the Oxford Conference was predominantly on the political struggles of the oppressed against repressive and exploitative regimes and their allies. How have ordinary people defended themselves against the violence of the state? And in what ways and under what conditions have their defensive and prefigurative actions become violent? These seemed to be the kinds of questions addressed by many of the papers.

Many of the aims and hopes of the conference were fulfilled, and this I think is due to three reasons mainly. Firstly, in some ways it could be said that the research on political violence has come of age. There have now been many

conferences - local and international - symposia, workshops, seminars, and now a large literature on political violence which has built up over the last five years. This 'maturity' of 'violence studies' was evident at the Oxford Conference, and also enabled the discussion to be conducted at a relatively sophisticated level. The second reason has to do with the thematic focus of the conference. It could have been entitled: 'Political violence and the history of opposition'. And thirdly, the idea of restricting the number of participants facilitated a working and seminar atmosphere which resulted in quite persistent and penetrative debate and argument.

I am not sure that we left the conference with a sense of what exactly constitutes a 'theory of violence'. There did, however, seem to be some agreement about violence as a distinct problematic, but of course there would be contesting views regarding the nature of this problematic. Finally, I think the conference did take us further along the road to developing a theory of violence. A more complex and elaborate *language* of violence did emerge. The task of developing a language of violence that is adequate to the phenomenon of political violence is something which researchers should strive for as they try to make sense of the (violent) political conflicts that stand in the way of creating a democratic and peaceful social order.

LIST OF PAPERS. (In the order presented)

1. Charles van Onselen (University of the Witwatersrand) - 'The social and economic underpinnings of paternalism and violence on the maize farms of the south-western Transvaal, 1900-1950'.
2. Allen Isaacman (University of Minnesota) - 'Coercion, paternalism and the labor process: the Mozambican cotton regime, 1938-1961'.
3. T Dunbar Moodie (Andover Newton Theological School) - 'Ethnic violence on South African gold mines'.
4. Wilmot James (University of Cape Town) - 'The erosion of paternalism on South African gold mines'.
5. William Beinart (University of Bristol) - 'Violence and masculinity in southern African historiography'.
6. Anthony Chennells (University of Zimbabwe) - 'Cultural violence during the Pax Rhodesiana: the evidence from Rhodesian fiction'.
7. Ari Sitas (University of Natal, Durban) - 'The making of the comrades movement in Natal, 1985-1991'.
8. Debby Bonnain (University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg) - '"We are not interested in old women, we want to kill the husbands and sons": women and the war in Natal'.
9. Jeremy Seekings (University of Stellenbosch) - 'Identity, authority, and the dynamics of violent conflict: Duduza township, 1985'.
10. Hilary Sapire (University of London) - 'Protest and politics in South African squatter settlements: the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging Region: 1980-1989'.
11. Howard Barrell (University of Oxford) - 'The historicist conspirator, his detonators and bellows: the ANC of South Africa and the political-military relationship in revolutionary struggle'.
12. Mark Orkin (University of the Witwatersrand) - '"Democracy knows no colour": rationales for guerrilla involvement among black South Africans'.
13. Ken Wilson (University of Oxford) - 'Cults of violence and counter-violence in Mozambique'.
14. Zonke Majodina (University of Oxford) - 'Beyond the trauma: factors affecting how South African youth cope with violence'.

15. Catherine Campbell (University of Natal, Durban) - 'Learning to kill?: masculinity, the family and the current political violence'.
16. Grahame Hayes (University of Natal, Durban) - 'Another side of violence: talking to township youth about the violence'.

NOTES

1. This article is a report on the International Conference on Political Violence in Southern Africa: historical, comparative and contemporary perspectives, that was held at St Anthony's College, University of Oxford, 25-27 June 1991. The conference was jointly sponsored by the University of Oxford Standing Committee on African Studies and the *Journal of Southern African Studies*.
2. It would be inappropriate, if not arrogant, to present a detailed commentary on each and every paper presented at the conference. In an attempt to give some indication of the range of conference discussions I would like to raise some interesting and challenging ideas that came from the papers, and that I feel competent to comment on. Furthermore, a selection of the papers is going to be published as a special number of the *Journal of Southern African Studies* later this year. The inventory of the papers presented is listed in the order in which they were delivered (see above).