

DURBAN HOSTELS AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE: CASE STUDIES IN KWAMASHU AND UMLAZI

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Contextualising Violence in the Two Hostels

Single-sex hostels represent more than the remaining features of influx control. Once a symbol of migratory labour, they now constitute the terrain of the struggle and consequently the site of the ensuing violence between the extra-parliamentary opposition and the state-aligned organisations, particularly Inkatha. A number of explanations for the sudden violent politicisation of hostels have been advanced. The first is that the marginalisation of hostels by the surrounding communities has alienated hostel residents from both townships and shack settlements. The acute politicisation of urban life has meant that it is in the political sphere that this marginalisation has been most strongly felt. In the process hostels have developed their own identity which, because of their existential experiences, has assumed political dimensions as well. There are problems with this explanation. Firstly, the marginalisation thesis fails to account for the recent upsurge of political activity in the hostels as a whole. Secondly, out of 11 hostels in the Greater Durban Functional Region, only two, Umlazi and Kwa Mashu, have become political trouble spots.

The second explanation is strongly aligned to the first. There are allegations that the resurgence of extra parliamentary opposition, first in the form of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and secondly the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in the mid-1980s, put Inkatha on the defensive. Up to this time Inkatha had been the dominant political force in the region. The emergence of the UDF and COSATU as powerful political forces drove Inkatha out of the townships into the hostels which, because of their marginalised position, became a natural base for a conservatively placed organisation. Exponents of this line of thinking claim that the timing of the politicisation process which started after the second of February 1990 gives a strong indication of a carefully drawn plan. Also what gives credence to the claim is that the two hostels which are presently in conflict with the adjacent communities fall directly within the Kwa Zulu administration and the Kwa Zulu police are responsible for the policing of the two areas. Much ink has been spilled in detailing the close relationship between the Kwa Zulu police and Inkatha as well as the effect this

relationship has had on the levels of violence in the region (Minnaar, 1992; Gwala, 1992; The Human Rights Commission, 1992; and the International Commission of Jurists, 1992).

Besides a relatively brief spell of violence between Inkatha-supporting hostel dwellers from the SJ Smith hostel and residents from Lamontville township from 1984 to 1986, hostels in the Durban Functional Region have been relatively quiet until the recent outbreak of political hostilities which centred mainly around the Kwa Mashu and Umlazi hostels. Both the Kwa Mashu and Umlazi hostels were politically rather neutral territories until the first quarter of 1990. However, by the end of the first half of 1990 the Kwa Mashu hostel had become the centre of politically-motivated violence in the township. The hostel in Umlazi remained calm until the end of 1991 when a situation which, in many respects resembled that obtaining in Kwa Mashu, developed. Before examining, in detail, the causes and process of the violence between residents in these two hostels and their surrounding communities, a brief look into the theoretical positions regarding the course of the violence in South Africa is advisable.

Theoretical Explanations Of the Present Violence in South Africa

Basically three theoretical positions account for the present conflict and the violence which has been raging for almost eight years in South Africa. The first is that the violence is a result of the struggle for political control between those in power represented by the regime in office and those who seek access to political power and are represented by the liberation movements where the African National Congress (ANC) is the principal partner. There are two variants of this theory. The first locates the causes of violence at the doors of the government and holds the oppressive conditions responsible for the carnage. The violence is seen as an expression of resentment by the oppressed against the inhumanities and the deprivation imposed on them by apartheid. The oppressed are merely reacting in efforts to assert their democratic rights. It is the state's violent reaction that unleashes counter violence. That the violence appears to be in the main between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) is only a function of the structural location of the IFP in the South African political economy. The IFP is seen as no more than a representative of the regime. Therefore, the apparent struggle for hegemony between the ANC and the IFP, in Natal, is no more than another side of the main act, ie a violent contest between the regime and the forces of liberation.

The second variant of this theory places responsibility for the violence in the hands of the liberation movements. It asserts that the violence is a product of

revolutionary forces spearheaded by the ANC's revolutionary theory and its attendant ungovernability through the people's war (Kane-Berman, 1992). The other parties to the conflict, particularly the IFP and the security forces, are merely reacting and, therefore, play the role of counter revolutionaries.

The second theory is that deteriorating economic conditions, particularly unemployment, have precipitated a struggle for scarce resources where individuals have resorted to violence in order to access these resources (Woods, 1992). However, economic conditions on their own are insufficient to offer an explanation. The coupling of politics with access to economic resources politicises the conflict, hence the ensuing violence assumes political dimensions.

The third argument is that the violence is orchestrated by a third force - a network of security personnel and politically-motivated individuals who engage in acts of violence in order to eliminate elements from the opposition. The theory is in tandem with the state's explanation of discontent as emanating from agitators inspired by communist elements. Eliminating such elements would, therefore, put the country back to peace.

There are common elements in the three theoretical positions, in spite of their ideological divergence. All ascribe the violence to a bipolar relationship between the state and the extended state apparatus on the one side and the liberation movements on the other. Empirical evidence confirms this position as the violence has, indeed, a bipolar configuration, ie it is between those that control and allocate resources on the one side and the recipients of the allocations on the other. Put differently, the root causes of the violence lie in material discrepancies where access to resources is unevenly distributed within the black community itself. Because of the political determinants of access, the violence has taken political dimensions. The principal visible combatants represent the two poles in the resource configuration. The IFP not only rules Kwa Zulu by the grace of Pretoria, it also controls the allocation of resources via the town council system since a vast majority of township councillors are also officials in the party. On the other hand, the ANC is the principal representative of the liberation movement or the opposition to the regime in power.

Social Organisation of Life in the Hostels

The majority of residents in the hostels within the Greater Durban Functional Region come from Natal and Kwa Zulu. The Transkei contributes the second largest source of recruitment. Access to hostels tends to be through personal contacts, or via companies which reserve specific blocks for their employees. This has greatly contributed to the formation of homeboy cliques among residents in hostels mainly because personal contact is inclined to favour homeboys and, secondly, because previous employment policies by certain companies

tended to favour regional cliques. Consequently, social life in the hostels tends to be organised around regional or ethnocentric arrangements in spite of the existence of cross cutting activities such as religion and sporting life. For instance, musical groups often comprise men from the same geographical districts, and soccer clubs may follow the same arrangements. Other life supporting activities such as burial societies and stockvels have the same tendencies mainly because of the measure of mutual trust inherent in close contact neighbourhood relationships.

Social profile of hostel residents

An overwhelming majority of residents in Durban hostels come from rural areas (93%). An estimated 50% of the population in the hostels is unskilled and approximately a third is unemployed. Only a tenth (11%) is either in skilled or white-collar jobs and an almost equal number (14%) in semi-skilled undertakings. Almost all of them, with very few exceptions, are still within working life, ie below pensionable age. A vast majority (62%) of the residents has either had no formal education or has not progressed beyond primary school (Zulu, 1991b). Lack of formal education limits the world view of a number of migrants. In the same survey, conducted by Zulu in 1991, it was found that communication with the outside world was mainly through Radio Zulu and to a lesser extent, the indigenous press, *Ilanga* and *Umfrika*. Entertainment was also severely limited to watching soccer over weekends and to participation in small choral groups. The Kwa Mashu and Umlazi hostels have further limitations in that they do not have facilities where sports such as boxing or karate, and other interests, such as music, can be pursued (hostels like the SATS, Glebelands, SJ Smith and Kranskloof have these). Relative to the other hostels, the Kwa Mashu and Umlazi hostels experience a sense of deprivation.

Kwa Mashu and Umlazi Hostels: Methodological Issues

The material which forms part of these case studies has been collected by two trained researchers stationed at the Centre for Social and Development Studies at the University of Natal, Durban. Both have intimate knowledge of the two hostels (one spent a year, 1991, staying in the Umlazi hostel while the other stays within 500 metres of the Kwa Mashu hostel and spends time as a participant observer at the mass meetings held in the hostel). Both researchers and the author of this document have personally visited the two hostels to establish on the spot state of the buildings and the surroundings. Further, all have established an extensive network of homeboys and kinsmen in the hostels in order to crosscheck information gathered from the media and other interested parties. In addition,

apart from the research that the author of this document conducted in the hostels around Durban in October 1991 as part of the Natal Monitor project, I have co-operated with members of the Legal Resources Centre, Lawyers For Human Rights, and Church bodies in monitoring violence in the region. The material presented here is in the form of descriptive narrative arranged into themes which reflect the broad trends in the two hostels. It does not attempt to give an exhaustive historical overview of daily occurrences in the hostels. That is far beyond the scope of this brief. However, from the broad sketches, the reader is brought into the daily realities of life in the two hostels together with the impact of broader political developments in the region, on the lives of hostel residents and their neighbours.

Kwa Mashu

Places of origin of the migrants

The majority of residents in the Kwa Mashu hostel come from areas to the north of Durban, ie from what is referred to as traditional Zulu territory. The rest come from the Natal Midlands, Southern Natal and a small minority from the Transkei.

Conditions in the hostel

The hostel consists of large single storey blocks of eight rooms each. Each room houses four residents thus making a total of 32 residents per block. Four men share a common kitchen with four cupboards, a table and two bunkers which act as chairs. Each man has his own cupboard, a bed made up of bricks and a wooden base as a mattress and a built-in wardrobe made of cement and a wooden lockable door. Four blocks, ie 128 men share a common set of cold showers, toilets and cement washing basins where the occupants wash their pots, cutlery and utensils. The physical set up is such that the blocks are situated in rows where every alternate row houses these elementary amenities located at the corner of every second block. The toilets and washing sinks are situated exactly opposite each other in adjacent blocks. There are four toilets, four showers and two hand washing basins in a block, all within one enclosure. The amenities are generally in a dilapidated state since official cleaners only collect the garbage in the yard, and the inside of the toilets, bathrooms and wash basins has become the responsibility of the residents themselves. In a number of instances, residents have organised themselves into teams and have at times bought locks to bar entry to non-team members. Inside the rooms the occupants are responsible for the upkeep of their places. Residents pay a monthly rental of R4.50 per person.

There are three shopping centres inside the hostel. Each shopping centre comprises a butchery, a grocery shop, tea rooms, a bottle store, a beer hall, a

barber shop, and there may be one or two other small business fittings such as a tailor shop or green grocer. With the advent of deregulation a number of informal entrepreneurs have come forth with shack shop caravans and other structures where they sell various types of commodities including clothing. This has resulted in fierce competition for space and consequently caused a measure of conflict within the hostel.

The hostel has almost ceased to cater for single sex accommodation as the number of womenfolk residing with men has increased dramatically. This is a source of ill-feelings from a number of residents who claim that this is an abrogation of moral standards and an encroachment on their privacy (Zulu, 1991b). This and the spiralling informal sector have contributed greatly to the increase in the number of informal structures within the hostel. In absolute numbers there may be more informal structures than the formal blocks. Spatially, the hostel appears overcrowded and aesthetically objectionable. There is a terrible stink from the ablution blocks and the uncollected garbage which spreads all over within the premises contributes to this poor state of affairs.

Administration and management

Kwa Mashu township, together with the hostel which is situated on the eastern border of and almost within the township, is administered by a township manager. The township is zoned into administrative areas each with a superintendent. The hostel is one of these administrative zones. Each zone has an office where the residents pay their monthly rentals, report the breakage in water and sewerage pipes and drains for repairs, and contact township officials for any business which requires bureaucratic attention. Politically the zones constitute wards each with a councillor as a 'representative'. Administratively, the hostel is treated like any part of the township. It is this similarity between hostel and the township which, because of the disparity in political culture between the two, is part of the cause of the conflict. While the township is relatively sophisticated politically and, therefore, much more militant on issues of political participation and representation, the hostel is relatively conservative: first, because of the relatively lower educational standards of the residents; and, second, because the issues around hostels are different from those which affect township residents. For instance, much discontent with the government has been around housing and educational issues. While housing affects hostel residents, education has been outside of their interests as they do not have children around the township. The township and the hostel have representation on the same town council but this has only complicated issues and exacerbated differences in concerns.

Relations with the surrounding communities

Before the outbreak of political violence, and to a certain extent in spite of it, relations between the hostel and the surrounding communities were 'normal' at the level of individuals, ie relatives and friends of hostel dwellers freely entered the hostel and the same applied to hostel residents with respect to the township. There is still relatively free access by both parties, although, during periods of tension, individuals have to use greater circumspection. Part of the relative 'normality' is that hostel dwellers are physically indistinguishable from township residents. The outbreak of political violence (see below) has changed the official relationship as the hostel has become seen as an Inkatha base while township residents are predominantly anti-Inkatha. Relations have developed into a cautious state where hostel residents feel marginalised, as a group, by the township but still maintain individual relations at a normal level. After all there are more cross-cutting affinities, including kinship ties, with township residents, than residential differences. This is confirmed in other previous research projects (see Zulu, 1991b) where hostel dwellers claim that they regard township residents as 'kinsmen and brothers'.

Conflict, politics and violence

The Kwa Mashu hostel started becoming restive much earlier than the one in Umlazi. The explanation might be that the township itself has been turbulent for much longer than has been the case with Umlazi. However, the restiveness is apparently not incidental. There are claims that a meeting of tribal authorities and town councillors was held at Ulundi on 23 March 1990. A number of analysts interpret that meeting to have been called to develop strategies for the consolidation of Inkatha in the region. Details of what the discussions at Ulundi were are not clear. What is evident, however, is that following upon the Ulundi meeting town councillors in Kwa Mashu met at Bhhekuzulu on 4 April 1990 and decided among other things to:

- install a new leadership of Inkatha in the hostel. To this end a Mr Hlela was elected as chairman of amabutho, a regiment of men generally with para-military activities;
- exert pressure on hostel dwellers to attend Inkatha meetings;
- to hold marches by hostel dwellers daily between five and nine o'clock in the evenings. This would demonstrate the organisation's strength in the hostel and in the township;
- expel all ANC supporting 'comrades' from the hostel;
- pressurise businesspersons operating from within the hostel premises to become members of Inkatha; and
- outlaw the selling of ANC T-shirts from hostel premises.

Soon after this meeting there were reports of gun testing circulating in the hostel

and some of these were confirmed by township residents living adjacent to the hostel. There were also rumours within the hostel claiming that Xhosas were going to attack hostel residents and on one occasion pamphlets to this effect were distributed in the hostel. In one instance a meeting was held by hostel dwellers at the Corobrick hostel near Kwa Mashu and allegedly attended by a few white persons to discuss these 'impending attacks'. By August 1990 Inkatha had intensified its activities, in the Kwa Mashu hostel, to the extent that violence broke out among hostel dwellers themselves. For instance, in the same month, a hostel dweller was killed for allegedly refusing to take part in the 'show of strength' daily marches. A number of hostel residents claimed that Inkatha meetings had displaced soccer matches, which normally constituted the main pastime for residents, and that they were 'fed up' with this form of intimidation.

• *rallies and celebrations as recruitment devices*

Preparations for the King Shaka Day celebrations in September 1990 offered Inkatha an opportunity to intensify its drive for membership and this created tensions between hostel residents and the surrounding community. This was particularly because the leadership from the hostels attempted to recruit township residents forcefully to the celebrations at Kings Park sports stadium. Angry township residents attacked and almost killed Hlela, the leader of the regiments, when he tried his recruitment stance in a section adjacent to the hostel.

The issue of support for the celebrations did not only cause tensions between the hostel residents and the surrounding community in the township, there were serious tensions among the hostel residents themselves. On their way from the celebratory rally Inkatha supporters are alleged to have attacked township residents at the nearby Thembalihle railway station, and further went on to attack their compatriots, in the hostels, who did not attend the rally. This prompted a group of hostel dwellers who felt aggrieved by this violent behaviour of fellow residents to approach the nearby Kwa Zulu police station to lodge complaints of harassment and intimidation. Among the complaints brought forward were:

- forced marches by the leaders of the regiments in the evenings;
- killings which generally accompanied the marches;
- intimidation to join Inkatha by the leaders of the regiments.

The police referred the delegation to representatives of the hostels on the town council. Being members of Inkatha the latter could do very little to discourage their over-zealous supporters from their enthusiasm. By the end of October 1990 there were evident signs of strongmanship or 'warlordship' in the Kwa Mashu hostel. Meanwhile over 20 people had died within the hostel, allegedly from clashes arising out of their refusal to join the marches.

- *the emergence of a professional army of rally circulators*

The existence of an Inkatha branch within the hostel in Kwa Mashu had provided a captive audience for easy recruitment to rallies staged elsewhere in the region. By October 1990 men from this hostel together with shack dwellers from Lindelani and Kwa Mshayazafe, both strong Inkatha bases, were bussed to constitute audiences to the inauguration of Inkatha branches in the region. It became apparent that Inkatha supporters from the hostels were circulated as permanent rally trotters, and that each time they went out there would be random attacks on whoever was regarded as the opposition at the time. Attendance at these rallies was far from voluntary as allegations of intimidation abounded. Examples of these rallies, most of which were held outside Kwa Mashu, are: Umlazi (14.04.91; 14.07.91; 06.10.91; 01.12.91), Inanda (28.10.90), Kwa Mshayazafe (23.06.91), Mandini (1992), and Glebelands (23.08.92). Like forced marches within the hostel, intimidating residents into attending rallies exacerbated tensions within the hostel population.

Secondly, the rallies fuelled the fires of hatred between ANC-supporting township residents and hostel dwellers who were lumped together as Inkatha supporters. Often, on their way to and from these rallies, hostel dwellers would be mobbed by groups of youths who would taunt them or hostel dwellers would attack the youth on the pretext or belief that the latter looked down upon them. This exacerbated the cycle of violence. The arrest and subsequent detention of Hlela, the leader of the regiments, in October 1990, for being in possession of an AK 47 and for allegedly ordering the killing of three youths who ran a tuck shop in the hostel, brought in some relative quiet in and around the hostel until his release in early-1991. The marches soon resumed and with them the growing tensions.

- *rallies and violence*

Observations by monitors have been that Inkatha rallies staged by hostel dwellers often precede violent clashes with township residents particularly the youth. Both monitors and the press reported more incidents of attacks on civilians by hostel mobs returning from Inkatha rallies elsewhere. Examples of such incidents include: attacks on train commuters at Thembalihle station (06.10.91), an attempted attack on E Section following a rally at the Rotary Stadium (24.11.91), and a fierce clash between Inkatha supporters from the hostel and residents at Besters Camp (28.10.90) where almost 6000 hostel dwellers faced an equally large crowd of residents. The intervention by the SADF in the latter two instances prevented a bloodbath.

There are strong allegations that these clashes and attacks are not incidental but planned. For instance, there are claims that at an Inkatha rally held at the

Rotary Stadium on 10 February 1991, the leader of the regiments announced the impending attack by hostel dwellers on specific targeted sections of the township. This announcement was followed by an attack on E section of the township where two residents were killed. A march on Ntuzuma township soon followed but this backfired as the leader of the regiments was arrested and detained for contravening his bail terms. A temporary lull lasted to the middle of March when the marches resumed, resulting in more attacks on the adjacent township sections, notably the B and E sections. While clashes with township residents were predictable, tensions within the hostel rose as a result of what others regarded as intimidatory techniques by Inkatha enthusiasts. These included demanding fees of R20 from informal business operators for their presence in what was regarded as Inkatha territory. Part of the money would be used in preparation for a rally which was to be held on 7 April 1991. Tensions within the hostel rose so high that the leader of the regiments and his assistant were killed on the evening of 14 April 1991. This followed a rampage by Inkatha supporters from the hostel earlier during the day on their way from Umlazi where they had gone purportedly to inaugurate a branch at the hostel. During the rampage they had attacked and wounded street traders at the Thembalihle railway station. They had then proceeded to the nearby soccer field and there also attacked and wounded spectators at a football match. On 27 July 1991 another IFP leader in the hostel, John Nzuza, was killed in the same way as his two predecessors.

There is still no certainty regarding the killers of the three leaders. Inkatha blamed the killings on the ANC but a number of residents in the hostel believe that they were killed by fellow residents who were fed up with intimidatory marches and forced attacks on people with whom they had no scores to settle.

• *nationalising and further politicising the hostels issue*

The call for the banning of traditional weapons by the ANC and other observers of the violence resulted in a closing of ranks within Inkatha. This purported attack on 'Zulu culture', as Inkatha decided to interpret the call, resonated well with a conservatively-oriented male-dominated audience in the hostels. By this move, Inkatha had nationalised the issue thus broadening its appeal beyond Kwa Zulu and the hostels. Accordingly, at a rally of hostel dwellers called by the local town councillors on 5 May 1991, speakers included members of the Kwa Zulu Legislative Assembly as well as traditional chiefs. A call was made for ANC supporters to leave Natal and go to the Transkei. A few more rallies, one held at Glebelands hostel and another at the Umshayazafe informal settlement, followed the Kwa Mashu one. Invariably, these rallies were accompanied by attacks on either civilians or train passengers as the excited men coming from inciting

speeches viewed the township as a place which harboured the enemy. There were also numerous allegations of brandishing of fire arms, spears and pangas together with random shootings by the mobs attending these rallies. Other allegations included abduction of train passengers by the same mobs (*The Natal Witness*, 20.05.91; eye witnesses, 08.06.91 and 23.06.91). One incident confirmed by unrest monitors was the attack by Kwa Mashu hostel dwellers at the Duffs Road railway station on ANC supporters going to the rally following the National Conference at Kings Park on 7 July 1991. The mob had to be dispersed by the Riot Unit. On the afternoon of the same day another crowd of hostel dwellers had to be dispersed by the SADF while attempting to attack the B section in Kwa Mashu.

• *relationship with security forces*

It must be pointed out from the onset that in terms of inherent proneness to violence there are no differences across the organisations that contest the political turf in the region. However, the differential response by the security apparatus to the initiation of or involvement in the violence by supporters of the contesting organisations has encouraged Inkatha members to act with impunity in the knowledge that the law is on their side. This has been clearly demonstrated in the way in which hostel residents have acted in both Kwa Mashu and Umlazi. Township residents in Kwa Mashu claim that the Kwa Zulu police stationed in the township collude with Inkatha supporting hostel residents in their attacks on the township. In a number of instances residents allege that attacks by hostel dwellers on them have been conducted with the assistance of the Kwa Zulu police. Claims of either collusion or direct involvement by the police in attacks staged by hostel residents are: attacks on E and F sections (13.04.91) and Umzomusha at Inanda (23.06.91). However, there is no uniformity with regard to the feelings about the police from among the hostel residents themselves. This might arise out of a number of instances when the Riot Control Unit has apprehended men carrying dangerous weapons including firearms inside the hostel. For instance, at a meeting called by the leadership within the hostel on 8 September 1991, a resolution demanding that all security forces be removed from the hostel was taken. Notwithstanding the resolution a number of hostel residents felt that the resolution was an attempt by the leadership and their supporters to have a free hand in mayhem and that the security forces were needed in the hostel.

Umlazi

Places of origin of the migrants

The majority of residents in the Umlazi hostel come from areas to the south of Durban, ie the South coast, the Southern Natal Midlands and a minority from the

Transkei. The northerners are in the minority such that the Kwa Mashu hostel is perceived and regarded by migrants as a northern or Zululand hostel.

Conditions in the hostel

The Umlazi Hostel is unique among hostels in the Greater Durban Functional Region. It consists of four-roomed houses such that were it not because of the disregarded, unpainted appearance of the buildings, the hostel would look like any residential section of the township. However, the type of housing is the only feature which gives any similarity between the hostel and the township. The surroundings in the hostel are markedly different. The yards are hardly ever attended to. Garbage is strewn all over the place, drains are almost in a state of disuse, there is bush between buildings, and the number of infill shacks is threatening to outnumber the formal structures. Umlazi hostel comprises 1282 units of four rooms each. Each unit has seven occupants where two men occupy an unfurnished room with a bunker for a bed for each man. There are three men in the larger room making a total of seven. The seven share a common kitchen with small lockers for each man's elementary groceries. There is a fixed cement table and two benches for the men to sit around in the kitchen. Each unit has an inside toilet and a shower. Outside each unit a tap serves both as a source of water supply and a space for washing clothes, utensils and cutlery. The occupants are responsible for the cleaning of their rooms, bathroom and toilet. Access to rooms is via the housing queue. Therefore, it is normal practice for strangers to share a room although, like in many other areas, the informal network mediates in the allocation of spaces into the hostel.

There are two shopping centres inside the hostel. As in Kwa Mashu the centres comprise a grocery shop, tea rooms, a bottle store, a beer hall, a barber shop, and there may be other informal businesses such as green grocers and street traders dealing in various other assortments. Also, as is the case with the Kwa Mashu hostel, the Umlazi hostel can hardly be described as a single-sex hostel in terms of the gender composition of the *de facto* residents. This has tremendously affected the moral tone of the hostel as a large number of the residents find this objectionable (Zulu, 1991b). The hostel is without any recreational facilities save a beer hall and an elementary football ground. The Umlazi stadium is within walking distance. It is thus conceivable that residents from the hostel have access to it.

Administration, management and organisation

The Umlazi hostel is administered by Kwa Zulu as part of the township. The township has a manager who supervises area superintendencies of which the hostel is one. The local office services residents in terms of the payment of rent,

and any other business which requires the attention of the administration. Residents pay a monthly rental of R4.50. This amount includes a fixed payment for water and electricity. The hostel has, through an 'elected' councillor, representation on the Umlazi town council. This has adversely integrated the hostel into the politics of the township as a majority of the hostel dwellers find themselves caught in the politics of the township, a situation many of them would wish to avoid as their interests are significantly different from those of the permanent township residents. Amabutho, or the regiments, constitute a quasi-military organisation which, in the context of the conflict between hostels and the surrounding communities, has been abused both for sectional interests and personal gains. Originally designed for internal organisation and discipline, the amabutho now comprise the nexus for a private army of whoever is in political authority in the hostel.

Relations with the surrounding communities

Up until the latter half of 1991 the Umlazi hostel could have been perceptibly part of the township save that hostel residents were physically located in the hostel. Hostel residents drank in the adjacent shebeens in the township, boarded the same trains, buses and taxis as their compatriots in the township, and there was free movement between the township and the hostel. The advent of informal settlements in Umlazi during the latter part of the 1980s did not alter this relationship. In fact, a number of migrants from the hostel built their own shacks in the adjacent informal settlements in order to accommodate their visiting families periodically when need arose and, in many instances, let these out to residents in the informal settlements when they did not need them. Relations between residents in the hostel and their counterparts in the township had been as normal as relations between individuals could have been. As a group hostel residents had always been marginalised by circumstances. They were regarded as single men who lived in inferior conditions, strangers and yet brothers to the extent that they were black and a great number of them had and still have relatives in the township. The conflict started in the latter part of 1990 when hostel residents began to perceive themselves as threatened by shack occupants as potential claimants to their accommodation. This was after the formation of the Hostel Dwellers Association in September 1990. To the extent that shack dwellers in the surrounding area were perceived as politically hostile to the ideology of town councillors who organised in the hostels, shack settlements and the township became enemy territories. The dividing lines were more or less drawn along these lines. In spite of the ongoing conflict there is still movement between the hostel and the township on an individual basis mainly because of the numerous cross cutting affinities, blood relationships, origins from the same geographical districts and other personal relationships.

The politicisation of the relations with informal settlements

Competition for political space between Inkatha and the ANC after February 1990 brought in new elements in social relations which otherwise had been normal or less complicated. The violent conflict which broke out between the Umlazi hostel and three settlements adjacent to it is a case in point. The conflict which has become political had its origins in the competition for scarce resources between the hostel and the informal settlements around them. In this instance Zamani, a nearby informal settlement, had been fetching its water from the units in the hostel. The taps are sited outside the buildings such that they are freely accessible even in the absence of the occupants of the units. This had been going on smoothly until in early-1991 when criminal elements driven out of the hostel settled at Zamani, and problems started. Hostel dwellers tried to stop the Zamani residents from using their water on the pretext that they were harbouring thugs. When Zamani did not comply hostel dwellers attacked Zamani to drive out the thugs and the latter sought shelter at Ekuthuleni and Uganda settlements hence the escalation of the conflict first into Ekuthuleni and later into Uganda. In Uganda additional factors contributed to the growing tensions with the hostel. Developments within Uganda, a pro-ANC settlement next to the hostel, had led to the emigration of men from that settlement into the hostel. It is not clear why the men emigrated into the hostel, but it is also common knowledge that a number of men in the hostels also have shacks in the adjacent informal settlements. Whatever the case was, this migration together with the settlement of the ex-hostel thugs from Zamani caused tensions between the Uganda settlement and the hostel. Relations between the hostel and the three settlements (Zamani, Ekuthuleni and Uganda) were to be the source of numerous attacks and counter attacks between residents from the hostel and their neighbours in the three informal settlements.

Violent conflict spreads

Relationships and the attendant conflict between the hostel and the nearby informal settlements became further politicised when the Kwa Mashu hostel together with Lindelani, an Inkatha stronghold near Kwa Mashu, joined in the conflict. Until mid-1991 political activity by Umlazi hostel residents had taken place outside of the hostel. Since the middle of 1990 up to this time those hostel dwellers who were active at all were, together with the residents of Uganda, Ekuthuleni and Zamani informal settlements, part of the D section branch of the ANC. However, changes had come about in April 1991 when Inkatha established a branch at the hostel. The inaugural rally was allegedly attended by men from the Kwa Mashu hostel and also by residents from the Lindelani informal settlement near Kwa Mashu. There are claims that on their way from the rally

the men attacked residents of Ekuthuleni informal settlement in the vicinity of the hostel. This incident introduced tensions between the Umlazi hostel and the Ekuthuleni settlement. By the beginning of December 1991 it was increasingly becoming evident that relationships between the hostel on the one side and the township and informal settlements on the other were deteriorating. The announcement by the youth from the township to commemorate the death of the Mxenges (Griffiths and Victoria Mxenge were human rights lawyers who were brutally murdered by the anti-liberation forces in Umlazi in 1981 and 1985 respectively) in the Umlazi stadium on 1 December 1991 drew blood from Inkatha. The issue was aggravated by the announcement by the youth that they were to rename the highway, that goes through Umlazi and unofficially referred to as the Mangosuthu Highway, as the Griffiths Mxenge Highway, just as the Mangosuthu Technikon is popularly referred to as the Mxenge Technikon. Inkatha interpreted the renaming of the highway as an open provocation. The youth, of whom most support the ANC, were to stage this commemoration service in the name of the ANC. However, the ANC retrieved the situation by repudiating the announcement by the youth, but this did not deter Inkatha from marshalling forces allegedly from the Kwa Mashu hostel, Lindelani and Kwa Mshayazafe in Inanda, to augment whatever strength they had in the Umlazi hostel. Inkatha forces occupied the stadium and the youth had to call off their commemoration service. It had become common practice for Inkatha to use their official connections with the Kwa Zulu administration to block meetings by the ANC if these were to be held in venues controlled by the Kwa Zulu administration.

On 15 December 1991 Inkatha staged a rally in the Umlazi stadium. The rally was to protest against the exclusion of the Zulu monarch from the negotiations in CODESA. Ostensibly the rally was non-partisan and was intended to bring the Zulus together to air their views on an issue which, according to Buthelezi, affected them as a nation. In essence this was an Inkatha rally since those Zulus who purportedly felt excluded from CODESA are Inkatha supporters and the issue was in any way strongly partisan. There are allegations that there were clashes between men from the rally and residents of Ekuthuleni as had become the pattern with such rallies. Further allegations are that on their way from the rally, men from the Kwa Mashu hostel assaulted train commuters at the Greyville railway station and injured some passengers.

The following day, December 16, Umkhonto weSizwe held a rally at Curries Fountain in Durban. On their way from the rally, residents of Ekuthuleni and of Uganda settlement were attacked by hostel dwellers at Kwa Mnyandu station near the hostel. Ekuthuleni residents claimed that the men tore an ANC flag which they were carrying and killed a boy of fourteen years. Up to this time there

was still communication between the hostel dwellers and residents of Ekuthuleni and Uganda settlements. During the discussions, hostel residents apologised for the incident and claimed that it was their visitors from the Kwa Mashu hostel who had committed this atrocity. However, there were allegations by the Umlazi hostel dwellers that on their way from the rally, residents of Uganda settlement taunted and attacked them killing two of their compatriots in the process. The following day, ie 17 December, hostel dwellers mobilised during the early hours of the morning, prevented any one of them from going to work and invaded Uganda settlement. Residents of Uganda claim that hostel dwellers were assisted by the Kwa Zulu police in the invasion. The following few days were marked by sporadic fighting between the hostel and the Uganda settlement, a battle which resulted in seven deaths and numerous injuries on both sides.

• *a planned strategy?*

A number of questions on the conflict generated around the Umlazi hostel need to be posed in order to establish the exact nature of the violence there. On the part of Inkatha and the hostel authorities, the role and function of the town council together with the institution of amabutho have to be thoroughly researched and assessed. In addition the relationship between Inkatha and the Kwa Zulu administration particularly the Kwa Zulu police need to be appraised. The hostel is neither politically nor ideologically homogeneous. The fact that in terms of geographical origins residents in the Umlazi hostel come mainly from the Southern parts of Natal contributes to the disparity in political and ideological outlook. Because of this diversity information from the Umlazi hostel flows relatively more easily than is the case in the Kwa Mashu hostel. According to informants from within the hostel (some of the allegations are in the form of sworn affidavits), in the months of October and November 1991 a number of meetings were called by the local town councillor in the hostel. In a number of them either local members of the Kwa Zulu Legislative Assembly or local Inkatha officials were present. Discussions in these meetings centered around preparations to attack the surrounding shack settlements particularly Uganda and Ekuthuleni. Part of this preparation entailed collecting fees for the purchase of arms for attack as well as for defensive purposes and muti to immunise warriors against enemy fire.

• *intimidation*

Following upon counter attacks from both the Uganda and the Ekuthuleni informal settlements in early 1992, confirmed allegations are that the leadership in the Umlazi hostel decided to:

- intensify nightly vigils or camps for defensive purposes;

- force all hostel dwellers to become members of Inkatha. To this end checks would be made at the local renting office to establish if any of the hostel residents were without the organisation's membership cards;
- take away the beds of those residents who had decided to leave the hostel in order to avoid 'conscription' aimed at fighting the surrounding 'ANC' informal settlements.

This form of intimidation adversely affected the solidarity of hostel dwellers. Up to this point they had been fighting to defend territory against threats of losing their accommodation to 'pretenders' from the informal settlements. They were not fighting as members of political organisations. The issue was aggravated by the attempts by the hostel leadership to compel residents to attend a planned march, in town, by Inkatha to protest against the ban on the carrying of traditional weapons. Murmurs soon spread around the hostel that:

- a number of men had been fighting as hostel residents and not as Inkatha supporters; and
- that the leadership in the hostel was after all from Zululand and, therefore, bent on sacrificing men from the south to die on the ideological altar of the Northerners.

The dissatisfied lot alleged that more men from the south died in the battles with the surrounding shack settlements than was the case with men from the north. Although the discrepancies in the geographical ratios among the dead were actually a function of numbers rather than intentional or planned, such perceptions did much to weaken solidarity among hostel dwellers and accelerated leakages of information to the detriment of the leadership. The ethnicisation of the issue by Inkatha did little to alleviate the situation as the north was perceptibly being associated with being Zulu while the south was by implication apparently non-Zulu. With information freely flowing from the hostel, the surrounding informal settlements found it easier to mount attacks on sections reported to be the homes of leading hostel militants. The attack on and the consequent killing of Philemon Cele, the leader of the regiments, allegedly by residents of Uganda on 2 March 1992 has to be viewed in this context. Between January and May 1992 attacks and counter-attacks between the hostel and the surrounding settlements of Uganda and Ekuthuleni reached a climax. In one instance on 13 March 1992, 18 people, mostly women and children, died and more than 25 were injured when the settlement was allegedly attacked by approximately 800 men from the hostel. Residents of Uganda further alleged that this invasion was carried out with the assistance of members of the Kwa Zulu police who were among the attackers. Additional allegations by dissidents from within the hostel are that plans for these attacks were hatched in certain units in the hostel. Three such units, numbers T.1180, T.1181 and T.1182 were frequently named as the meeting places for such planned attacks.

• *the arms traffic*

The most frightening outcome of the growth in hostilities between the hostel and the informal settlements around the hostel has been the increase in the arms traffic in both the hostel and the informal settlements. Battles have increasingly been fought with live ammunition and accusations of trafficking in arms are rife from both sides. Hostel dwellers who are against the conflict claim that the Kwa Zulu police are the main suppliers of arms to Inkatha supporting hostel residents while Inkatha blames the increase of arms on the ANC defence units and particularly on Umkhonto weSizwe. At one stage a number of hostel dwellers claimed to have been instructed by the Kwa Zulu police to bring in their home-made firearms to be tried and fitted with appropriate rounds of ammunition. In November 1991 a research informant took a hostel resident to collect his 'qhwasha', as these home made firearms are called, from the township for this purpose. Hostel dwellers have organised themselves into defence patrol units which, during intense periods of fighting, have to camp out every night. Allegations confirmed by a number of hostel dwellers and substantiated by researchers are that the Kwa Zulu police have often been present in these camps and in many instances have supplied the campers with ammunition. A number of these camps have actually been dispersed by the Riot Control Unit when regional monitors have intervened through the local commander. Reports of arms coming into the hostels have been so widespread that during December 1991 residents in the Q section, which is the closest to the hostel, claimed to have witnessed white men assisted by Kwa Zulu police offloading weapons at a hostel complex. Reports such as this one abound in the hostel as well. What is disturbing is that they are invariably followed by attacks from the hostel on the surrounding communities.

• *relations with other hostels*

Geographically, the Umlazi hostel is within two kilometers from the Glebelands hostel and a mere five kilometers away from the SJ Smith Hostel. The hostel at Glebelands has always been a COSATU stronghold while the SJ Smith hostel has predominantly Southern Natal/Pondoland residents. It was in fact this composition which partly frustrated the constant attacks by Inkatha supporting men from the hostel on Lamontville during the mid-1980s. Both the Glebelands and the SJ Smith hostel have de facto strongly-functioning branches of the ANC. The political alignments in the two hostels eventually created tensions with an Inkatha-aligned Ningizimu town council as councillors 'representing' the two hostels also sat on the Ningizimu town council. To aggravate the position refugees from the Ekuthuleni settlement near the Umlazi hostel sought shelter in a community hall within the premises of the Glebelands hostel following the sacking of the settlement allegedly by men from the Umlazi hostel.

When these tensions became unbearable the Inkatha councillor for Glebelands left the hostel. By July 1992 there were reports, from the Glebelands hostel, of men conducting shooting practice in the vicinity of the hostel. As the Kwa Zulu police are housed in a former hospital near the hostel, rumours were soon rife that it was the Kwa Zulu police who were engaged in such exercises as a prelude to an attack by Inkatha on the hostel. Residents of Glebelands hostel soon organised night vigils to guard the hostel against the impending attack. It was as a sequel to these night vigils that the South African police raided the hostel on 11 July 1992 and confiscated a number of weapons. There were allegations that in the process the police assaulted and beat up a number of men in the hostel. While this was going on, the ANC branch chairperson in the SJ Smith hostel, a certain Mr. Chiya from the South Coast, was shot and killed by unknown gunmen at the hostel on 7 September 1992. This further inflamed the already frail relations between the two parties.

On its own, the raid on Glebelands hostel would have been inconsequential were it not followed by a march, allegedly by Inkatha-aligned hostel dwellers from the Umlazi and Kwa Mashu hostels as well as from the Lindelani and Kwa Mshayazafe settlements near Inanda. The men arrived on 12 July 1992 fully armed with 'traditional' weapons. Allegations are that the men were escorted by the Kwa Zulu police and that members of the South African police stood by and made no attempts either to disarm or prevent the men from proceeding into the stadium inside the Glebelands hostel. They were prevented from entering the stadium by a strong contingent of residents from Glebelands hostel who refused to leave the stadium on the grounds that as bona fide ratepayers in the hostel they had preferential treatment on the use of facilities that they paid for. What is further disturbing is that one of the monitors, an academic from the University of Natal, had telephoned a captain in the South African police Riot Control Unit informing him of the impending march. The outcome had been a search in the Glebelands hostel on the 11 July and no preventative measures were taken to protect the disarmed residents from a probable attack by Inkatha aligned invaders from the Umlazi hostel and its political allies on the following day. A second major march on the Glebelands hostel by Inkatha-supporting residents from the Umlazi hostel was forestalled by a strong South African police presence about a kilometer away from Glebelands on 23 August 1992. In the process the police confiscated 11 firearms and 21 rounds of ammunition from the Inkatha crowd. During the afternoon of the same day another crowd allegedly from the Kwa Mashu hostel and from Lindelani tried to force its way into the Glebelands hostel but was repulsed by men from within the hostel. Allegations are that the invading army lost more than a handful of men.

Relations between the Umlazi hostel and its neighbouring counterparts have

been further bedevilled by the flight of men who are disgruntled by the politics in the Umlazi hostel to Glebelands and the SJ Smith hostels. A number of men have also allegedly fled Umlazi hostel either into the township or onto the adjacent informal settlements. To counter this exodus the leadership in the hostel has allegedly imposed a fine on any men who attempt to re-enter the hostel after leaving it for some time. The disaffection by a number of hostel residents with the leadership's intimidatory tactics have brought confusion to a situation that is both fragile and tense. For instance when Gideon Sibiya, an Inkatha leader and councillor representing the SJ Smith hostel on the Ningizimu town council, was killed by unknown gunmen on 28 September 1992, there were speculations that the killers might have been fellow hostel dwellers disgruntled by political intimidation within the hostel. The same fate had allegedly befallen Hlela who was engaged in the same intimidatory tactics in the Kwa Mashu hostel a year earlier, and on 21 March 1993, Councillor Ndebele from the Umlazi hostel died under the same conditions as Sibiya and Hlela.

• *security police and the Umlazi hostel*

The role of the security police and particularly the Kwa Zulu police in the ongoing violence in Natal is the subject of investigation by the Goldstone Commission. Suffice it to say in this paper that the role of the Kwa Zulu police has been widely publicised in the reports by the International Commission of Jurists (April 1992) and by the Human Rights Commission (June 1992). Besides what is published in these reports, there are numerous sworn affidavits by eye witnesses, filed with the Legal Resources Centre and with attorneys representing the aggrieved parties, detailing the extent of collusion between the Kwa Zulu police and residents from the Umlazi hostel. For instance when hostel dwellers allegedly attacked Chimurenga shack settlement on 23 February 1992, the Kwa Zulu police who, residents of Chimurenga claimed, had escorted and assisted the attackers, further detained about 35 of the men from Chimurenga and allegedly assaulted a number of them while in detention. In the attack on the Uganda settlement on 13 March 1992, allegations by eye witnesses were that the Kwa Zulu police were among the attackers. Response by the Kwa Zulu police was that a member of their force had been murdered in Uganda the previous day and that their presence in the settlement was to investigate the said murder. However, the ensuing report by the International Commission of Jurists was scathing in its description of the role of the Kwa Zulu police in that incident.

• *the political role of the hostel*

There is very little doubt that, like the Kwa Mashu hostel, the Umlazi hostel has a significant role in the battle for political turf in the region. Inkatha has lost

ground in the townships and the hostels have constituted a conservative base where a perceptibly reactionary organisation can manoeuvre for political space. It has become common knowledge that the Umlazi hostel has become the centre where Inkatha converges whenever there are rallies to attend. Residents from the hostel are part of a 'professional' army, of stage-managed rally supporters, that has been circulating in almost all Inkatha rallies in the region, including places as far away as Zululand. Further, the politicisation of the hostel has created problems particularly with regard to issues of upgrading and improvement of the quality of life of hostel dwellers. The approach to such issues has tended to be influenced by party political positions rather than by the interests of the hostel dwellers themselves.

Conclusions

An appraisal of the position in the two hostels

• spatial problems

Both the Umlazi and the Kwa Mashu hostels present specific problems of space and administration. Physically they are spread out such that policing, unlike in the other hostels, is problematic. There are official entry points into each hostel but because of the vast perimeters strangers can enter from any direction with very little chances of being detected. The attacks on the Umlazi hostel allegedly by residents in informal settlements are facilitated by this spatial problem. Similarly, migrants can go in and out of the hostels to attack surrounding communities without being noticed. The vastness of the territory on which the hostels stand has also meant that it has been relatively easier to site informal housing in between the units. This has not only made the hostels very ugly in appearance, it has also contributed to the competition for scarce resources both within and from without the hostels. Within the hostels, residents in the shacks draw water from the hostel blocks and in a number of instances have electrically connected their shacks to the main blocks. This has potential for conflict as officially shack owners do not pay rent. This suggests that they are preying on the registered tenants for resources or that they pay unofficial rent to the registered tenants. They are thus either exploiting or being exploited by the situation. In both instances the position is hardly compatible with orderly societal norms and augurs badly for effective control.

• political problems

Developments in the hostels in general demonstrate that the hostels have become contested terrains where the battle for political space is being waged. The Kwa Mashu and the Umlazi hostels are effectively situated such that this

contest is exacerbated. In the first place they are located within the administration of Kwa Zulu and de facto are perceived by Inkatha as its territorial space. This has constrained political choices for the inhabitants of the two hostels. In areas controlled by Kwa Zulu, in practice, only Inkatha and no other political party is allowed to exist. This has created such tensions that the conflict between the hostels and the surrounding communities, and within the hostels themselves, can be partly attributed to this. Secondly, because of their isolation and spatial location, the two hostels have become easy prey for political manipulators for violence. Allegations that the two hostels have become hiding dens for arms caches abound, and have turned out to be extremely difficult to verify mainly because the police force is perceptibly partisan. This does not augur well for the progress to peace within a violence-infested region.

• *the security situation*

Both the Kwa Mashu and the Umlazi hostels are situated within Kwa Zulu and are therefore, administered by the same authority. There have been scathing accusations of the Kwa Zulu police by both internal and international bodies. Evidence before the courts (see Jamile, and Trust Feed proceedings) and before the Goldstone Commission (the Black Cats, Wesselton, Khumalo investigations), reports by the International Commission of Jurists and Lawyers For Human Rights, as well as numerous affidavits in the hands of attorneys, magistrates, and other law officials confirm these accusations. It is evident from this presentation that the hostels have the potential to, if they actually have not, become centres of violence against political enemies. Sociological conditions, ie the social organisation of the hostels, marginalisation and alienation, predispose hostels to mobilisation and consequently violence on the slightest signs of provocation. It is not that hostel dwellers are inherently aggressive, but that the social conditions that they live under make them easy prey to political manipulation. Given the role of the Kwa Zulu police in the political conflict in the region, hostels that fall within their jurisdiction will always remain problematic and a security risk not only to the surrounding communities but to themselves as well.

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