

# POLITICAL VIOLENCE

## *The carnage in Pietermaritzburg*

**V**iolence and, in particular, black-on-black violence has been the scourge of South African townships for many years.

The trouble spots have shifted in emphasis and intensity from place to place — Soweto, Alexandra, East London, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town and elsewhere — and now the focus is on Pietermaritzburg.

Although media coverage of the overall violence has tended to stress the political nature of the conflicts, there is now no doubt that socio-economic and other factors are also major determinants which *must* be taken into account when examining the issue.

It is simply fallacious to attempt to “fix” the total blame on specific individuals and organisations (for instance Inkatha, the UDF, COSATU and others) although, as far as the External Mission of the ANC is concerned, a definite decision has been taken and articulated by them to foment violence in Natal/KwaZulu and elsewhere throughout South Africa.

In Natal their supporters are urged, in Radio Freedom broadcasts and other publications, to create a situation of “ungovernability” and to “destroy” the Chief Minister of KwaZulu and President of Inkatha, Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi, his KwaZulu/Inkatha power-base and other so-called “enemies” including town councillors. Armed insurgents are sent into South Africa from across the country’s borders for this purpose.

### **TARGETS OF “UNGOVERNABILITY”**

“... We must work to win over his (Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi’s) supporters to deprive him of his social base . . . Clearly the bantustans should also be the targets of our Movement’s efforts to render South Africa ungovernable . . . As part of our underground we must ensure that the ANC core groups are organised and active in all the mass democratic organisations . . . We support the campaigns of the UDF around which mobilisation both on regional and national levels is planned . . . We (recommend) we establish ANC collectives within affiliates as well as the leadership. These would not act as factions but as organised sections of our movement fighting for the strengthening of and consolidation of the UDF . . .”

— AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE, JUNE 1985. *Commission on Cadre Policy, Political and Ideological Work. Internal Commission Report. Commission on Strategy and Tactics.*

### **“DESTROY” THE ENEMY**

“Those collaborators who are serving in the community councils must be dealt with. Informers, policemen, special branch police and army personnel living and working amongst our people must be eliminated. The puppets in the tricameral parliament and the Bantustans must be destroyed.”

RADIO FREEDOM,  
ADDIS ABABA, May 6,  
1985. ANC National  
Executive Committee.

The overall crucial socio-economic and other accompanying political factors regarding violence are accepted by numerous sociologists and other academics of varying political persuasions who have examined the issue.

(It has to be noted that in South Africa’s polarised society, some — usually highly publicised — political and other “research” undertaken by certain academics in South Africa is, in many cases, biased towards the political predilections of the authors. It is therefore worthwhile commenting that researchers known to support, for instance, the UDF or Inkatha agree that the violence in Pietermaritzburg has a multiplicity of contributing factors.)

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