CHAPTER – 4

With the launching of reforms under the rubric of ‘total strategy’, the government was expressing confidence as if everything was going on in the right direction. It even managed to get an overwhelming ‘yes’ vote in the November 1983 referendum\(^1\) which approved the tricameral constitutional plan. Even the white liberals in the PFP (some 30% of its supporters) voted in favour of the reform because they thought that Botha’s constitutional plan was at last a step in right direction and he was in a position to implement the proposals.\(^2\)

The signing of Nkomati Accord with the Marxist regime of Mozambique in March 1984 gave a serious blow to the ANC as that country stopped supporting the latter’s insurgent activities within its borders. Angola, which provided main training facilities, and Lesotho were also brought to the negotiating table, thereby making the overseas activities increasingly difficult for the ANC. With these positive signs for the regime (or so they thought),

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\(^1\) The referendum was overwhelming in the sense that most whites voted in its favour. But 77 per cent of coloured voters and 80 per cent of Indian voters boycotted the elections.

\(^2\) For details of PFP’s stand and impact of reforms on other political parties see “Bowing to Botha”. The Economist, February 18, 1984, p. 23.
P.W. Botha was selected South Africa’s first executive president under the new constitution on September 3, 1984 with greater constitutional powers unlike his predecessors. Propelled by the so called success of the reforms Botha made his well-publicised European tour in the winter of 1994, in which he visited eight countries, in an attempt to win over foreign skeptics of his reform programmes. Commenting on the ultimate goal of the reforms, the president stated that the country was on ‘a road leading to the extension of democracy’. The reforms, besides seeking devolution of power, were aimed at forming a confederation.  

He also presented the case of South Africa as a regional power especially in the aftermath of Nkomati accord.

Despite reforms and optimism in the NP circle, the country soon entered into a phase of protracted township unrest towards the end of 1984. When P.W. Botha was sworn in as the executive president in September, violence erupted in Vaal Triangle. Ten people died on the first day of uprising. Violence soon moved to the East Rand and other areas and continued unabated. This was the logical outcome of adopting incremental reform in an increasingly revolutionary climate. These reforms, instead of addressing the problems of majority population, helped in developing cracks in the system as they raised the expectation of the people regarding further reform. The dilemma before P.W. Botha was to ensure that real power remained in the hands of whites

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while the blacks' demand for political reform would not go unheeded. The situation became particularly worse as the African middle class, due to its economic prosperity and political awareness, started demanding reforms in the system. This can be substantiated from the opinion poll conducted between 1979 and 1985.

**ECONOMIC CRISIS IN MID'80s**

Economic crisis which had started in early 1980s took an alarming proportion in the mid 1980s making *The Economist* to comment that South Africa was 'heading remorselessly towards a siege economy'. Some of the economic trends would make this point clear. Gold price which had already started falling in 1980-81, came down to US$ 400 per ounce in 1984. Although the austerity measures of 1984 enabled the government to achieve a balance of payment surplus ($ 2.5 billion in 1985), this also increased overseas borrowing at lower rates. Worth of Rand came down to 33 American cents in August 1985. This made imports expensive causing a rise in inflation which

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7 *The Economist*, n. 5.
was 17% in 1986.\textsuperscript{8} Pressure of international sanctions on the country’s exports was another cause for concern.\textsuperscript{9} Although foreign debt burden had come down due to trade surplus, from $19.6 billion at the end of September, 1984 to $17 billion by mid-1985, the problem of short-term credit was a major challenge for the economy. About $12 billion of total debt was short-term.\textsuperscript{10} This impaired South Africa’s creditworthiness. American banks followed by European who were operating in the country announced their inability to extend credit on maturing short-term loans. Disinvestment and outflow of capital further complicated the matter. There was an outflow of foreign exchange worth $200 million from equity disinvestment between May and July 1985 from Johannesburg stock exchange\textsuperscript{11}. The country lost an estimated R30 billion in capital outflow between 1985 and November 1989\textsuperscript{12}.

In the face of growing economic crisis, organised capital soon raised voices against the continuation of apartheid. In March, leading players like the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (AHI) and the Association of Chambers of Commerce of South Africa (ASSOCOM) pledged their support for economic and political reforms. Government’s apathy led to its criticisms in newspapers

\textsuperscript{8} "Is there Life After Sanctions?", \textit{The Economist}, July 26, 1986, pp. 24-26.

\textsuperscript{9} For impact of sanctions on economy, see Ibid.

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{The Economist}, n. 5.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Weekly Mail}, December 21, 1989.
and other mass media which supported change in the system. Industry mounted pressure on the government which culminated in a meeting of a business delegation with the ANC in Lusaka.\textsuperscript{13} Many more meetings followed after this which also enhanced ANC's international profile.

**REFORM PROGRAMMES SINCE MID-1980s**

The failure of 'total strategy' reforms to address the core issues of black unrest,\textsuperscript{14} economic crisis and international pressure compelled the apartheid state to enter into another phase of socio-economic and political reforms beginning with mid-1980s. As in case of reforms in early 1980s, this phase was also an attempt on the part of Afrikaners to bring change in such a way that the final control of power remained in their hands. Nevertheless it was a step ahead in the direction of a permanent solution.

**Socio-Economic Reforms**

On the issue of urbanisation, the Presidents' Council (PC) published a report in August 1985 entitled 'An Urbanisation Strategy for the Republic of the South Africa' which, while rejecting Riekert Commission report as obsolete, proposed a strategy of 'orderly urbanisation'. It called for the

\textsuperscript{13} For details of the response of capital to the economic crisis, see Douglas Booth, "South Africa: Reform, Resistance and Negotiation", Politics, 25, 1 (May 1990), pp. 37-47.

\textsuperscript{14} Core issues in South Africa were lack of political rights for the majority, abolition of Group Areas Act (residential segregation) and classification of people on the basis of race.
elimination of influx control and pass book-system and also a widening of the official definition of ‘settled urban Africans’ to include the so far excluded sections of urban African population in and around cities. Consequently the government’s White Paper on Urbanisation recommended the scrapping of influx control law. Several aspects of social life were desegregated; such as hotels, cinemas, parks and beaches were opened to all races; the Immorality Act of 1959 and the Prohibition of Mixed marriages Act of 1949 were repealed; job reservation was done away with and the public service was desegregated. The Temporary Removal of Restrictions on Economic Activities Act (TRREAA) of September 1986 empowered the president to abolish laws impeding economic progress and the government soon started privatisation of the economy. However the fundamental discriminatory laws such as Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act remained in force, thus leaving the most important black demand unfulfilled.

Political Reforms

Political reforms were affected at three different levels, i.e. local and regional, provincial and national. Due to financial constraint and increasing

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16 Influx Control was abolished in terms of the Abolition of Influx Control Act in June 1986.

17 For details, see Booth, n. 13, p. 40; “Apartheid’s Slow Road”, The Economist, May 16, 1987, p. 59.
attacks from township violence, the Black Local Authorities (BLAs) became inoperative by mid-1985 with the suspension of all but five of the 38 black local authorities. Hence in the Regional Services Council (RSCs)\textsuperscript{18} Act (1985) provision was made for participation of the representatives of BLA in the RSCs as full members. The first RSCs were instituted in June 1987. These councils were entrusted with the task of raising funds and improving infrastructure in their areas.

Towards reform at the second tier or provincial level the minister of Constitutional Development and Planning announced on May 5, 1985 the abolition of white-controlled provincial councils and the establishment of multi-racial executive and administrative committees in their place, appointed by the state president and answerable to the parliament. Entrusted with the administration of 'general affairs' these newly created committees were empowered to work jointly with the homeland administrations.

Reform at the national level was rather slow to come as seen in the developments since 1985. On the recommendations of a Cabinet Committee, President Botha announced in his opening address to parliament on January 25, 1985, the plan for establishment of a negotiating forum of government and

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\textsuperscript{18} RSCs were administrative units at metropolitan level (besides urban areas outside bantustans, a metropolitan area as per this Act included (potentially) quasi-urban settlements within parts of the bantustans-those within commuting distance of the commercial and industrial locations of the country) responsible for the administration of general affairs such as water, electricity, etc. Inclusion of African townships within bantustan was a decisive break with the concept that bantustans were politically and economically independent units.
\end{flushright}
African leaders to decide the future constitutional development.\textsuperscript{19} A NP booklet ‘… And What About Black People?’ in May 1985 not only admitted the failure of the homeland system but also the inability of government to create a conducive atmosphere among blacks of both urban areas and homelands towards reforms\textsuperscript{20}. Again at the opening session of parliament in 1986 Botha reiterated the proposal for establishment of a national statutory council. The National Council Bill was passed by parliament in May 1986. Besides acting as a forum for constitutional negotiation, the Bill made provisions for the Africans to participate in government at executive level. The national council would consist of the chief ministers of six non-independent homelands, ten representatives of Africans residing permanently in white-designated areas, the chairman of each minister’s council in national parliament, cabinet members appointed by the president and not more than ten other people appointed by the state president in consultation with the national council members.\textsuperscript{21} Among the blacks the national council was seen as another reluctant step by the regime to transform the system without uprooting it. As such the advisory role for the blacks was far from actual control of the system. Actual power remained in the hands of whites.

\textsuperscript{19} The Economist, February 2, 1985. p. 46.

\textsuperscript{20} Alden, n. 3, p. 192, also Booth, n. 13, p. 40.

\textsuperscript{21} Race Relations Survey 1986 (Johannesburg. 1986), Part I, p. 93.
INKATHA’S RESPONSE TO REFORMS AND ITS IMPACT ON ANTI-APARTHEID STRUGGLES

Inkatha’s reactions to reforms had direct relevance for anti-apartheid struggles. Because this reflected the organisation’s multi-strategy approach. In this period an important change in the attitude of the government could be noticed. The grand apartheid policy of dividing the majority permanently by creating independent black ethnic homelands was no more considered relevant. Although homelands remained, the emphasis was more on accommodation of the demands of blacks than independence of homelands as in 1970s and early 1980s. The government accepted the blacks who used to live in white areas as permanent inhabitants. Moreover it even included the black townships (adjacent to urban areas) of bantustans within the administrative jurisdiction of Regional Services Councils. This and other reform measures mentioned above can be said to be a climb down from the original position. Under this circumstance the government tried to enlist the support of moderate black organisations for its reform programmes. When radical organisations like the UDF, NF, AZAPO and others were beyond reach, only moderate ones like Inkatha were considered to be beneficial. Inkatha’s position in regard to reforms has to be seen in this context.

Inkatha’s first reaction to reforms came in the form of rejection of RSCs. No RSC could be established in Natal due to opposition from Buthelezi. It was argued since the RSCs were legislated by a white parliament which had no
representation for Africans, these were not acceptable. The most significant response of the organisation however was the rejection of the proposal for the formation of national council. Notwithstanding the president’s desire to have Buthelezi participate in the Council thereby giving legitimacy and acceptability to the proposal as well as countering the ANC, UDF and other radical organisations,\(^{22}\) the Chief made his participation conditional upon the scrapping of Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act and the release of jailed ANC leader Nelson Mandela, Zeph Mothopeng of rival Pan Africanist Congress and others. Buthelezi’s reaction to the proposal when it was first put forward at the opening session of parliament in January 1985 was that “it would be political suicide to participate”.\(^{23}\) From now on he continued to oppose the national council much to the discomfort of the apartheid regime. In his view unless the government was ‘serious about addressing the fundamental issues of black constitutional rights’, negotiation with it was not possible.\(^{24}\) At a “prayer rally” at the Jabulani stadium in Soweto on June 29, 1986 (17 days

\(^{22}\) ANC rejected the proposal as an attempt to circumvent the demand for universal adult suffrage. Similarly UDF, AZAPO and many coloured and Indian leaders also strongly rejected it. The only black support come from the Urban Council Association of South Africa and Federal Independent Democratic Alliance- both insignificant organisations. For details, see Alden, n. 3, pp. 253-258; also, “Do Lets Have A Chat”, *The Economist*, June 6, 1987, p. 58.

\(^{23}\) *The Economist*, n. 19.

after the full state of emergency was imposed).\(^{25}\) Inkatha president declared his intention to work with Mandela and renewed the call for his release.\(^{26}\)

From the above account it can be inferred that Inkatha had not outrightly dismissed the proposal for NC like other radical organisations, it had only attached some conditions to facilitate its acceptance. This response can be said to be in consonance with the movement’s multi-strategy approach, particularly its emphasis on the politics of negotiation. In fact, the demand for release of political prisoners was not new, it had been on the agenda of Inkatha since its formation. Also an outright acceptance of the government’s proposal was practically not feasible considering the organisation’s diminishing support. This can be logically proved from some of the survey reports of the period. In a survey conducted in the second half of 1985 the urban blacks were asked a question: “Which leader or organisation would you most like to represent you in solving problems or grievances?”\(^{27}\) Over 60 per cent gave opinion in favour of leaders and organisations which call for black rule and unitary state. The ANC or its leader Nelson Mandela got 31 per cent support; Bishop Tutu received 16 per cent and the UDF, 14 per cent. Chief Buthelezi or his Inkatha

\(^{25}\)The special police permission given for the rally during emergency, when activities of other political parties were severely restricted, demonstrated the regime’s softness towards Inkatha. This was ostensibly to get its support for reforms.


\(^{27}\)The survey was conducted by Financial Mail and published in the magazine’s, vol. 97, no. 12 (September 20, 1985) issue (p. 64); cited in Kenneth W. Grundy, “Race Politics in South Africa: Change and revolt”, Current History, 85. 511 (May 1986), pp. 197-200.
movement could garner only 8 per cent support and another 8 per cent opted for government or pro-government organisations. Eighty per cent of the respondents agreed with the view that 'compromise was no longer possible'. Some other opinion polls conducted during this time also came out with similar findings.²⁸

A comparison between the 1977 survey by West Germany Bergstraesser Institute, which found Buthelezi as the most popular leader, with the findings mentioned above shows the extent of loss of popularity of both Inkatha and the Chief. Under this circumstance any unequivocal support to any of the government plans (NC particularly) would have meant not only further loss of popularity for Inkatha but also an increase in the acceptability of the UDF, ANC and other rival organisations. Notwithstanding these survey reports, Inkatha leadership made repeated declarations that it would work for Mandela (Buthelezi had given assurance to the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group in this regard) despite its known differences with the ANC. Inkatha's approach to change, however, was not appreciated by the radical organisations. As will be discussed later any understanding between Inkatha and government led to deterioration of the movement's relationship with the

²⁸ A research conducted by Mr. Mark Orkin, a South African pollster, in the first half of 1986, it was concluded that Buthelezi did not have the support of majority of Zulus in Natal, supposed to be the strong hold of Inkatha. The Chief's support in Durban city was also declining. Among the Zulus of outside Natal his following was decreasing sharply. And among the non-zulu blacks it was only negligible. The Economist, n. 26. For some other findings, also see Fatima Meer, ed., Resistance in the Townships (Durban, 1989), pp. 262-64.
UDF and others.

Coming to the provincial level reforms, the KwaZulu/Natal region was advanced in comparison to other regions as attempts at reform were taken up by Chief Buthelezi in the form of Buthelezi Commission well before the state’s initiative came to the fore. As reformers of all shades including some members of NP and state continued to express their affirmative views for Buthelezi Commission recommendations, the government, despite initial rejection, decided in May 1985 to implement a regional consolidation plan. In 9 June 1985 the representatives of New Republic Party and the NP in the Natal Provincial Council formulated a plan for establishing a statutory body for KwaZulu/Natal region to deal with ‘general affairs’. The proposals of Natal Indaba, another initiative by Buthelezi, further supplemented these initiatives (see discussion on Inkatha’s reform initiatives below).

So far as the struggles against apartheid were concerned, the most significant reaction of Inkatha to government reforms was its refusal to participate in the proposed national council. The organisation refused to accept the plan of government when it needed most. This period was particularly a challenging one for the Apartheid State. Some of the challenges have been mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Despite imposition of emergency\(^\text{29}\) township violence continued at a high pitch. *The Economist* reported in

\(^{29}\) Emergency was first imposed on July 20, 1985 in 36 magisterial districts in the urban areas of Eastern Cape and industrial heartland of Transvaal. In face of continued violence it was extended on June 12, 1986 to cover the whole of country.
November 1987 death of around 2600 people as a result of political violence since September 1984.\textsuperscript{30} Challenge from the far right-wing Afrikaner organisations, particularly the recently formed Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging – AWB (Afrikaner Resistance Movement) was a cause for concern in Afrikaner ruling clique.\textsuperscript{31} The AWB was accusing Botha of weakness due to his reform proposals. The government was charged of working under pressure of outside powers. The situation was perplexing for the Pretoria regime. If Botha proceeded slowly on the issue of reforms he would have to face the ire of not only the blacks but also the countries supporting sanctions. And if he took bold steps like releasing Mandela and opening up talks with the ANC that would invite the anger of Afrikaner hard-liners. The proposed national council, in which blacks supporting non-violence would gain an advisory role in central government and participate in future constitution making, was a middle-of-the-road reform to avoid two extremes. Buthelezi, the government thought, would provide support to this new arrangement because of his moderate non-violent strategy against apartheid. Considering Inkatha’s 1.5 million membership (notwithstanding its loss of support in this period), its support would have enabled the government to claim that blacks had accepted reforms. The question of ANC or the UDF joining the council did not arise as their main

\textsuperscript{30} The Economist, November 7, 1987, pp. 61-62.

demand was universal suffrage in a non-racial society. Inkatha's conditions for joining the council, as noted earlier, were hard to accept for the regime. Hence the position of Inkatha on this issue was a major blow to the apartheid regime at a very critical time. It made the state realise the urgency and inevitability of meaningful reforms along the lines of majority demands.

The government's willingness to implement regional consolidation plan which was on the line of Buthelezi Commission findings was a positive development. It has been argued in the previous chapter that establishment of joint administration for KwaZulu and Natal had economic as well as political benefits. So the plan unveiled in 1985 was a step in the direction of betterment of blacks, hence contributory to the struggles against apartheid. In November 1987 a Joint Executive Authority came into existence under the provisions of the Joint Executive Authority for KwaZulu and Natal Act of 1986 with a ten member apex decision making body selected equally from KwaZulu and Natal. The new body was empowered to administer local services such as hospitals and protection of bathers against sharks.

**Response to Economic Sanctions**

Economic sanctions, first proposed by the ANC leader Albert Luthuli after the Sharpeville massacre gathered momentum since 1985 especially with eruption of township conflicts and the disappointing 'Rubicon' speech of president Botha. The United States, the European Community and the
Commonwealth countries, despite reluctance of conservatives like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher to impose comprehensive sanctions, soon went for it by curtailing foreign investment, trade, importation of South African goods, ban on sale of oil and restrictions of military, scientific and cultural ties (by EC). In addition to this, the sanctions applied by private international banks (the Chase Manhattan Bank for example) compelling the corporate borrowers to pay both interest on loans and the principal coupled with decreasing confidence of international lending institutions and shrinking of capital flows resulted in a balance of payment crisis and 50 per cent fall in the value of currency.\textsuperscript{32} Rise of unemployment (also due to scrapping of influx control), capital shortages, disillusionment among the elites especially due to cultural, scientific and academic boycotts, etc were some other manifestations of sanctions by international community\textsuperscript{33}.

At a time when the ANC was spearheading campaign in favour of sanctions and its impact was being felt by the government, Inkatha was arguing against sanctions and disinvestment on the ground that it would cause hardship to the very blacks it was intended to help. To put forward his views before world leaders Buthelezi toured western countries and met leaders like Reagan, Thatcher and others. Arguing in favour of foreign investment in USA, the Chief said that American corporations had a lot to contribute to the

\textsuperscript{32} Price, n. 4, pp. 222-3, 225

\textsuperscript{33} For details of the impact of sanction see Alden, n. 3, pp. 241-43; also The Economist, n. 8.
advancement of black people in the area of economic justice.\textsuperscript{34} In his evidence to the British Parliament's foreign affairs committee on January 20, 1986, Buthelezi argued against disinvestment which damaged economy. In his view sanction should 'not harm the growth of the economy' but should 'exert pressure on Pretoria' for bringing change.\textsuperscript{35} For this reason he urged for humanitarian aid to the victims of apartheid during his visits abroad.

Notwithstanding the merits of the argument put forward by Inkatha, the issue of economic sanctions need to be discussed in the context of then prevailing racial prejudices. One of the main reasons for Pretoria's long sustainability despite black unrest and demands of change was its ability to protect the country's economy with the help of United States and the West. These countries had interests in South Africa's exports as well as imports. Inkatha's anti-sanction policy was favourable to the western countries. In a speech delivered at Boston University in 1987 Buthelezi praised 'the dollar, the American Marines and the heavy weight of American clout' as a 'force for international peace in the world'. He told that 'his goals were consonant with American dream'.\textsuperscript{36} This convergence of interests was not in favour of anti-apartheid struggles. Because indirectly it encouraged and helped the apartheid

\textsuperscript{34} Times (London), November 25, 1986.


regime to continue with its racial policy. In the opinion of Gerhard Mare, the fact that economic sanctions did play a role in anti-apartheid struggles was never realised by Inkatha leadership. This preference for capital was due to the organisation’s support in business community.37

INKATHA’S REFORM INITIATIVES

So far discussion was limited to Inkatha’s response to the reforms by government and its impact on anti-apartheid struggles. This section deals with the organisation’s own initiatives to bring change. One important aspect of multi-strategy approach was resolving crisis through negotiation and forging meaningful unity among anti-apartheid forces and more particularly black unity. This aspect shall be analysed here. Buthelezi along with PFP leader Van Zyl Slabbert established a National Convention of opposition leaders in September 1985. They also called upon Mandela and President Botha to participate in the forum so that the political impasse of the period could be solved. However, non-participation of UDF and AZAPO in the Convention and their criticisms resulted in the demise of the project within a very short span of time.

The next initiative of Inkatha, perhaps the most important one, came in 1986 with the opening of a conference in Durban City Hall known as the KwaZulu/Natal Indaba on April 3. The mandate of the Indaba was to explore

37 Notes from interview with Dr. Gerhard Mare. University of Natal, Durban.
ways for a possible merger of the province of Natal – a stronghold of whites of British origin, and the KwaZulu homeland by creating a single legislature for the region. Due to geographical proximity (as the homeland, consisting of 48 bits and pieces of areas, exists within the Natal province) and economic interdependence of the two regions, it was felt that a political compromise could be possible along non-racial lines among the whites, blacks (majority Zulus), people of Indian origin and coloured. The exercise known as “Natal Option”, if turned out to be success, could be considered for the country as a whole. Natal Indaba was the culmination of a long exercise that had began with Buthelezi Commission.

Including Natal provincial council and the KwaZulu administration, thirty-one business, farming and political organisations had participated in the Indaba. However the ANC, UDF, AZAPO and COSATU did not participate despite invitations; while the ruling NP took only observer status. Other notable participants were Desmond Clarence (the Chair) – Principal of the University of Natal and John Kane-Berman – director of the South African Institute of Race Relations. After eight months of negotiations, on November 28, 1986 the Indaba finally reached a near-unanimous agreement on a non-racial constitution for the region.

Recommendations of Indaba

The Indaba recommended a bicameral legislature for the region. It was
empowered to make laws on all matters concerning its welfare with the exception of foreign affairs, defence, police, post and telecommunications, transport, harbour administration, aviation, mineral and energy affairs and inland revenue. This shows the proposed legislature would have the same powers as that of the so-called independent homelands of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei, except one difference: the citizens of KwaZulu/Natal would remain South Africans.\textsuperscript{38} The principle of one-person-one-vote was accepted as demanded by blacks. At the same time adequate safeguards for minorities were prescribed. The first chamber of the bicameral parliament would consist of 100 members elected on the basis of proportional representation, with 66 members representing constituencies and the rest from political parties.

The second chamber consisting of 50 members would be divided among Africans, English, Afrikaners, Asians and South Africans (those who refused to being identified on the basis of race) with ten members each. Provision for vetoing legislation affecting culture, language and religion was made in this chamber. For protection of cultural rights a series of “cultural councils” were prescribed.\textsuperscript{39}

All parliamentary bills, except the constitutional amendment ones for which two-thirds majority was required, were to be passed by simple majority

\textsuperscript{38} Smith, n. 24, p. 213.

\textsuperscript{39} “Pre-natal Care”, \textit{The Economist}, December 6, 1986, p. 58-59.
of both chambers. The Prime Minister would be the executive head of the region and would administer with the ten member cabinet drawn both from majority party and smaller ones. A governor would be appointed by president of South Africa on the advice of the regional legislature.

**Reactions to the Recommendations**

Reactions varied according to the varying perceptions of political groups. The response of government was ambiguous from the beginning mainly due to the compulsions of reform and need for white dominance. As admitted by South Africa’s Home Minister, Mr. Stoffel Botha, the government rejected the recommendations on the ground that it lacked adequate protection for minorities. Mr. Chris Heunis, minister of Constitutional Development also rejected it on similar ground in parliament on 3 February 1987. For the Government which had already conceded the demand for a joint executive for KwaZulu/Natal, the proposal for a joint legislature was not acceptable especially when elections were going to be held in April 1987. President Botha was anxious to repulse the rise of right wing Conservative Party. Acceptance of Indaba proposals would have meant a loss of support for NP among the Afrikanner voters. As such the president told the parliament in January 1987 that the so-called one-man-one-vote, non-racial democracy was unsuited for

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South Africa; minority groups must be protected by constitutional provisions and must have right to self-determination at every level of government. The proposals were also opposed to the long term Botha policy of reforming the system without compromising the dominant position of whites.

However inconsistency in the government’s approach soon came to the fore as it tried to enlist the support of Buthelezi and his Inkatha movement for the proposed national council. Hence came the declaration of Mr. Heunis in the parliament (a deceptive declaration indeed) that the government was not averse to the Indaba proposal for a joint regional legislature for KwaZulu/Natal. By 1989 the government had entered into negotiations with Inkatha along the line of Indaba recommendations. Despite these attempts a joint legislature never materialised as swift political changes started in the government circles towards the end of 1990’s. In fact, the real intention of government was not to give any significant political concessions to Inkatha and also blacks, but only token inducement at the maximum (like joint executive) so that the twin purpose of white control and marginalisation of ANC and other popular organisations could be served. Even the establishment of joint executive authority in Natal did not serve any real purpose. Admitting this before a visiting British parliamentarian Buthelezi said on 2 February 1988 that he might withdraw

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41 Ibid.

from the executive authority as the body had become almost powerless.\textsuperscript{43}

In contrast to the response of government, the majority of whites in Natal had supported the proposals reflecting clearly their distance for the Afrikaner-based NP. In fact the English-speaking whites had a sense of traditional hostility against the Afrikaners because of the latter’s Dutch origin. They saw the Indaba as a viable alternative to both black radicalism and Afrikaner gradualism as they wanted a middle path providing for black partnership without black domination. Echoing this sentiment, Alan Paton, a friend of Buthelezi and a leader of the defunct Liberal Party said the Indaba was representing “the moderate, peace-loving, conflict-hating, middle-of-the-road people of KwaZulu and Natal”.\textsuperscript{44} Even some NP supporters like Dennis Worrall had supported the proposals.\textsuperscript{45} An opinion survey by a South African market research organisation in April/May 1988 among the whites of Natal proved their majority support to the Indaba. While 51 per cent favoured it, 21 per cent went against and 28 per cent were undecided.\textsuperscript{46}

Reactions of radical black organisations were negative from the beginning. They saw it as a ploy of Buthelezi to strengthen his power base in the region and engage in a collaborative role with the government. At a time

\textsuperscript{43} “Time to Reflect in Townships”, \textit{The Economist}, February 6, 1988, p. 44.


\textsuperscript{45} “Laager Quarrels” \textit{The Economist}, n. 40.

\textsuperscript{46} Smith, n. 24, p. 216.
when township violence was at its peak, the Indaba further widened the gulf between Inkatha and UDF. ANC’s rejection was based on the belief that no constitutional changes could be possible unless it emanated from an expression of dominant will of the people (Indaba was basically an initiative of Inkatha). Also the federal ideas, it was argued, would not be able to address the lacunae in political system which were rooted in racial inequality and unequal distribution of wealth.

In the opinion of scholars the pursuit of Natal option was an attempt of the dominant bloc to strengthen its bargaining power by exploiting regionalism systematically. Daryl Glaser considered this attempt conservative as it avoided majority rule in a unitary system and was against redistribution of wealth.47

Impact of Reforms on Anti-apartheid Struggles

The period under discussion witnessed one more attempt on the part of Inkatha (along with PFP) to forge a united front against apartheid state. But this did not succeed like other attempts in the part. In fact Inkatha’s initiative in regard to black unity (or the unity of like minded political formations) was a failure since its inception. Oscar Dhlomo, a former secretary general of the organisation, once admitted to this setback.48 This had not only adversely


affected anti-apartheid struggles, but also undermined prospect of reconciliation among political organisations. An instance of this was Inkatha’s strained relationship with the PFP after the ‘bull-tapes’ controversy.49

Because of its importance, the impact of Indaba proposals on anti-apartheid struggles needs to be discussed in detail. For the critics belonging to radical school, who called the Indaba as a “Muzorewa option”,50 these proposals were against a unitary state and due to its (Indaba) reliance on whites and capitalists for support, it was against the anti-apartheid struggles. Briefly speaking, Indaba was another instance of collaborative policy of Inkatha at a time when its popularity was coming down.

Radical school, however ignores the positive impact of the report on anti-apartheid struggles. The recommendation of Indaba for a single legislature, if implemented, would have become the first such structure in the country symbolising racial and regional cooperation. This had implications well ahead of apartheid system as it had the potential of providing meaningful alternative to the then existing racial hegemony. In this context a linkage could also be

49 “Bull tapes” controversy came to light in February 1986. This was a recording of secret conversation between Botha and Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert, the leader of PFP, in which the later remarked that Buthelezi, like the ANC, wanted to be the only bull in the kraal”. The reference here is to negotiation issue. That Buthelezi wanted to talk alone. For details of this controversy. see De Kock, n. 35, pp. 113-15.

50 Critics refer to the deal that made Bishop Abel Muzorewa the nominal prime minister of Rhodesia just before it became Zimbabwe. Muzorewa could not end civil war in Rhodesia as he had no control over the fighting guerrillas. Similarly Buthelezi, in view of critics, wanted to be the head of the region by Indaba proposals’ implementation, but would face the situation of Muzorewa as he too had no control over South African rebels. “Nice Try”, The Economist, April 12, 1985, p. 29-32.
established between multi-strategy approach, especially its strategy of negotiation, and the present recommendation. Indaba provided avenues for negotiation among races leading to eventual change. Seeing in this light, it was the culmination of efforts which began with the Buthelezi Commission. The establishment of a Joint Executive Authority was a step in this direction.

Interdependence of blacks and whites in the region and the presence of Inkatha provided opportunity for this kind of political experimentation. So far as the position of Inkatha was concerned its support base within the homeland was a major inducement in this regard. From Inkatha’s standpoint, the recommendations of Indaba if implemented would also have strengthened the organisation’s regional position. One of the reasons for its active participation in Indaba was that it satisfied the policy of regional consolidation (discussed in last chapter) that was followed since 1980. So Inkatha sought to achieve twin purposes – on the one hand, it thought to provide alternative to apartheid; on the other hand, it tried to strengthen its regional base from which political challenges (from the UDF and COSATU in this period) could be effectively faced. In the final analysis, this would have made the organisation’s position in national politics stronger.

Notwithstanding the shortcomings of this initiative, it can be said that Indaba, like Buthelezi Commission, demonstrated Inkatha’s attempts to go beyond the confines of protest politics. In both the cases it became an active initiator as well as participant in the process of negotiation. This had the
potential of not only defeating apartheid but also providing an alternative for future non-apartheid society. The strength of Indaba was that it received near-unanimous support from the delegates. However, for the reasons mentioned earlier, the proposal for a joint legislature could not be implemented.

FORMATION OF COSATU AND INKATHA’S RESPONSE

Formation of Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) added a new dimension to the politics of the country. This marked the entry of trade unions into political affairs. As COSATU was an important player in anti-apartheid struggles since mid-1980s, this discussion is imperative before discussing Inkatha’s relationship with other political organisations.

Trade union activities got a fillip when the government removed restrictions on the basis of Wiehahn Commission report (see Chapter 3). This led to the rise of Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) with which Inkatha had working relationship, because many of FOSATU members were members of Inkatha. But this relationship could not be maintained when FOSATU, General Workers Union (GWU), National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) and many UDF-affiliated trade unions joined hands to form COSATU in November 1985. The new union was welcomed by the UDF, ANC and the

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51 The final Indaba proposals were supported by 24 delegates. Only two organisations – Afrikaner cultural organisation and Afrikaner business association, voted against. Apart from this six delegates were absent at the time of voting and three abstained from voting. The Economist, n. 39.

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PAC. COSATU’s policy was along the lines of UDF and ANC. It supported politicisation of trade unions, rejected homeland system, and advocated sanctions and disinvestment as well as strikes and boycotts. Its leader Elijah Barayi declared that the new union would play a political role in support of the UDF.\(^{52}\)

Hence the differences with Inkatha were quite natural. By 1985 Inkatha and UDF had already developed a bitter relationship. COSATU’s open identification with the UDF and also its different policy added fuel to this bitterness. Buthelezi condemned COSATU as an ‘ANC pawn’ which was not aimed at genuine workers’ movement but only political agitation. About a month after the formation of COSATU, Buthelezi declared at a paper mill worker’s rally at Richard’s Bay that Inkatha might form its trade union to counter the “insults and denigration” of Inkatha and its leadership at the hands UDF. On May Day 1986 United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA) was launched with the support of Inkatha. Although Inkatha constitution had no provision for trade union and its leadership’s denial to have any interests ‘in the trade union pie’, the organisation’s involvement was quite clear.\(^{53}\) UWUSA’s general secretary, Simon Conco and many other functionaries were members of Inkatha who resigned their positions to join the new union.

\(^{52}\) “Buthelezi Fights the Black Giant”, *Africa Now*, n. 59 (March 1986), p. 15.

\(^{53}\) De Kock, n. 35, pp. 117-118.
The new union was designed to be a 'workerist' rather than a political organisation like COSATU. Along the lines of economic policy of Inkatha and the strategy adopted for liberation, UWUSA also opposed sanctions and disinvestment and supported free enterprise. Opposing non-interference in labour and business related issues by political organisations, it prescribed a milder form of protest, different from strikes and boycotts. To strengthen its base among workers in the face of an aggressive COSATU, UWUSA engaged in mobilization at shop-floor level. This along with the differing perceptions and methods of protests, soon landed up both the unions in bitter conflicts in Natal region.

INKATHA AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS IN ANTI-APARTHEID STRUGGLES SINCE MID-1980s

In previous sections Inkatha's role in anti-apartheid struggles has been discussed in the context of reforms. Here the aim is to take up the issue in relation to other anti-apartheid organisations. Entry of two rival trade unions into political arena further complicated the matter. COSATU's identification with UDF and UWUSA with Inkatha resulted in a polarisation of political forces, though some other organisations like AZAPO were also active at that
time. Significantly during this period inter-organisational rivalry and consequent violence dominated black politics in the country. This strengthened the oppressive arm of the state. The intensity of violence often created the impression that the aims of the organisations were not to overthrow the apartheid state but to destroy each other. This requires an analysis of violence which started in September 1984 in Sebokeng (Vaal Triangle) on issue of increases in rent and service charges and also tricameral parliament, and became endemic in coming years.

One of the most dehumanising aspects of anti-apartheid struggles was violence in townships and other parts of the country. Natal witnessed the worst kind of violence in comparison to other areas. The objective of present analysis is to locate various actors and reasons involved in violence and to assess its impact on anti-apartheid struggles. Considering the political developments in South Africa this issue can be discussed in two different phases – pre-1990 period and post-1990 period. The present discussion is limited to the first phase. However both the phases are interconnected. Post-1990 violence was primarily an extension of the previous period. Because the actors involved were same and so did the reasons except some contextual differences.
Extent of Violence

From Vaal Triangle in 1984 unrest gradually spread to other townships in Transvaal, Eastern Cape, Western Cape and Orange Free State. Notwithstanding the importance of general causes (to be discussed below), immediate issues that led to protests in townships varied from area to area. It was education in Pretoria townships of Atteridgeville and Mamelodi (also rent), Johannesburg townships of Tembisa, Alexandra and Soweto; education and rentals in Karoo towns of Cradock and Graaff Reinart; rent in Vaal Triangle and East Rand; and consumer boycotts of town councillors and government sponsored business in the Witwatersrand and Eastern Cape. These protests often met violent reprisals from police and security forces leading to deaths and destruction of properties.

Natal remained relatively calm till August 1, 1985, when Mrs. Victoria Mxenge, a Durban lawyer and senior member of UDF was murdered outside her Umlazi house igniting a series of protests and killings. Thousands of university students, mainly from University of Natal Medical School and the University of Durban-Westville held demonstration in Durban on August 2, followed by week-long school boycott starting from August 5 called by the Congress of South African students (COSAS), the Azanian Students’
Organisation, both UDF affiliates, and the Azanian People’s Organisation. The worst event happened at Umlazi cinema, where a memorial service was organised for Mrs. Mxenge, when alleged Inkatha supporters attacked and killed sixteen people inside the hall, mostly supporters of UDF. Fatima Meer, a sociologist and president of the Federation of South African Women, a UDF affiliate; who was present on the occasion, stated about Inkatha attack and also the spontaneous response of the UDF following the killing.

Thereafter violence continued unabatedly in townships of Natal. Pietermaritzburg area and some other Durban townships such as Inanda, Umlazi, KwaMashu etc. turned particularly violent with rival parties blaming each other for the turn of events. It is beyond the scope of present work to discuss all violent incidents in detail in a chronological order. Hence some of the trends as well as distinctive features related to events shall be discussed below.

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54 “Natal the Answer?”, The Economist. August 17, 1985, p. 42.

55 Meer, ed., n. 28, pp. 140-41.

56 For discussion of this type, see Anthea Jeffery, The Natal Story: Sixteen Years of Conflict (Johannesburg, 1997), pp. 43-211.
### Table
Number of People Killed in KwaZulu-Natal Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Midlands</th>
<th>Elsewhere</th>
<th>Unspecified</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>–</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996 till October</td>
<td>–</td>
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Source: Jeffery, n. 56, pp. 1-2.

Analysis of violence in KwaZulu/Natal reveals that it had primarily two different bases — racial basis and tribal basis. Racial basis of violence manifested in Inanda township of Durban where the Indian origin people were
attacked by Africans around the same time when Mrs. Mxenge murder issue cropped up. Inanda was one of the first areas where people of Indian origin settled in 1860. They had long historical relationship with blacks, although white hostility towards them was not knew. Most of the Indian origin people were traders and landowners. Over the years the area had developed as an underdeveloped suburb of Durban often creating problem for the city (like the fear of spread of epidemic in the aftermath of early 1980s drought). This prompted the government to control the population and the growth of the township. By moving out the Indians from the area the government thought to develop the African sacks and finally incorporate the area into KwaZulu. A handful of African entrepreneurs were also interested to buy Indian lands. The Indians though accepted the plan insisted on adequate compensation. This was the root of Inanda violence which soon took a racial colour.  

It is difficult to ascertain who was behind this violence though some interviews conducted by the Institute for Black Research (IBR) among Africans and Indian origin people pointed to the involvement of Inkatha. But Inkatha had organised a peace rally in the area to bring back normalcy. Even UDF was not very clear of the role played by Inkatha. The blame was put on the apartheid government for instigating violence. African residents had even

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57 For details of Inanda violence, see Meer. n. 28, pp. 147-57.

58 Ibid, pp. 158-64.

59 See Jeffery, n. 56, p. 55.
saved some Indians from attack and were deeply hurt at the turn of events as they had years of good neighbourly relations with Indians.

Tribal nature of violence manifested along the lines of Zulu-Xhosa, Zulu-Pondo and other forms of differences. But as seen in Natal region, Zulu-Xhosa violence was more correctly a Zulu-Zulu violence, because the people fighting the Zulu supporters of Inkatha were Zulu from rival political organisations. Inter-tribal conflicts also occurred between Zulu and Pondo in KwaMakutha in Umbogintwini. During November 1984 and January 1985 death toll rose to 100 with about 10,000 houses burn down.60

Ironically, while the level of violence came down considerably in other parts of the country under the impact of state of emergency and massive repression by government, Natal region became a notable exception where it continued to rise at an alarming rate. Though badly affected areas were urban and semi-urban townships, rural areas were no less affected. Unrest in Misinga, northern Natal over land, and in Mzumbe in south Durban were examples in this regard.

As rural areas were strongholds of Inkatha, they became targets of violence because UDF tried to enlist support in those areas. Efforts to bring peace through negotiation failed to yield any result. On October 6, 1987 both Inkatha and UDF declared a cease-fire after an agreement to this effect was

60 Meer, n. 28, pp. 165-76.
signed by UDF’s Archie Gumede and Musa Zondi, national chairman of the IYB. But it was ignored afterwards.\textsuperscript{61} Subsequent talks organised by Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce and Bishop Desmond Tuth also ended up in failure. In September 1988 a peace agreement was signed between Inkatha and COSATU, but violence continued to occur in townships. In 1989 Inkatha gave proposals to restore peace in the region. Some progress had been made on this proposal as efforts were made to include major organisations in the process such as the ANC, UDF, COSATU and Inkatha. But towards the end of the year it was clear that talks would be a failure as the ANC did not respond to Inkatha’s call. Inkatha accused the rival organisations of attacks at public meetings and trying to isolate the organisation from mainstream politics.

Failure of the parties to stop violence had its painful impact. By the end of 1989 reports indicated deaths of some 1100 people in political violence in KwaZulu and Natal since September 1987. More than 60,000 people had been internally displaced and thousands of schoolchildren had missed about four years of schooling. It also came to light that among the dead about 60 percent were in the age group of under-25 years.\textsuperscript{62}

\textbf{Actors in Violence}

Inkatha was an important actor in violence in Natal region. Its vigilantes

\textsuperscript{61} The Economist, n. 30.

\textsuperscript{62} Jeffery, n. 56, p. 194.
(also called amabutho or impis) organised at the local level were meant to protect the territory from attacks by rival groups. Brandishing sticks, iron rods and traditional weapons these impis were a common sight on the roads during violence days. Their presence on the scene created fearsome moment for the residents in townships. These vigilantes were responsible for many deaths and destruction of properties since the outbreak of violence in Natal. UWUSA, the Inkatha supported trade union was also involved in violence against its rivals. There were reports of forced recruitment and attacks by UWUSA members.\(^{63}\)

In direct confrontation with Inkatha were both the UDF and COSATU. Following the tradition of ANC these two organisations followed brutal techniques against their opponents. Their respective territories were guarded against the attacks by Inkatha supporters. The tyre-and-petrol 'necklace' (a tyre soaked in petrol would be put on the neck, then lit) was a typical UDF tactic adopted to kill its opponents. Though state repression during emergency had made UDF weak, its activities in Natal at the grassroot level had by no means diminished. Its associates even during this period kept on growing with the inclusion of the South African National Students Congress (SANCO), the Natal Student Congress (NASCO), the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA), the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) and the revived Federation of South African Women (FEEDSA W).\(^{64}\) In 1989 both

\(^{63}\) Ibid, p. 63.

\(^{64}\) Meer, ed., n. 28, p. 195.
UDF and COSATU formed the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) and accepted negotiation as a solution to end apartheid. The UDF was instrumental in organising ‘street committees’ and ‘peoples courts’ along the lines of ANC’s ungovernability policy. These structures in many instances became vehicles of terror for political opponents. After the banning of UDF and 14 other organisations on February 24, 1988, its tasks were carried forward by Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) formed by UDF and COSATU. Besides Inkatha and UDF, the Azanian People’s Organisation was also involved in fighting with the UDF. There were about 40 recorded instances of fighting between UDF and PAC aligned groups (including AZAPO) in the 1980s.  

An ugly dimension of Natal violence was the rise of gangsters and warlords with the tacit support of UDF and Inkatha respectively. Contributing to the rise of gangsterism were the com-tsosis (criminals who had earlier worked with the UDF but now lived on coercion and uses of force) who had been involved in senseless crimes in townships around Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Similarly warlords having links with Inkatha such as David Ntombela, Thomas Shabalala, Velaphi Ndlovu and Winnington Sabelo were known for instigating violence against rival communities. These criminal elements had no understanding of ideology or the organisation for which they

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65 “Black on Black”, *The Economist*, June 1, 1985; also see Jeffery, n. 56, p. 196.
67 Taylor, n. 44, p. 357; Jeffery, n. 56. p. 106.
claimed to be working. It is important to note in this context that the rise of criminals in this period was linked to the ANC’s call to make townships ungovernable and to create alternative structures of governance. In the name of alternative structures, ‘peoples’ courts’ and ‘street communities’ soon came to be controlled by youths who had in turn became terrors in townships.

Apart from the actors mentioned above, members of South African Defence Force (SADF), South African Police (SAP) and KwaZulu Police Force (KZP) – having jurisdiction over KwaZulu homeland were also actively involved in township violence. The activities of SADF and SAP were guided by State Security Council (SSC) which was an apex body responsible for advising the government on security-related issues. The National Security Management System (NSMS) and its Joint Management Centres (JMC), below the SSC, were the coordinating bodies. The elements of SADF and SAP later came to be known as ‘third force’ for its alleged involvement in violence and assistance to Inkatha.

Causes of Violence

The specific causes that led to protests in townships have already been noted elsewhere. The present analysis is done keeping in mind the conditions of Natal, because by the time violence began in Natal region and started aggravating, other parts of the country witnessed return of peace largely due to

imposition of emergency. This is, however, not to deny the applicability of this analysis in broader South African context, because Natal situation was a reflection of the general condition prevailing in the country under the impact of apartheid and anti-apartheid struggles.

A complex phenomenon like violence cannot be studied on the basis of single factor. For example, all through the period of violence many media reports offered ethnic explanation in the form of ‘Zulu-Xhosa’ war or ‘black-on-black’ violence.\(^69\) Ethnicity or tribal identity can explain some of the aspects only to the extent it was used by political organisations to mobilise or incite people to indulge in violence. But it cannot explain intra-tribal violence. Natal had seen violence among Zulus having different political allegiance (Inkatha or ANC/UDF). Had it been exclusively ethnic or tribal in nature Zulus would not have killed Zulus. In an interview Buthelezi even told that he did not claim to have the support of all Zulus.\(^70\) Moreover, Zulu and Xhosa, except once instance, have no such history of inter-tribal violence to claim that the present rivalry was an extension of past.\(^71\) Coming to the level of organisation, describing the ANC and Inkatha purely on ethnic term has also some


\(^{71}\) The two tribes had fought only once in 1827 when Shaka was building his Zulu empire by defeating other tribes. Only a small number of Xhosa people participated in this war. See Taylor, n. 69, p. 5.
limitation. The ANC had never been a Xhosa organisation, some of its prominent leaders like John Dube, Pixley Seme and Albert Luthuli were Zulus. Similarly, Inkatha, though predominantly Zulu supported (see Chapter I), cannot be considered an exclusively Zulu organisation. So ethnicity cannot be the sole cause of violence.

Another possible way of explaining violence is in socio-economic term. It is argued that the evil impact of apartheid on society and economy (discussed below in detail) caused people to resort to violence. The picture of Natal as a case of social degeneration and economic decay remained at the root of violence. But as will be discussed below the evils of apartheid were felt not just in Natal region, but in other parts of the country. Why then the violence took such ugly form in Natal and since 1990 in the Reef region, and not in other parts? This requires to see things beyond socio-economic analysis. Socio-economic factors are essential, but they cannot be solely responsible for violence.

Similarly impact of political differences on violence has also certain limitation. When UDF emerged on the political scene, antagonism developed between the Front and Inkatha for the reasons mentioned earlier. But this in itself cannot be sufficient to justify the brutality of violence manifested in killing of community members in Natal. Political differences can fuel discontent, but it does not justify either the inhuman nature or the large-scale occurrence of violence.
On the basis of above arguments it can be said that a monocausal analysis of violence is not correct. Rather it was a result of social, economic, political, ethnic and some other circumstantial factors working together. However, at a broader level the present study divides the causes into two-political and non-political. The latter group of causes can be said to be the simmering factors/causes, while the former was a triggering factor. The simmering factors or the non-political causes were largely a result of apartheid. In other words the socio-economic and other evils to be discussed below would not have been so acute but for the apartheid policy. While the discontent was brewing among the majority population, the triggering factor provided the much-needed spark. In fact the triggering factor was an outcome of black politics or more particularly the differences among black political organisations. An already volatile situation by the beginning of 1980s, when received an immediate outlet, got manifested in the form of violence. Natal region since 1985 and the Reef (townships around Johannesburg) since 1990 witnessed the worst form of violence (a sort of fratricidal war) because the triggering factor (i.e. differences between Inkatha and ANC/UDF) was at its heightened form in this region.

One more important aspect of violence needs to be discussed here. If apartheid state was at the root of violence, why did the blacks fight among themselves and not with the whites? The answer again lies in the nature of black politics or more specifically the kind of relationship the major political
organisations had among themselves and the issue at stake. This and the factors noted above are discussed below.

**Social Cause:** Expansion of industries led to rapid urbanisation in South Africa in 1970s and 1980s. The benefits of this process undoubtedly went to the whites, while the black majority had to suffer its evils. The black areas that developed in industrial towns and cities were not properly planned, as under apartheid this population was treated as 'temporary sojourners' in white cities. Most of these squatter areas had no facilities for water, electricity, sewage, schools, etc., making life miserable. The conditions in migrant hostels were no less worse. Far away from family life, the hostel dwellers were forced to perform the worst kind of dirty works in industries. Caught in the vicious circle of poverty, these squatter camps and hostel residents had to suffer the evils of apartheid. Removal of influx control restrictions in 1986 and the flow of people from rural areas to cities in search of employment further compounded the problem. According to one estimate, in 1990 some 2.8 million people were living in squatters in KwaZulu and Natal.\(^2\)

This determined their social life. Breakdown of family life, absence of community development, and lack of societal and traditional values were the major causes of violence. The youths were the worst affected. According one

\(^2\) Jeffery, n. 56, p. 4.
study conducted by Inkatha Institute of South Africa over 90 percent of township violence were perpetrated by black youths in 1980s.\textsuperscript{73}

Another major cause in this context was ‘generation gap’. The hold of older population on the young was being constantly eroded as society changed rapidly. According to Shula Marks generational conflict had long been an idiom of African politics; this had now become a deadly fashion.\textsuperscript{74} He has located the impact of this social phenomenon in the rise of vigilantes in Cape townships and violence in Natal. The youths, once away from family and with no norms to keep them in control, could find easy solution to the stresses of urbanisation and modernisation in violence.

**Impact of Economy:** Some of the downward economic trends have been discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Suffice it to say that the growth of South African economy since early 1980s deteriorated with negative or minimal rate of growth (less than 1\%) in gross domestic product, fall in investment and decline in business confidence.\textsuperscript{75}

KwaZulu/Natal was a victim of several economic deficiencies. According to the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) the area had the

\textsuperscript{73} Meer, n. 28, p. 241.


\textsuperscript{75} See Jeffery, n. 56, p. 5.
largest concentration of people in South Africa in 1993.\textsuperscript{76} This is true even now.\textsuperscript{77} Unemployment rate, the highest in the country, continued to rise from 12.1\% in 1980 to 25.2\% in 1991.\textsuperscript{78} Nature had also played havoc in the area. Successive droughts and cyclones had caused hundreds of deaths, destruction of properties and even diseases. In 1981 cholera crept down from Tanzania through Mozambique into the area. Deaths and destruction were huge in two cyclones in January 1984.\textsuperscript{79} The region also received the third smallest share of revenue from central government in relation to its population, size of economy and taxes it imposed.\textsuperscript{80} As a result of all these, the annual growth rate of the area continued to decline since 1980. The DBSA estimates show growth rate of 3.08 percent in the period 1975-1980, 2.57 percent in 1980-1984 and rising marginally to 2.81 percent from 1984-1988.\textsuperscript{81}

From the statistics noted above it can be concluded that the condition of the majority (blacks) was the most appalling. Poverty was acute. A 1987 survey in townships in the area indicated an average monthly income of R17 per

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{77} According to the preliminary results of 1996 census KwaZulu-Natal has the largest population at 7.672 million (20.3\% percent of total 30.7 million). \textit{South Africa Yearbook 1998} (Pretoria, 1988), pp. 8, 47-48.

\textsuperscript{78} Jeffery, n. 56, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{The Economist}, April 28, 1984, p. 60-61.

\textsuperscript{80} Jeffery, n. 56, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
The impact of economic hardships was most profound among the youth particularly when they had hopes for a better future. In the opinion of Gavin Woods an aware youth living adjacent to a comparatively affluent community (white and Indian areas) gave rise to 'anger and dissatisfaction' which manifested in the form of violence.

**Ethnic Factor:** Despite limitations mentioned earlier ethnicity did play a role in violence especially in KwaZulu/Natal region. By creating ethnic homelands for blacks, the apartheid state gave ethnicity a reality. Material benefits now came to be associated with the ethnic identity of people. In the name of providing political power to the traditional tribal authority, the state actually promoted ethnic feeling among the people. These homelands with their own administrative apparatuses, finance (with revenue from Pretoria) and powers of patronage became inevitable for the poor Africans who were in need of land and work. Ethnicity came to be treated as a yardstick for homeland patronage. This use of ethnicity for allocating inadequate resources, in the opinion of Morris Szeftel, had the consequence of politicising ethnic boundaries. 

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82 Meer, n. 28, p. 242.

83 Ibid.

of limited success of this state policy\textsuperscript{85} due to radicalisation of politics and urbanisation, its impact cannot be ignored especially in KwaZulu.

In previous sections use of ethnicity in KwaZulu homeland has already been mentioned. This aspect became dominant in homeland politics since 1980 when Inkatha adopted the ‘policy of regional consolidation’. Inkatha began celebrating Shaka Day and other traditional Zulu festivals. References were increasingly made to Zulu pride, Zulu nation, ‘glorious heritage’ etc. at these functions.\textsuperscript{86} Often media coverage of these events made the issue more appealing. As Inkatha faced increasing opposition from UDF/COSATU in 1980s, it identified ‘an enemy within’, Zulus who supported rival political organisations, not Inkatha.\textsuperscript{87} These references to Zulu identity did influence the turn of events in 1980s and even in 1990s, albeit, to a limited extent.

**Role of Police and Third Force:** It has been pointed out earlier that the SAP, SADF and the KZP had a role in violence. However, in this context, a distinction has to be made between reasons for the origin of violence and factors helping the violence to go on or aggravating its extent. Role of police and others was limited to the second aspect. These forces came to picture only

\textsuperscript{85} For analysis of limited success of homeland policy, see Ibid, p. 194. Also Marks, n. 75, pp. 129-31.

\textsuperscript{86} For details of this, see Mary de Haas and Paulus Zulu, “Ethnicity and Federalism: The Case of KwaZulu-Natal”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 20, n. 3 (September 1994), pp. 433-46.

\textsuperscript{87} Szefiel. n. 85, p. 194.
after eruption of violence.

Since mid 1980s ANC/UDF started accusing the SAP and SADF of helping KZP in killing its members. The Trust Feed massacre on December 3, 1988 in which eleven people were killed points to Inkatha and Police (SAP) collusion. This massacre was planned by a SAP officer Brian Mitchell and two Inkatha members Jerome Gabela and David Ntombela. Although the plan was to kill UDF members, due to some mistaken instruction by Mitchell, the people killed were members of Inkatha. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report\textsuperscript{88} established linkage between vigilantes in townships and Inkatha. According to the Report, some of the townships known for vigilante activities were Chesterville (A-term, a vigilante having Inkatha connection), KwaMashu (Ama Sinyora, fighting against UDF) and Lindelani (where Thomas Shabalala was heading the vigilantes).\textsuperscript{89}

Both the Goldstone Commission\textsuperscript{90} report and TRC report point to the training of 200 IFP supporters by SADF in the Caprivi Strip in northern

\textsuperscript{88} The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was constituted in terms of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Bill, which received President’s signature on May 17, 1995. The objectives of the TRC were to look into acts of omissions and offences of political nature during anti-apartheid struggles and to grant amnesty in order to advance reconciliation and reconstruction. The period of reference was from March 21, 1960 till December 5, 1993. The Final Report was submitted by its Chairman Archbishop Desmond Tutu on October 29, 1998. For details of TRCs structures and terms of references, see \textit{The Hindu} (Madras), May 13, 1996.

\textsuperscript{89} Patrick Lawrence, “The TRC Report and the War in KwaZulu-Natal”, \textit{KwaZulu-Natal Briefing} (Parklands, South Africa), December 1998, p. 2-5.

\textsuperscript{90} The Goldstone Commission was established in 1991 under the chairmanship of Justice RJ Goldstone in terms of the National Peace Accord (see next chapter). The Commission worked for three years.

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Mambibia (then South West Africa). The Military Intelligence (MI) wing of SADF was in charge of this training. The training was provided in 1986 and the trainees were appointed by M.Z. Khumalo, then personal assistant to Chief Buthelezi. According to IFP this training was necessary because of continuous threat from ANC and UDF to the KwaZulu administration and also the threat of attack to Inkatha leaders, particularly Chief Buthelezi. After the training these youths were inducted into the KZP. The TRC report points out that “hit squads” were formed with the assistance of SADF to work in KwaZulu. According to the report this contributed substantially to ‘violations of human rights including killing, attempted killing and severe ill treatment’.92

Inkatha’s claim that its leaders were under constant threat when the decision for Caprivi training was taken is not unfounded. Thabo Mbeki, leader of the ANC and Deputy President of South Africa had admitted before the TRC that his party had decided to kill Buthelezi during its eleven years of undeclared civil war with Inkatha, but later abandoned the idea.93 But the involvement of Caprivi trainees in violence and activities of criminal nature cannot be ignored. Inkatha also acknowledged that some of the trainees might have indulged in unlawful activities, though it rejected the allegations of hit-

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91 Jeffery, n. 56, p. 726-7.


squards and excesses by KZP. What is important at present is that the relation between KZP and SADF at times contributed to violence, especially in KwaZulu/Natal region.

Instances of police helping the UDF were also there. In KwaShange incident in September 1987 police supported by alleged UDF people attacked a house guarded by 13 Inkatha youth brigade members. All thirteen were killed. This killing, according to then Inkatha secretary general Oscar Dhlomo, showed police collusion with UDF. According to Gerhard Mare both Inkatha and its rival UDF and ANC were supplied arms by Military Intelligence – a body of SADF. This is how the ‘third force’, which had elements of state police and military, came to operate during this period. They were members of government in disguise. Their sole purpose was to create divisions among blacks thereby putting obstacles in the path to transition. The ‘third force’ became more active in post-1990 period.

**Political Reason:** This has to be analysed in the broader context of the politics of the country or more particularly black politics of the period. It does not mean that role of apartheid regime was unimportant. It has been mentioned earlier that the political or triggering factor was an outcome of black politics

94 Jeffery, n. 56, p. 726.

95 *The Economist,* n. 30. Also see Ibid, p. 200.

96 Notes from interview with Gerhard Mare. University of Natal, Durban, November 1, 1998.
(referring to Inkatha and ANC/UDF relationship) rather than apartheid regime. Hence a discussion of black politics in 1980s is in order. This would help in understanding violence of the period.

Since 1979 break up, the relationship between Inkatha and ANC was marked by increasing hostility and violent encounters. This became particularly worse since 1985 when violence first erupted in Natal region. Following reasons can be noted to comprehend this hostility. The first reason was strategic difference between the two organisations. In fact this was always there, but in 1980s it took a new turn when the ANC adopted the policy of 'ungovernability'. This was like giving the strategy of armed struggle a new name. In 1984 Oliver Tambo, in his new year message, gave the call to make South Africa ungovernable and apartheid unworkable. This dominated the political activities of the organisation in the second half of the 1980s. Accordingly parallel structures of administration in the form of 'people's courts' and 'street committees' were established. Rent boycotts, boycott of schools and attacks on black councillors who were denounced as collaborators as well as tribal authorities recognised by the government were some of the activities done to create a power vacuum in the townships. The degree of success of this new policy was a different issue altogether. The issue here is these activities created a climate of intolerance and the parallel structures often turned out to be the 'vehicles of local terror against political opponents or those
who attempted neutrality.\textsuperscript{97} School boycotts not only made the young students uneducated but also violent street-fighters.

Inkatha's strategy of non-violent protest within the parameters of multi-strategy approach was seen as a challenge by the ANC. Significantly, for the ANC Inkatha was perhaps the only organisation whose strategy was diametrically opposed to its own. The PAC, Black Consciousness movement and other organisations, though opposed to the ANC and there were many instances of violent confrontations, they can broadly be classified as radical opponents of apartheid. While it was easier for the ANC and UDF to dominate other radical black organisations and implement the policy of ungovernability, Inkatha remained a major challenge in this regard. Had it been an ordinary organisation, the situation would have been different. Inkatha, despite allegations of forced recruitment,\textsuperscript{98} remained numerically a major political force to be reckoned with. Besides its traditional stronghold in north of Tugela river, the support in townships of Durban and other areas and strong organisational structures at this level made the organisation a potential challenger to the policy of ungovernability of the ANC.

The second reason for the bitter violence in Natal since mid-1980s was the activities of the United Democratic Front and COSATU. The UDF was


\textsuperscript{98} For details of forced recruitment, see Meer, ed., n. 28, pp. 200-3.
following the tradition, strategy and policies of the ANC. Its leaders like Archie Gumede and Mrs. Albertina Sisulu were known sympathisers of the ANC. Though it claimed to be a separate organisation, its connection with the banned organisation was a common knowledge. The UDF and later COSATU fulfilled the need of some organisation for implementing the policy of ungovernability.

It is important to note in this context that the ANC challenged Inkatha on two different fronts since 1980. One was a propaganda campaign which started immediately after 1979 split. Radio Freedom broadcasts, articles in *Sechaba, Struggle Update* (ANC publications), *The African Communist* and *Umsebenzi* (publications of SACP), were full of anti-Inkatha and anti-Buthelezi literature. This campaign, which continued all through 1980s, created a sort of permanent animosity between the two organisations. The second front used by ANC was its challenge through UDF and COSATU. These two organisations provided a link with the masses which the ANC was lacking since its banning. The important aspect of this development was that there occurred a qualitative change in the opposition activities in regard to Inkatha. Previously it was more of a rhetorical challenge than any organised opposition.

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99 In its submission to the TRC Inkatha had given a list of articles published in these journals (with dates of publication), Radio Freedom broadcasts and paper clippings which give a picture of the level of animosity. This submission contains examples of direct threats to Chief Buthelezi. Except one article of *The African Communist* (1973), all the items are of post-1980 period. This shows that the rivalry started following the split. For details, see “ANC Killing Talk in the Electronic and Written Media: 1973-1988”, in *Inkatha Freedom Party, Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, September 5, 1996, pp. 163-376. Also see Jeffery, n. 56, p. 199.
This is however not to deny ANCs support in early 1980s which had manifested in 1980 school boycott and 1983 Ngoye incident. But with the UDF and later COSATU coming on the political scene, and the call for ungovernability, the challenges to Inkatha became more organised, vocal and direct.

This challenge was more pronounced in Natal region, the stronghold of Inkatha. Beginning with Ngoye incident, conflict leading to violence and killing between Inkatha and UDF continued to rise. Townships were divided into Inkatha and UDF areas. Both UDF comrades and Inkatha vigilantes were involved in fighting since 1985 in Durban and Pietermaritzburg areas. When two organisations come to occupy a space in a single constituency, conflict and violence become more obvious. Contrary to the ANC’s thinking that violence was a result of both UDF and Inkatha claiming to be the follower of ANC tradition,\textsuperscript{100} it was due to their attempts to occupy a place in black constituency and ultimately in anti-apartheid struggles. Or more correctly, while it was a case of strengthening the base among the people for the UDF; it was protecting or keeping the base intact in case of Inkatha.

Besides strategic differences between Inkatha and ANC/UDF, the struggle to occupy a political space was at the core of violence in Natal region in the 1980s. This also provides justification for intra-black fighting, despite

\textsuperscript{100} Jeffery, n. 56, p. 104.
the fact that the perpetrators of apartheid were white Afrikaners, not fellow blacks. The fighting was never against apartheid state, because the political dynamics was different at that time. Considering the nature of apartheid state and black politics of the period, it can be noted that no single factor was responsible for Natal violence in the 1980s, rather it was a combination of all the factors discussed above. Political reason nevertheless contributed to the severity of violence.

**Impact of Violence on Anti-apartheid Struggles**

The nature of violence was such that it severely undermined anti-apartheid struggles. When two black political organisations were fighting among themselves it became easier for the government to claim that black rule would turn the country into another scene of African disorder. The feeling of hatred was so intense that even negotiations between the groups were opposed by supporters. When Archie Gumede of UDF signed a truce with Musa Zondi of Inkatha in 1987, the former had to face angry supporters. The KwaMashu Youth League had threatened to withdraw its affiliation from UDF over this issue.¹⁰¹

Role of Inkatha in anti-apartheid struggles received a serious blow during this period due to its involvement in violence. Particularly objectionable

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¹⁰¹ Work In Progress, n. 50-51 (October-November 1987), pp. 7-10.
in this regard was the help it took from the apartheid government in training its members in Caprivi. It is significant to note that taking military help was not new to black politics keeping in mind ANC’s open military assistance from Soviet Union and other countries. However in case of Inkatha, the help was not from any outside country to fight the state (which was of course not the strategy of the organisation), but from the apartheid state itself against whom it was supposed to fight. This undermined the role of Inkatha, since it was impossible to raise voice against the system which was providing assistance in the security field.

There were also cases of collusion of KZP with SAP and other state agents as noted earlier. The apartheid state was clever enough to create divisions among blacks and a black alternative outside the ANC/UDF orbit, by providing help to Inkatha. Inkatha perhaps never realised this underlying objective of the state. Notwithstanding the positive role that the organisation played in thwarting state’s reform initiatives, its role in violence was not contributory to the success of anti-apartheid struggles.

COTRALESA and Inkatha

Besides challenges from the UDF and COSATU, Inkatha also faced opposition from tribal chiefs in the second half of 1980s when it manifested in the form of a new organisation. As the name stands, Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (COTRALESA) formed on September 20, 1987 was a
Congress of chiefs of homelands and other tribes (38 chiefs had participated in the first meeting). The initiative was taken by chiefs from KwaNdebele and Moutse who had strongly opposed to independence and incorporation of Moutse into KwaNdebele. The South Africa Youth Congress (SAYCO) also took active part in the formation of COTRALESA.

Analysis of the constitution of the COTRALESA reveals that it was strongly against both the apartheid state and the homeland system. As told by its founding members: “in perpetuating the evil system of apartheid especially in the form of homeland, the regime has been, and still is, using chiefs to oppress their own people and to suppress their aspirations for the achievement of a fair, just and equitable order”.\(^{102}\) The new organisation opposed tribalism and ethnicity. It repudiated the chiefs who had been working with the apartheid regime.

Both the ANC and UDF welcomed the formation the COTRALESA. When a delegation of CONTRALESA met the ANC at Lusaka in February 1988, the latter praised the efforts of chiefs for raising their voices against state. These chiefs were all supporters of the ANC.

Chief Buthelezi was very critical of COTRALESA as about fifty chiefs of KwaZulu had joined it under the inspiration of Maphumulo, himself a chief. Buthelezi saw this attempt as a challenge to Inkatha’s position in KwaZulu. He

even convened a meeting of chiefs in September 1989 and called them to close ranks and remain united. 103 A result of this difference was the allegation of vigilante attacks on chiefs who had participated in the Contralesa. Notable among them were Prince Israel Mcwayizeni of Zulu royal family, Chief Alpheus Molefe of the Molefe people in Nqutu district and Chief Maphumulo. At a time when Inkatha was facing challenges from UDF and other radical organisations formation of CONTRALESA only made its task more difficult.

INKATHA AND ANTI-APARTHEID STRUGGLES SINCE MID-1980s

Following observations can be made on the basis of the preceding discussions. The second half of 1980s was a challenging period for Inkatha due to variety of reasons. For the first time it faced opposition of two organised political formations such as the UDF and COSATU to its policies and programmes since 1979 split. The traditional leaders also went against it. Increasing support to armed struggle and radical political activities such as boycotts, protests etc. was responsible for loss of support to the organisation. At the core of these challenges remained the contradictions that arose out of struggles against apartheid regime on one hand and against the rival black opponents of apartheid on the other. In the process Inkatha became more close to the former than the latter. Taking help from the apartheid state in the form of military training demonstrated the level of relationship between the two.

103 Ibid.
Notwithstanding the compulsions of the period, this political posturing of Inkatha was against the larger interest of anti-apartheid struggles. In fact this act restricted the organisations role in struggles.

But Inkatha's policy of change through negotiation had a great positive outcome in this period when Buthelezi strongly objected to the national council proposal without the release of political prisoners and scrapping of obnoxious apartheid laws. His opposition to Regional Services Councils should also be seen in this light. The organisation was also involved in a serious political exercise in the form of Natal Indaba. The constitution that was dawn by the Indaba, despite limitations, was a bold initiative in regard to black-white unity as well as the realisation of a non-racial society. It was one more instance of seeing the world beyond the confines of protest politics. The government was however not cooperative to these proposals. Even the joint executive authority that was established for KwaZulu and Natal region was a failure. Due to this, Inkatha became critical of the government's intentions for reform, even though it had welcomed the establishment of the JEA.

As will be discussed in subsequent discussion, late 1980s was a challenging period for all political organisations. No single factor was responsible for change, rather the compulsions of changing domestic and international political scenario influenced heavily the political organisations and the government to start the process of change. Inkatha's role in anti-apartheid struggles should be seen in this light. It should be seen in relative
terms. Its contribution lies in keeping an alternative protest option open. As seen in earlier discussions apartheid state had always tried to bring change in the system to perpetuate its oppression. At the same time it always looked for black leaders’ support, so that it could claim acceptance of its so called reforms by the majority. Inkatha having its base in the largest black community-Zulu, was in a better position to frustrate state initiatives. No organisation was solely responsible for change in South Africa. But Inkatha had a serious problem in this regard. As the organisation’s base was in KwaZulu homeland which was a government-created structure, its credential as an anti-apartheid organisation was doubted by radical political organisations. This was a major drawback of Inkatha. This led its opponents to reject even the policies which put pressure on government (national council proposal) Inkatha needs to be understood on merit of the issue.

The political situation towards the end of 1980s changed dramatically creating different alignments of political forces and in the process throwing new challenges to parties. Continued stalemate in the political reform, economic hardships and the challenges from the far-right CP compelled the government to think of some radical change in its policy. There had already been a growing realisation within government circles that a talk with ANC (its greatest foe) could only break the continuing political impasse. A logical outcome of this change was a secret meeting between P.W. Botha and Nelson Mandela on 6 July 1989, preceded by more talks between the parties. The ANC
and the UDF also felt the need of talks as they had become weak towards the end of decade due to strong security measures under emergency\textsuperscript{104} and the change of Soviet policy (from whom ANC was getting military support) under Mikhail Gorbachev, who wanted a negotiated settlement of the problem. Resignation of Botha on 14 August 1989 following a stroke and ascendency of F.W. de Klerk to the presidency under these changing situations soon heralded in a new era, when the new President declared the unbanning of the ANC, PAC and SACP, and release of Nelson Mandela.

\textsuperscript{104} By the time UDF was banned in 1988, most of its prominet leaders were either in jail or killed by security forces. Pessimism was growing within the organisation regarding the efficacy of protest politics and armed struggle. See \textit{The Economist}, June 21, 1986, February 6, 1988.