

**KZN Civil-War/uDlame 1976-1996:
Hurting and Healing - Motives and Perspectives**

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I
***uBuntu*, Conflicts and *ukuBuyisana*¹**

Observation confirms that communities, rulers and governments will, after armed conflicts, quite often make attempts to come to terms with themselves and their former adversaries; they will thereby at least express the intention to commit themselves to laying foundations for future perspectives². The recurrence of clashes not being in their interest, post-conflict communities will seldom allow memories to nurture ill-feelings conducive to jeopardising their efforts at ‘laying ghosts to rest’³. The patterns of their efforts range from tacit or expressive

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¹ Ubuntu = unconditional friendliness, regard and respect for humankind and social interconnectedness; ukuBuyisana = A reconciliation-process of *meeting half-way in order to return (go) home or proceed together*. Ben Khumalo-Seegelken, [UKUBUYISANA](http://www.benkhumalo-seegelken.de/dokumente/UkuBuyisana_2011.doc), http://www.benkhumalo-seegelken.de/dokumente/UkuBuyisana_2011.doc (03.06.2011)

² Taking as our point of departure the contribution recently made by the German historian, Christian Meier, in a series of lectures and public addresses since 1996, a year after the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, on the theme “Erinnern - Verdrängen - Vergessen” (“Commemorate - Suppress - Forget”) entitled “Das Gebot zu vergessen und die Unabweisbarkeit des Erinnerns. Vom öffentlichen Umgang mit schlimmer Vergangenheit” (“The Requirement to Forget and the Irrefutability to Recall. Whether and How the Public Deals with Evil Episodes of the Past) we shall trace this observation in the context of Southern Africa and seek for comparable insights.

³ In the sense the social anthropologist, Mamphela Ramphele, identifies what she terms “stubborn ghosts” (Racism; Ethnic chauvinism; Sexism; Authoritarianism) and pleads for “laying ghosts to rest”

undertakings to simply and strictly 'refrain from recalling evil episodes', "*me mnesikakein*"⁴, up to *silentium perpetuum* - maintaining unending silence on those incidents.

When the series of massacres that repeatedly ravaged homesteads and villages in the then province of Natal and in the KwaZulu "homeland" (today: KwaZulu-Natal/KZN⁵) during the last two decades of the last century (roughly between 1976 and 1996)⁶ once more reached a climax, poured over into the broader trail, the 'people's war'⁷, and culminated into what later got known as the "Seven Days War" (25-31 March 1990), thousands of lives in and around Vulindlela, iMbali and Edendale (near Pietermaritzburg), KwaMashu, iNanda and Mbumbulu (near Durban), Shobashobane⁸ and elsewhere⁹ had been lost and even more left behind uprooted, maimed and traumatised. That storm of violence that up to 1996 had claimed more than 11 600 lives¹⁰, is said to be the worst experienced in any one region of

by way of "channelling anger into creative energy": ["Mamphela Ramphele \(2008\): Laying Ghosts to Rest"](#)

⁴ Oaths sworn in Ancient Greece some 2400 years ago (404/3 B.C.) "never (ever again) to remind of the evils" ("*me mnesikakein*") bound the respective post-conflict parties (the state and its citizens) and publicly committed them to accede to granting on that basis 'immunity from prosecution and punishment' (= "*amnesty*", a term derived from "*mnemo*" to mean 'not / no longer remembering'), which was meant to prevent eventual escalation of the conflict, forestall possible retaliation and facilitate the settlement of the conflict and new begin. (see: Christian Meier, 2010. 15-49).

⁵ "KZN" designates the territory alongside the Indian Ocean roughly between the oPhongolo River to the north and the uMtavuna River to the south, which since 1994 constitutes the province of "KwaZulu-Natal" and had in the preceding era constituted two separately administered entities, the 'white' province of "Natal" and the 'homeland' "KwaZulu".

⁶ Although the period between 1980 and 1994 is often taken for a single distinguishable and coherent historical unit, the preceding four years following the *Soweto Uprisings* (1976) and the subsequent two years up to the inauguration and the first hearing of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (1996) are so much part of the era under review that "1976-1996" could rightly be taken for a more appropriate bracket for historical research.

⁷ Armed conflicts of different types and differing measures are colloquially called massacres, battles or wars - very often deliberately not in compliance with the strictest sense of the corresponding formal definition. The later phase of the armed conflict in KZN and other provinces after 1979/1980 got known as "the people's war", marking the extent and the intensity the ongoing resistance and the "liberation struggle" against apartheid had reached.

⁸ On Christmas Day in 1995 in an early morning attack by an armed mob of 600 men or more believed to be members of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP); some 19 people, who were later identified as members of the African National Congress (ANC) were killed. (Anthea Jeffrey, 1997. 521).

⁹ Killings at Ngoye in 1983: Four students at the University of Zululand at Ngoye near eMpangeni were killed, 11 arrested, 13 seriously injured and another 100 wounded by armed troops of the *Inkatha* on 28 October 1983, a day before a public event with the president of that organisation as guest-speaker was to be held on campus in spite of ongoing protests and a pending court-order application by the students against it. (see: Anthea Jeffrey, 1997. 48-49).

¹⁰ Calculations based on South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) research and the *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the South African Police*, RP 68/1992, pp. 99-101; *Hansard* 7 1 cols 560-561, 16-19 March 1993; *The Citizen* 12 May 1993; 1983 Survey (SAIRR), p. 568, Fast Facts (SAIRR) 1/93, 3/93, 5/93. (see: Kane-Berman, p. 89); see also: P. Forsyth, 1991; J.J.W. Aitchison, 1993.

South Africa since the revolt of 1976-1977. In the 'Natal Midlands' it is said to be the most disastrous since the *insumansumane* (the 'Bhambatha rebellion') of 1906¹¹.

It should be borne in mind that in the course of the last two centuries, series of politically inspired upheavals and armed conflicts each costing up to tens of thousands of lives and destroying homes, crops, livestock and infrastructure, have occasioned the region presently known as KZN pretty frequently¹². Consequently, one would justifiably ask, whether and under what circumstances attitudes and value-systems like *uBuntu* (humaneness), *iNhlonipho* (unconditional respect), *uBuqotho* (reliability, dependability, trustworthiness) and others, that are generally presumed to be and always have been characteristic of simply everyone in that region, did at all take root and at any stage develop to any notable extent or have they ultimately 'gone lost' or turned out to be nothing more than sheer wishful thinking. We contend that decades and centuries under perpetual challenges, clashes, devastations and new begins can, indeed, influence the attitudes and the propensities in a given community sustainably. The remark holds in respect of the people of KZN as well: Armed conflicts are no 'natural catastrophe'; they are made and can be avoided!

Among the immediate survivors of the "people's war" and their descendants, some of whom have in the meantime been able to voice their memories and grievances in public or testify amongst others before the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)* (1996-1998)¹³, some are of late concerned with collectively reviewing and trying to resolve those conflicts in as much as they directly and indirectly affect their lives to date. Mbumbulu (2007) and Vulindlela (2010)¹⁴ are two such communities in KZN today.

Individually and within certain networks the survivors and their descendants are determined to address and hopefully resolve the conflicts they had gone through - a process known as UKUBUYISANA¹⁵ - "meeting halfway to return home or to proceed together". Many, however, are still so intensively preoccupied with

¹¹ John Wright. 1988: Background to political violence: Pietermaritzburg region 1987-1988 <http://www.benkhumalo-seegelken.de/dokumente/Background-to-political-violence.doc> (03.11.2010).

¹² Donald R. Morris, 1966; Jeff Guy, 1979; Laband.2001.

¹³ See: Report: Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/> (03.06.2011). The hearings before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) were initially set to be heard in camera, but the intervention of 23 non-governmental organisations eventually succeeded in gaining media access to the hearings. On 15 April 1996 the South African National Broadcaster televised the first two hours of the first human rights violation committee hearing live. ... the hearings were presented on television each Sunday from April 1996 to June 1998 in hour-long episodes of the "Truth Commission Special Report". See: Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, 2006; Ralf K. Wüstenberg, 2009.

¹⁴ See: Ben Khumalo-Seegelken, 2010: Cleansing and Reconciling in KwaZulu-Natal Today, <http://www.benkhumalo-seegelken.de/dokumente/UkuHlambuluketana-nokuBuyisana.doc> (03.06.2011)

¹⁵ Ben Khumalo-Seegelken, UKUBUYISANA, http://www.benkhumalo-seegelken.de/dokumente/UkuBuyisana_2011.doc (03.06.2011)

mourning and seeking to recover from traumata and material havoc, resolution and reconciliation are still themes of sheer negligible priority to them.

If 'studies of the past' were to "speak truth to power" today or "resist pandering"¹⁶ to it, the immediate survivors of the "*people's war*" and their descendants would - after having kept quiet all along - receive the encouragement they need to at last open their mouths¹⁷ and enable South Africa and the world to gain insight into 'what happened'¹⁸, start attending to the questions that result from there, remedy the wounds and learn for the future. Simply closing the files and 'letting the bygones be bygones' would be short-sighted and unwise¹⁹.

II *uDlame*²⁰

Directly involved in that series of politically inspired verbal and physical onslaughts and destruction of homes, livestock and infrastructure in Natal and KwaZulu between 1976 and 1990/1994 on which in the meantime comprehensive notes, records, reports and analyses have already been published²¹, were forces determined to maintain and enforce the apartheid-system (*pro-apartheid forces*) on the one hand and those aiming at overthrowing and replacing it (*anti-apartheid forces*) on the other hand - the "*iNkatha yeNkululeko yeSizwe*" (founded/re-established in 1975, based in the KwaZulu 'homeland', operating in the hands and in the interests of the 'homeland'-administration and enjoying recognition and

¹⁶ In line with some motivational thoughts to the invitation to SAHRS 2011, <http://www.history.ukzn.ac.za/sahsconf/>

¹⁷ See: *Asikhumbuzane*, <http://www.benkhumalo-seegelken.de/dokumente/ASIKHUMBUZANE.doc> (03.06.2011); Ralf K. Wüstenberg, 2009.

¹⁸ '... happened'? - Armed conflicts are no 'natural catastrophe'; they are planned and carried out on purpose!

¹⁹ Opting to suppress memory instead of 'recalling the past' - instead of taking consequences and 'learning for the future' is the one way most communities and states used to take for as far back as 2400 years already (see: Christian Meier, 2010. 15-49). The recent development of taking the initiative to encourage the immediate survivors to open their hearts and their mouths in order that the community and the world can learn through them for the future, started and gained profile in Germany in connection with the crimes against humanity committed during the Nazi-regime (1933-1945) and attained maturity and universal credibility in South Africa through the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)* (1996-1998). Setting this path forth in order to secure a peaceful and stable future in post-conflict KZN and at large, demands uncovering and confronting the "stubborn ghosts" (Racism; Ethnic chauvinism; Sexism; Authoritarianism) in order to be able to ultimately "lay the ghosts to rest" by way of "channelling anger into creative energy". *Asikhumbuzane*, <http://www.benkhumalo-seegelken.de/dokumente/ASIKHUMBUZANE.doc> (03.06.2011); "*Mamphela Ramphele (2008): Laying Ghosts to Rest*".

²⁰ In common discourse the wording "KZN Civil-War: 1976-1996", "*UDlame KwaZulu-Natali: 1976-1996*", the "*iNkatha/ANC Massacres*" have achieved popular currency for encompassing the tumultuous era under review; we, however prefer the term "*uDlame*" - upheaval, civil unrest, civil war.

²¹ A.J. Middleton, 1986; John Wright, 1988; Andreas Rosen, 1993; Anthea J. Jeffrey, 1997; John Laband, 2001; Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, 2006; Mxolisi R Mchunu, 2007; Ralf K. Wüstenberg, 2009; Antjie Krog, 2010.

support by the apartheid-regime²², renamed “*Inkatha Freedom Party/IFP*” in 1990), the “*United Democratic Front/UDF*” (founded in 1983, declared unlawful and ordered to silence by the apartheid-regime in 1988) and the “*Congress of South African Trade Unions/COSATU*” (launched in 1985) - the *UDF* and *COSATU* being generally held to be the ‘inland wing’ of the then banned and exiled/underground “*African National Congress of South Africa, /ANC*” (founded in 1912, declared unlawful and ordered to silence by the apartheid-regime in 1960 and operating since then underground and in exile, unbanned in 1990). Advocates for non-violent commitment and mediators in KZN included a handful, renowned personalities from different population-groups in Natal, “KwaZulu” and countrywide as well as the church- and civic-organisations, the *Pietermaritzburg Action for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA)* and the *Centre for Adult Education (CEA)*.

The extent to which the apartheid-regime itself and its institutions (including the ‘homeland’ administration) are directly accountable for the acts of violence ascribed to their various police- and ‘hit-squads’, armed-forces and ‘*the third force*’, has in the meantime partly been established and documented²³.

In common discourse the wording “KZN Civil-War: 1976-1996”, “*uDlame KwaZulu-Natali: 1976-1996*”, the “*iNkatha/ANC Massacres*” achieved popular currency for encompassing the tumultuous era under review; we, however, prefer the term “*uDlame*” - upheaval, civil unrest, civil war.

A selection of reports, surveys and analyses²⁴ on the issue at hand serves as frame of reference for our survey and for the complementary field-work²⁵ exploring the motives, evaluating the outcomes and probing possible perspectives of *uDlame*.

²² During the 1970s it became known that the apartheid-government was funding a newspaper, *The Citizen*, and other activities of the Department of Information (1978 Survey (SAIRR), pp. 3-5; 1979 Survey (SAIRR), pp. 7-10) that promoted the founding of “Inkatha” in 1975 and its development into a preferable option in the apartheid-government’s plan of a so-called “internal settlement” as a solution that would exclude the banned and exiled/underground liberation movement. In 1991 it was disclosed that secret payments to finance two Inkatha rallies had been made and that an Inkatha-related trade union had also received covert funding (1991/92 Survey (SAIRR), p. 1iii). Earlier covert activities also involved an attempt by the Bureau for State Security (BOSS), using secret payments in favour of “Inkatha” and a rival party, “Umkhonto Ka Shaka” (Shaka’s spear) (*The Star* 16 March 1993). (Kane-Berman, p. 94)

²³ See: Goldstone R.J., 1 June 1993; Goldstone R.J., 18 March 1994; Goldstone R.J., 22 April 1994: [Report: Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\)](http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/), <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/> (03.06.2011).

²⁴ Goldstone R.J., Rossouw R.J. and van Zyl Smit D., ; A.J. Middleton, 1986; Paul A. Wellings and Michael O. Sutcliffe, 1986; A.J. Middleton, 1986; John Wright, 1988; M.G. Buthelezi, 1987; Mzala, 1988; International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa (ed.), 1990; P. Forsyth, 1991; J.J.W. Aitchison, 1993; Andreas Rosen, 1993; John Kane-Berman, 1993; Anthea J. Jeffrey, 1997; John Laband, 2001; Villa-Vicencio, Charles and Wilhelm Verwoerd, 2005; Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, 2006; Mxolisi R Mchunu, 2007; Ralf K. Wüstenberg, 2009; Antjie Krog, 2010; South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), 1976 - 2010.

²⁵ Ben Khumalo-Seegelken, [Cleansing and Reconciling in KwaZulu-Natal Today](http://www.benkhumalo-seegelken.de/dokumente/UkuHlambulukelana-nokuBuyisana.doc), <http://www.benkhumalo-seegelken.de/dokumente/UkuHlambulukelana-nokuBuyisana.doc> (03.06.2011)

Whilst we contend that *uDlame* is first and foremost a multi-dimensional chain of politically inspired responses to the challenges by apartheid, we share the insight that it is to a great extent also an intergenerational conflict between the ‘fathers’ and the ‘sons’²⁶ determined by perceptions on masculinity and practices of patriarchy prone to exploiting a given political crisis for a variety of even ‘non-political’ ends as has been studied and convincingly illustrated in the case of KwaShange in 1987 and in 1991 respectively²⁷. Paradoxically, the ‘fathers’ and the ‘sons’ would not simply subscribe *en bloc* to the one or the other political option - in this case *pro-* or *anti-apartheid*, “*iNkatha*” or “*UDF/ANC*” -, the perspectives associated with the one or the other option with regard to individual and collective expectations, played in the “*uDlame*” as decisive a role as they have always done and would always do under comparable circumstances²⁸.

Numerous reasons and explanations having been given by the various parties for the one or the other option they had taken or the one or other measure they had employed to reach the one or the other ‘goal’ within that series of armed conflicts²⁹, the underlying *motives* remain at least questionable; they range from somehow plausible arguments and options not unusual in a power-struggle under conditions of crisis and “state of emergency”, through “programs of action” with alarming overtones, depicting intolerance, hate and flagrant disregard for the very elementary notions of *uBuntu* and *iNhlonipho*, up to simply objectionable declarations blatantly propagating harm and instigating to confrontation and fight.

Whilst the *uDlame* resembles in every respect most of the armed conflicts Christian Meier reminds of in Ancient Athens, in Rome, during the French Revolution up to Holocaust and the recent civil wars and genocide in Ruanda, Kenya, Sudan and elsewhere³⁰, it differs from them, however, *fundamentally*, in as far as the new constitutional framework in South Africa which is unambiguously committed to realising peace, ‘reconciling interconnectedness’³¹ and stability in a post-conflict democracy, indeed, demands ‘uncovering and confronting’ the “stubborn ghosts” (Racism; Ethnic chauvinism; Sexism; Authoritarianism) in order to be able to ultimately “lay the ghosts to rest” by way of “channelling anger into creative

²⁶ Mxolisi R. Mchunu, 2007.

²⁷ Mxolisi R. Mchunu, 2007.

²⁸ The “struggle” against apartheid at individual and collective level necessitated opting for the one or the other strategy to realise the perspectives held to be the ideal alternative to the *status quo*. Were everyone in “KwaZulu” and many in Natal immediate victims of apartheid and presumably (potential) supporters of the *anti-apartheid forces*, many very often had reasons or rather succumbed to intimidation and pressure and occasionally opted even against their own convictions and supported *pro-apartheid forces*. See for example: “Forced recruitment sparks war in Pietermaritzburg in 1987” (Anthea J. Jeffrey, 1997. 61-77); “Killings at Ngoye in 1983” (Anthea J. Jeffrey, 1997. 48-49); “Denying free political activity in KwaZulu and Natal in early 1994” (Anthea J. Jeffrey, 1997. 420-445).

²⁹ Anthea J. Jeffrey, 1997.

³⁰ Christian Meier, 2010. 15-49; *Asikhumbuzane*, <http://www.benkhumalo-seegelken.de/dokumente/ASIKHUMBUZANE.doc> (03.06.2011).

³¹ In analogy to Antjie Krog, 2010. ‘*This thing called reconciliation*’: *forgiveness as part of an interconnectedness-towards-wholeness*.

energy”³². ‘Studies of the past’ today lead to a very fundamental realisation: KZN *has to differ* from “KwaZulu” and Natal! How do the immediate survivors and their descendants respond thereto?

III Parallels and Contrasts

A synopsis reveals resemblance and differences with regard to the determining factors, forces/troops, ‘war-lords’/commanders, motives, strategies, rituals and outcomes of the “uDlame” and those of the “Zulu Civil War: 1879 -1899”³³ a hundred years earlier - the latter having been the first large-scale series of inter-regional uprisings, faction fights and battles the territory had gone through since the founding of the Zulu Kingdom six decades earlier, the active participants of which were the “uSuthu” regiments, loyal to the monarch, King Cetshwayo kaMpande kaSenzangakhona, with their “abaQulusi” allies on the one hand and the “uMandlakazi” units under the command of Zibhebhu kaMaphitha kaSojijisa and his British colonial supporters on the other hand - “iMpi yoSuthu noMandlakazi”, or simply “eyoSuthu noZibhebhu”.

The effects in either case were devastating and the resulting social climate everything else than conducive to any degree of peaceful coexistence of the survivors and their descendants for any length of time. Over two decades after the highest peak of the “people’s war” (1990)³⁴ and well over a century since the epochal and fateful battle of oLundi (1879)³⁵ which marked the starting point of the “eyoSuthu noZibhebhu”, we set out to compare those patterns and constellations (*anti- and pro-colonial, uSuthu and uMandlakazi; anti- and pro-apartheid, UDF/ANC and iNkatha/IFP*), pose questions and probe into the future of KZN and Southern Africa.

Some factors of sociological, psychological and logistic significance should be borne in mind: War-doctors (*izinyanga*) that - as a matter of routine - had to have attended to the troops before and after the armed confrontations on battle-field, are not reported to have been engaged at all in the course of the “eyoSuthu noZibhebhu” (1879-1884/1899); the advisors and strategists (*izinduna* and *abashokobezi bempi*), however, featured and functioned as efficiently as they

³² [Mamphela Ramphele, 2008.](#)

³³ The outbreak of the “Anglo-Zulu War” on 22nd January 1879 and especially the defeat of the Zulu army at oLundi on the 4th of July 1879 set a decisive blow on the people in the remaining territory of the Zulu Kingdom north of the uThukela valley including the subsequent arrest, deportation and dethronement of King Cetshwayo kaMpande, the partition of the conquered remainder of the Kingdom’s territory and subjugation of the population under indirect rule leading to the ultimate annexation of the rest of the territory then named „Zululand“ (1898) as part of the British Colony of Natal seated in Pietermaritzburg. Up to and through the *Anglo-Boer South African War* (1899-1902) and the *insumansumane (the Bhambatha Uprising)* (1906) the people and the territory of the former Zulu Kingdom never again came to rest - an era of violence without end!

³⁴ The “Seven Days War” (25-31 March 1990)

³⁵ On the 4th July 1879: “The British invasion of the Zulu kingdom in 1879 culminated after a protracted and hard-fought campaign in the final and crushing defeat on 4 July of the Zulu army at the battle Ulundi.” (John Laband, 2001. 33).

would have done, if the king himself would have been directly in command³⁶. A century later in the course of the “*uDlame KwaZulu-Natali: 1976-1996*”, *izinyanga*, *izinduna* and *abashokobezi bempi* and their respective assignments and duties were - at least with regard to armed conflict - as good as totally out of function. The planning and the logistic during the *uDlame* were in the hands of a diversified post-colonial elite consisting of various *functionaries* loyal to the apartheid-regime on the one hand³⁷ and activists loyal to the one or the other organisation within the liberation-movement on the other hand.

Of course, the *anti-apartheid forces* within the *uDlame* would by no means match to the *anti-colonial forces* of the “*eyoSuthu noZibhebhu*” nor the *pro-apartheid* to the *pro-colonial forces* then; however, popular perceptions on masculinity and patriarchal practices that had in either case been regarded as essential for maintaining the idealised generational hierarchy between ‘fathers’ and ‘sons’ could be reactivated in both occasions and was successfully channelled in the interests of the respective *status quo*. Firearms and explosives of various kinds found in both instances willing hands especially on the *pro-colonial* and the *pro-apartheid* side to procure, distribute and use them against their respective targets; the *anti-apartheid forces* in the *uDlame* - the underground/exiled ANC in particular - were, compared to the *anti-colonial forces* a century earlier, at least just as adequately equipped as their adversaries³⁸.

The episodes Mxolisi Mchunu refers to as “‘(f)athers’ killing ‘sons’” and ‘(s)ons killing ‘fathers’” in KwaShange (1987 and 1991)³⁹ are largely an expression of a long-term process that had taken momentum also in rural parts of “KwaZulu” and Natal at the latest as far back as 1976, when the rejection of the “Bantu Education System” and the corresponding ideological concepts and the organisational ‘network at grass-roots’ generated by the *Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)*, were somehow advanced and were gradually receiving growing publicity. Those episodes depict the extent to which certain social constructions of masculinities had over generations survived and had been periodically rekindled to adapt to changing and differing ideological and programmatic premises: Determined to help maintain and enforce a political system affording a few of them some personal prestige, social esteem and some amount of political power, both the *pro-* and the *anti-apartheid forces* during the “*uDlame*” unleashed verbal and physical violence even against unarmed civilians and children; the *pro-apartheid forces* readily accepted support and coverage in doing so even from the police and the army of their sponsors - the *pro-colonial forces* during the “*eyoSuthu noZibhebhu*”, determined to help devastate the already defeated Zulu Kingdom, had fared not

³⁶ John Laband renders a comprehensive account also of the operations before and after what he terms “(T)he Later Zulu Wars” (1883-1888) - the main phase of “*eyoSuthu noZibhebhu*”. (John Laband, 2001). See also Jeff Guy, 1979, *The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879*.

³⁷ These included leading figures in the ‘homeland’-administration and its police- and intelligence-apparatus, *iNkatha/IFP* and its sub-organisations and affiliates, some ‘traditional leaders’ and various officials of the apartheid-regime including their police- and armed forces. (see: Intensifying ‘low intensity war’ (LIW) in 1990 (Anthea J. Jeffrey, 1997. 214-242); ; Goldstone R.J., 1 June 1993; Goldstone R.J., 18 March 1994; Goldstone R.J., 22 April 1994: [Report: Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\)](http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/), <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/> (03.06.2011)

³⁸ Rhetorically even more; See a.o.: Mzala, 1988. Gatsha Buthelezi. Chief with a Double Agenda.

³⁹ Mxolisi R Mchunu, 2007.

differently. Neither the *anti-apartheid forces* during the “*uDlame*” nor the *anti-colonial forces* during the “*eyoSuthu noZibhebhu*” - supposedly fighting ‘for a good course’ - operated anyhow differently in that respect: “Soft targets” - unarmed civilians and children - were often aimed at and killed by them as well.

Were, during the “*eyoSuthu noZibhebhu*” those personalities, who - in the “*uSuthu/abaQulusi*” regiments or in the “*uMandlakazi/British*” units, in their function as legitimate organs of the state, the Zulu Kingdom, or as designated appointees of the invading power, the colonial administration - worked out strategies and gave commands on battle-field and elsewhere, as a result accused, held ethically and legally responsible for the outcomes of their undertakings, it still stands to be seen, whether their counterparts today - the “war-lords”, ‘vigilantes’, ‘*amabutho*’, ‘*amaqabane*’, ‘comrades’ or at least the main strategists of the “*uDlame*” - ever would publicly give account and take responsibility for their part. Very few have as yet faced criminal charges or did take advantage of the opportunity to lodge an application for amnesty with the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)* (1996-1998); none has - as were to assume - been charged or had to appear before the International Court of Justice for the violation of human rights and *crimes against humanity*.

Having embarked onto “a new dispensation” since the transition to democracy in 1994, KZN is at least concerned with the “*uDlame*” and its outcomes as was ‘Natal’ with the “*eyoSuthu noZibhebhu*” since the ultimate annexation of ‘Zululand’ (1898) and subsequent embarking onto “a new dispensation”, the Union of South Africa (1910), over a century ago. Two (not so rhetoric) questions arise: Where could all this lead to?⁴⁰ Could KZN remain part of the “new dispensation”, grow into the emerging constellation of diversified population-groups and regions in post-apartheid South Africa and actively contribute to developing a *culture of non-violence* without itself having gone through critical self-analysis and reorientation at least on the basis of the outcomes of the “*uDlame*” (1976-1996) and without itself having undergone *transformation* at least with regard to prevailing constructions of masculinity and patriarchy?

IV

Laying Ghosts to Rest?⁴¹

We maintain: If ‘studies of the past’ in closer or wider perspective - KZN in global perspective⁴² - were to “speak truth to power” today or resist pandering to it, the

⁴⁰ Shall KZN ‘do as the Romans did’ - following the traditions from the last 2400 years (Christian Meier), or seek to start identifying the “stubborn ghosts” (Racism; Ethnic chauvinism; Sexism; Authoritarianism) that keep on revisiting and devastating that part of Africa so often and proceed to ultimately start “laying ghosts to rest” by way of “channelling anger into creative energy” (Mamphela Ramphele)?

⁴¹ In the sense the social anthropologist, Mamphela Ramphele, identifies what she terms “stubborn ghosts” (Racism; Ethnic chauvinism; Sexism; Authoritarianism) and pleads for “laying ghosts to rest” by way of “channelling anger into creative energy”: [“Mamphela Ramphele \(2008\): Laying Ghosts to Rest”](#).

⁴² Attempts of regional and national proportions in Europe dating as far back as 404 years before Christ (B.C.) to resolve conflicts by collectively agreeing to simply refuse ever recalling them - ‘as if they had never taken place at all’ - (= one of the roots of the legal praxis of granting *amnesty* in our days as one of the possibilities of resolving a given conflict) (see: Christian Meier, 2010) serve as

revisiting of “*uDlame*” and “*eyoSuthu noZibhebhu*” and the re-examination of initiatives and undertakings focusing on ‘commemoration’ and ‘settlement’ of those crises would doubtlessly “hurt” and “heal” simultaneously, because such undertakings would have to readdress and remind uncompromisingly and be convincingly committed to reconstructing and redressing as comprehensively and sustainably as possible. History research would therefore have to sense and stay adequately in touch with sociological, psychological, religious, legal and other aspects of issues and reflect on them with more concern and even more persistence. “Hurting and healing” in the process of ‘studying the past’ shall consequently entail reviewing those political structures and social processes in the armed conflict and analysing the corresponding attempts to address and redress the damages and losses endured.

The constellations and processes around and within ‘the past’ can better be perceived, as long as the processes of reviewing and analysing them today occur interchangeably through various disciplines and methods. Where ‘blood’ and ‘tears’ had been shed, ‘studies of the past’ shall better not seek to help hurriedly ‘bury the hatchet’ and ‘let the by-gones be bygones’; history research will rather seek to throw light into the underlying factors and unveil constellations and processes *uncompromisingly* - certainly a threat to certain power-constellations then and possibly in KZN today as well. Reviewing “*uDlame*” could mean tackling exactly such an assignment.

“*EyoSuthu noZibhebhu*” and “*uDlame*”, those two spans of armed conflict falling within the 120 years between the conquest of the Zulu Kingdom by the British colonial forces in July 1879 and the inauguration of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)* in 1996, equate a framework and provide an archive on the political state of affairs and the developments in the two respective periods in two consecutive centuries under at least four different political systems - *colonialism, dominion, apartheid* and *democracy* - within one and the same geographical horizon concerning one and the same multi-faceted population-group, the majority of which, *uZulu*, had been formally consolidated into a sovereign state, the Zulu Kingdom, hardly six decades before the outbreak of the first series in 1879. Those **two decades** at the end of each of the two last centuries - 1879-1899 and 1976-1996 - have each witnessed discontinuities, ushered new begins of different kinds and have each left the survivors and their descendants with a legacy to ‘remember’, to ‘remind’ of and to try to “meet halfway in order to return home or proceed together” (*ukuBuyisana*).

Would the survivors of *uDlame* and their descendants in their endeavours to recall and face ‘the past’ as responsible agents of ‘the present’ - be it merely theoretical - constructively take advantage of the *structures and policies of a democratic state* committed to reconciling and relieving the present from unresolved questions of the past, only the opposite could be the case with the survivors of “*eyoSuthu noZibhebhu*” and their descendants under colonial and non-democratic regimes of

frame of reference in dealing with “Hurting” and “Healing” in our discourse in KZN today and shall be brought into line with those developed in consequence to massacres (for example in ancient times in Athens ending in the year 851) revolutions (for example at the onset of the ‘Restoration’ after the French Revolution in 1814) up to holocausts and genocides of our days (Germany 1933-1945, Ruanda/Burundi, ...) - the historical and global context of the case-study at hand..

their day. Initiatives geared at facilitating the recalling and facing of 'the past' concerning "uDlame" geared at "meeting halfway, to return home or to proceed together" still reach hardly far enough beyond what the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)* could unveil and touch on within the limited phase of its operation (1996-1999). Primarily being concerned with constructing a possibly 'not so violent' version of 'the past' preceding the 'miracle' of the transition to democracy in 1994 - a version likely to be palatable to popular power-constellations of the day locally and abroad and likely to be unquestionably in line with current mainstream-teaching about 'the past' - that would compromise and grossly falsify the "uDlame" and should by no means be what responsible writing and teaching of history ever should be about⁴³.

The emerging variety of versions of what the survivors of "uDlame" went through - mental notes and reminiscences that pass over to coming generations, play a role in shaping and influencing their attitudes and their *Weltanschauung* (i.e. their approach in trying to understand the world around them) today and are a significant contribution towards healing and reconciling - 'letting ghost rest'.

V

"uZulu", "the Zulus" and "ubuntu"

The participants in the "*eyoSuthu noZibhebhu*" (1879-1884/1899) - the "*uSuthu/abaQulusi*" in particular⁴⁴ - were individually and collectively convinced adherents and loyal subscribers to a social order and were members of a political system they cherished - a system with which they identified and which they seemed prepared by no means to undermine, abandon or betray - at the least into the hands of the encroaching colonial powers! The elder contemporaries of the "uDlame" (1976-1996) on the other hand, objects of domination and oppression by powers resulting from the colonial invasion the preceding generations, their grandparents and great-grandparents, had been resisting and revolting against, had individually and collectively grown up having themselves to repeatedly go through protest, resistance and "*the struggle*" against even more subtle and delusive undemocratic rule, increasingly brutal *apartheid* laws and their enforcement and "*oppressive*" *patriarchal structures* and '*traditions*' within their immediate interpersonal and social sphere⁴⁵, experienced and partly realised "*black consciousness*" (1969-) and ultimately grew into the final phase of the "*people's war*" (1980-1994). Self-esteem and loyalty of a certain quality characterise the members of that generation and accentuate their identity up to the present day.

These two samples of contemporaries, "uZulu" of the 1870s (in oLundi in 1879) and "*the Zulus*"⁴⁶ of the 1970s (in KwaMashu, Edendale, iMbumbulu and elsewhere in 1979) - remain two different socio-political entities, sharing a common historical

⁴³ 'Studies of the past' cannot remain 'bloodless'; history - both oral and written - lives from lived lives and can help promote life and forestall tears and blood, if lived lives were named and described as they were lived.

⁴⁴ - a patriarchal and militarily principled and inspired society in the former Zulu Kingdom, of late preoccupied with resisting colonial invasion and "loss of homes, land and landscape" (residential sites and agricultural lands, livestock, grain stores, elementary resources including access to communal sources of drinking-water, streams and rivers) safety and sovereignty -

⁴⁵ Mxolisi R Mchunu, 2007.

continuum as they do, but each living with and being determined by a definite political, social and economic system with differing conditions and perspectives. The many obvious *similarities* and *differences* between “uZulu” and “the Zulus” are for history-research by no means peripheral, if the attempt to comprehend and analyse the “uDlame” (1976-1996) were at all to prove worthwhile.

On either side in each series - the “eyoSuthu noZibhebhu” and the “uDlame” - the participants then and thence soon adopted a strategy of going beyond merely attacking or defending themselves against counter-combatants on battlefield and went over to systematically targeting at unarmed civilians in homesteads⁴⁷, violating unwritten laws, (religious) traditions and rules of responsible conduct and tempering with the civil infrastructure in pursuit of their respective goals. In both instances even children and women became objects and targets of armed conflict and ended up constituting the highest number of the casualties altogether. Homesteads were set on fire, food-storages plundered, crops destroyed and livestock, if any, looted or maimed. The rest of what would have been left of uBuntu⁴⁸ suffered irrevocable damage.

At the latest in the course of the “uDlame” (1976-1996) the not so rhetoric question posed by the survivors of the “eyoSuthu noZibhebhu” a century earlier rose once more: **On what grounds could anyone ever feel justified to resort to such inhuman measures?**

⁴⁶ People from all population-groups in Natal and KwaZulu in times of the apartheid-regime (1948-1994) - more especially in the 1970s and later - had been victims and/or, in some cases, also perpetrators of violence to some or other extent. The population-group then officially designated ‘the Zulus’ constituted the majority in every respect - as supporters, members, sympathisers and activists on the one hand of the “iNkatha yeNkululeko yeSizwe” (later IFP) and its sub-organisations and affiliates, at some stage - contrary to any logic of relatedness - adopting and using the war-cry “uSuthu!” (see a.o.: Wessel de Kock, 1986), or - on the other hand - as supporters, members, sympathisers or activists of resistance- and protest-organisations within the “liberation movement” against apartheid, the then banned and exiled/underground “African National Congress of South Africa” (ANC) and the “Pan-Africanist Congress (of Azania)” (PAC), the South African Communist Party, the recently founded “United Democratic Front” (UDF), the “Congress of South African Trade Unions” (COSATU) or the one or the other organisation of the “Black Consciousness Movement” (BCM), very often the “Azanian People’s Organisation” (AZAPO) and their sub-organisations and affiliates. The focus in our survey lies primarily on this one very diversified population-group in Natal and KwaZulu in the 1970s and later. As a matter of expediency we shall, where necessary in the context of “uDlame” (1976-1996), use the term “the Zulus/iNkatha” to refer in particular to the supporters, members, sympathisers and activists of the “iNkatha yeNkululeko yeSizwe” (of late known as IFP) in that era and “the Zulus” to refer to all contemporaries and participants together whom the apartheid regime and the ‘homeland’ administration ‘officially’ designated as such.

⁴⁷ Just one example: “... five civilians were killed in what was said by some to be the first major insurgent attack on a ‘soft target’, a shopping centre in Amanzimtoti (Natal) in December 1985. This followed the Kabwe conference of the ANC in June of the same year, which authorised members of Umkhonto weSizwe to attack civilians, or ‘soft targets’ (1985 Survey (SAIRR), pp. 540-545). In May 1983, however, 19 people had been killed by a car-bomb in a busy street in the centre of Pretoria outside South African Air Force headquarters. Eleven of the dead were whites and eight black. Of the 19, four were military personnel”. (1983 Survey (SAIRR), pp. 569-570) (98)

⁴⁸The unconditional friendliness, high regard and respect for humankind and social interconnectedness supposedly characteristic especially of uZulu and the peoples of Africa as such.

In the face of the public attentiveness accompanying the work of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)* since 1996, “the Zulus” among the immediate survivors of “uDlame” (1976-1996) certainly should be feeling like standing before a mirror - almost like “uZulu” a century earlier: Many were perplexed, shocked and disgusted at the outcome and effects of social and political processes they had actively or passively been part of, some remained on different reasons indifferent and quiet, others - mostly of the “Zibhebhu/British” and the “Zulus/iNkatha” factions - were not seldom even “proud” of themselves and their deeds. The internalised self-esteem and the popular image of a robust and supposedly fearless (young) man with a cowhide-shield and a spear - “*traditional weapons*” - in his hands that had taken shape and gained appreciation and envy since the early days of ‘nation-building’ in the 1820s, had undergone and outlived changes through the colonial- and apartheid-times to ultimately become what was and is colloquially termed the “Zulu warrior” - a caricature - that made a notorious career mainly in *pro-apartheid forces* right through the times of “*the struggle*” and “*the people’s war*” to end up in a long-term clinch with the non-violent transition into a constitutional democracy and its project of healing and reconciling.

‘Meeting half-way in order to return home or to proceed together’, *ukubuyisana*, in KZN today is a process the immediate survivors of “uDlame” and their descendants have to embark and work on soon and intensively, if post-apartheid KZN were to recover to some degree from endured atrocities and make optimal use of its potentials as a ‘*diversified community with a moved and moving past*’ full of challenges and lessons in the interests of a less unstable future in peaceful postcolonial Africa. The emerging chapter of post-conflict history in KZN reflecting on practices in communities and states over 2400 years ranging from ‘resolving to simply forget, over systematically suppressing memory up to willingly and responsibly commemorating the evil episodes of the past’⁴⁹ remains an interdisciplinary effort that shall have to continue reflecting on the causes, throw light on the motives and strategies and describe the envisaged outcomes in geo-political context: A grass-roots’ approach in a multi-dimensional on-going process in global context.

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⁴⁹ A learning process for KZN and post-conflict communities worldwide today in response to and as explication of the impulses given by the historian Christian Meier in the series of lectures and public addresses since 1996, a year after the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, on the theme “Erinnern - Verdrängen - Vergessen” (“Commemorate - Suppress Memory - Forget”) emphasizing on ‘the requirement to forget and the irrefutability to recall’ (Christian Meier, 2010) and the social anthropologist Mamphela Ramphele who identifies what she terms “stubborn ghosts” (Racism; Ethnic chauvinism; Sexism; Authoritarianism) and pleads for “laying ghosts to rest” by way of “channelling anger into creative energy” ([Mamphela Ramphele, 2008](#)).

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