



ISOTROPE  
MEDIA

the trantraal brothers  
**CROSSROADS**



PART 5 OF A SERIES



# CROSSROADS

## The Mothers of Crossroads

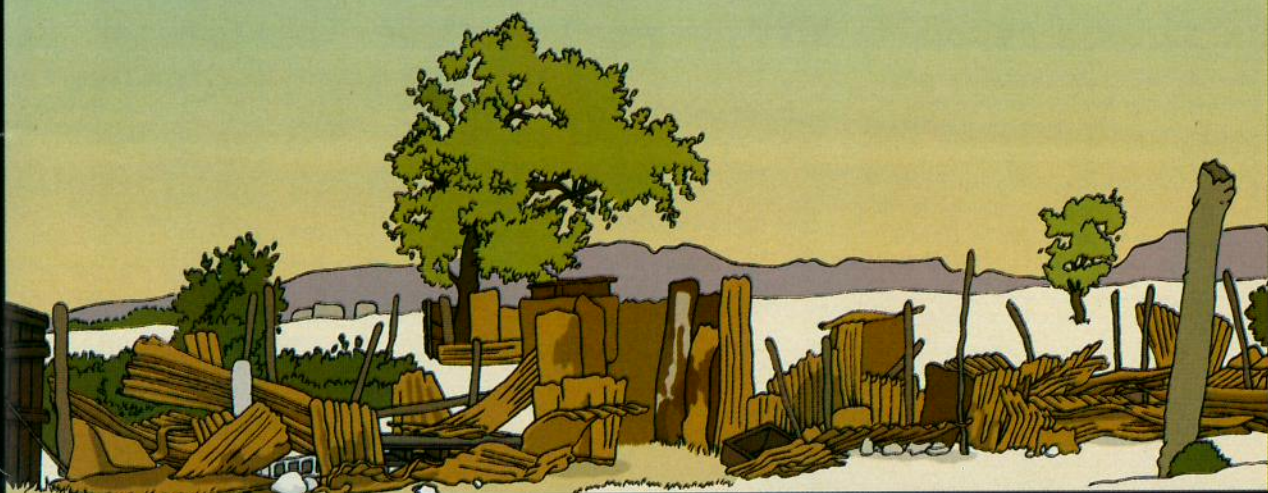


Koni Benson  
André Trantraal  
Nathan Trantraal  
Ashley Marais

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THE SERIES OF ATTACKS ON OLD CROSSROADS, IN MAY 1986, BY STATE-BACKED WITDOEKE VIGILANTES LEFT MANY DEAD, HOMES BURNT DOWN AND 70000 PEOPLE DISPLACED.



ABOUT 30000 WERE SELECTIVELY LET BACK INTO THE AREA THAT WAS NOW UNDER THE CONTROL OF 'MAYOR' NGXOBONGWANA, WHO HAD ALLIED WITH THE APARTHEID STATE IN RETURN FOR CONTROL OVER THE LONG-AWAITED AND DESPERATELY NEEDED HOUSING UPGRADE FOR THE AREA.

THE MOVE BOTH DESENSIFIED AND DEPOLITICIZED THE AREA.

THIS WAS AN INCREASINGLY VIOLENT AND VOLATILE ENVIRONMENT, WHERE BOTH WOMEN'S NEEDS AND THEIR MARGINALIZATION FROM ANY FORUMS TO CHALLENGE THINGS, WERE GROWING.

IT WOULD TAKE A LONG TIME AND A LOT OF CAREFUL WATCHING AND THINKING FOR A GROUP OF WOMEN TO COME TOGETHER TO FIND A WAY TO INTERVENE IN WHAT BECAME A WAR ZONE OF GUN VIOLENCE AND ONGOING FORCED REMOVALS IN CROSSROADS IN THE EARLY 1990'S



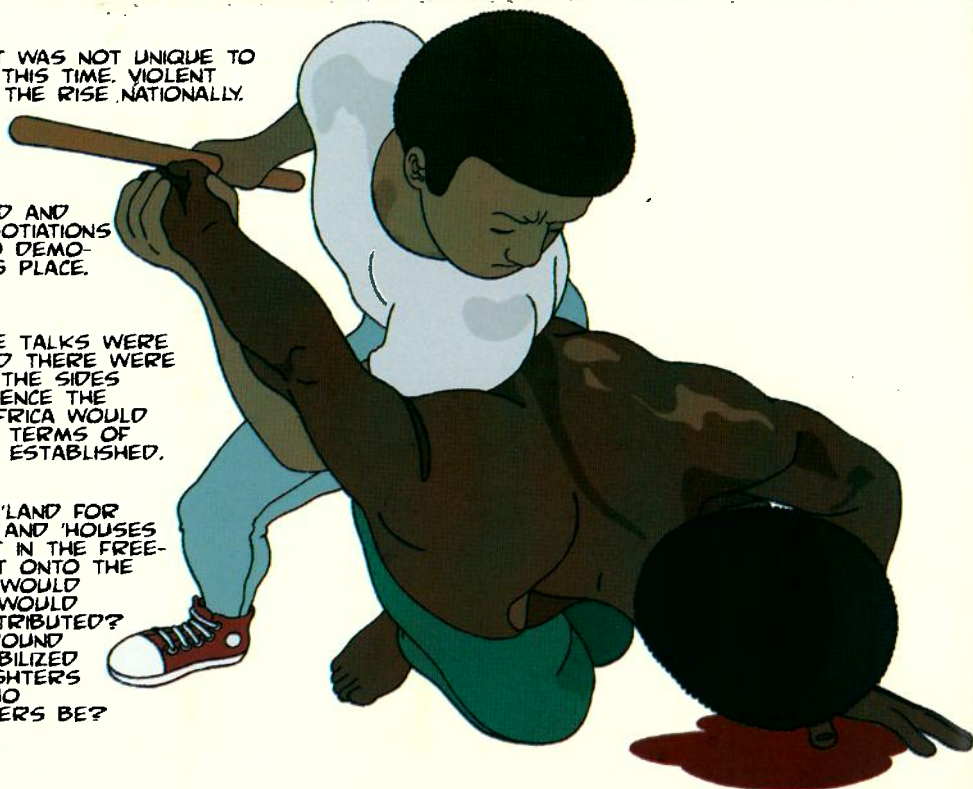


THIS ENVIRONMENT WAS NOT UNIQUE TO CROSSROADS AT THIS TIME. VIOLENT CONFLICT WAS ON THE RISE NATIONALLY.

POLITICAL PARTIES HAD BEEN UNBANNED AND NATIONAL LEVEL NEGOTIATIONS FOR 'TRANSITION' TO DEMOCRACY WERE TAKING PLACE.

THE STAKES OF THE TALKS WERE EXTREMELY HIGH AND THERE WERE MANY SIDES WITHIN THE SIDES COMPETING TO INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION SOUTH AFRICA WOULD TAKE AND THE NEW TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT TO BE ESTABLISHED.

WOULD THE CALL FOR 'LAND FOR THOSE WHO WORK IT' AND 'HOUSES FOR ALL' SPELLED OUT IN THE FREEDOM CHARTER MAKE IT ONTO THE NEGOTIATION TABLES? WOULD POWER BE SHARED? WOULD RESOURCES BE REDISTRIBUTED? HOW WOULD UNDERGROUND MOVEMENTS BE DEMOBILIZED AND UNDERGROUND FIGHTERS DECOMMISSIONED? WHO WOULD THE NEW LEADERS BE?



MANY STRUGGLES HAD BEEN CONTAINED WITHIN COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE SUCCESS OF APARTHEID BLACK LOCAL AUTHORITIES SYSTEMS AND THEIR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT STRATEGIES OF THE 1980'S. ADDED TO THIS NOW WERE THE INCREASING TENSIONS OVER REDEFINING A NEW PECKING ORDER.

BETWEEN 1990-1994 MORE PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN COMMUNITY STRUGGLES THAT THE STATE LABELED 'BLACK ON BLACK' VIOLENCE THAN BY THE APARTHEID STATE IN ALL OF THE 1980'S.

IN CROSSROADS THESE TENSIONS PLAYED OUT IN A DECADE OF 1990'S VIOLENT CONFLICT OVER HOUSING ALLOCATION THAT LOOKED NOTHING LIKE THE IMAGES OF CELEBRATION WITH MANDELA'S RELEASE FROM PRISON, OR THE RAINBOW NATIONALISM OF THE YEARS SURROUNDING THE FIRST DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA IN 1994.

THE GOLDSTONE COMMISSION WAS EVENTUALLY APPOINTED TO LOOK INTO THE CAUSES OF THIS INCREASED VIOLENCE THAT TOOK PLACE ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

THE GOLDSTONE COMMISSION  
Official Report

CROSSROADS WAS ONE OF THE PLACES STUDIED BY THE COMMISSION AND THE TESTIMONY OF PEOPLE THERE AND REPORTS OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT WORKED IN THE AREA, LIKE THE TRAUMA CENTER, UNPACKS A VERY DIFFICULT ENVIRONMENT WHERE WOMEN WERE THREATENED WHEN THEY TRIED TO ORGANIZE, AND FELT LIKE THEIR VOICES WERE 'KEPT IN A TIN.'





IN 1987, 847 BESTER HOMES WENT ON SALE IN CROSSROADS. BEYOND THE MEANS OF MOST SQUATTERS IN THE AREA, MANY WERE PURCHASED BY RESIDENTS FROM THE MORE ESTABLISHED TOWNSHIPS OF LANGA, NYANGA AND GUGULETHU.

THE FIRST SUBSIDIZED LOW-COST HOUSES, IN A SECTION NAMED UNATHI, WERE BUILT LATER THAT YEAR. THESE HOUSES WERE REFERRED TO AS PHASE 2 OF CROSSROADS' DEVELOPMENT.

IN ORDER TO BUILD THESE HOUSES, PEOPLE IN SECTION 2 WERE MOVED TO A 'TEMPORARY' TRANSIT CAMP WITHIN CROSSROADS. A PIECE OF LAND NORTH OF KLIPFONTEIN ROAD, AGAINST THE N2 HIGHWAY, WHICH BECAME KNOWN AS BOYS TOWN (NAMED FOR THE DELINQUENT CENTER THAT USED TO BE THERE).

AS THE FIRST AFFORDABLE HOUSING BUILT IN CROSSROADS AND WITH LESS THAN 900 UNITS, A FIERCE FIGHT BROKE OUT OVER WHO WOULD GET AN UNATHI HOUSE.

THE 'ROLL-OVER' METHOD OF TURNING INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS INTO TOWNSHIPS HAS BEEN WIDELY CRITICIZED FOR THE WAY IT DISPLACES PEOPLE, BECAUSE MOST SHACK AREAS ARE MORE POPULATED THAN THE NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL ALLOW.

UNATHI MEANS PEACE IN ISIXHOSA BUT THE HISTORY OF THIS DEVELOPMENT WAS FAR FROM PEACEFUL.

RELOCATION OF PEOPLE IN UNATHI CONSTITUTED ANOTHER CONTENTIOUS AND BLOODY SET OF 'REMOVALS' AND SHIFTING ALLEGIANCES.

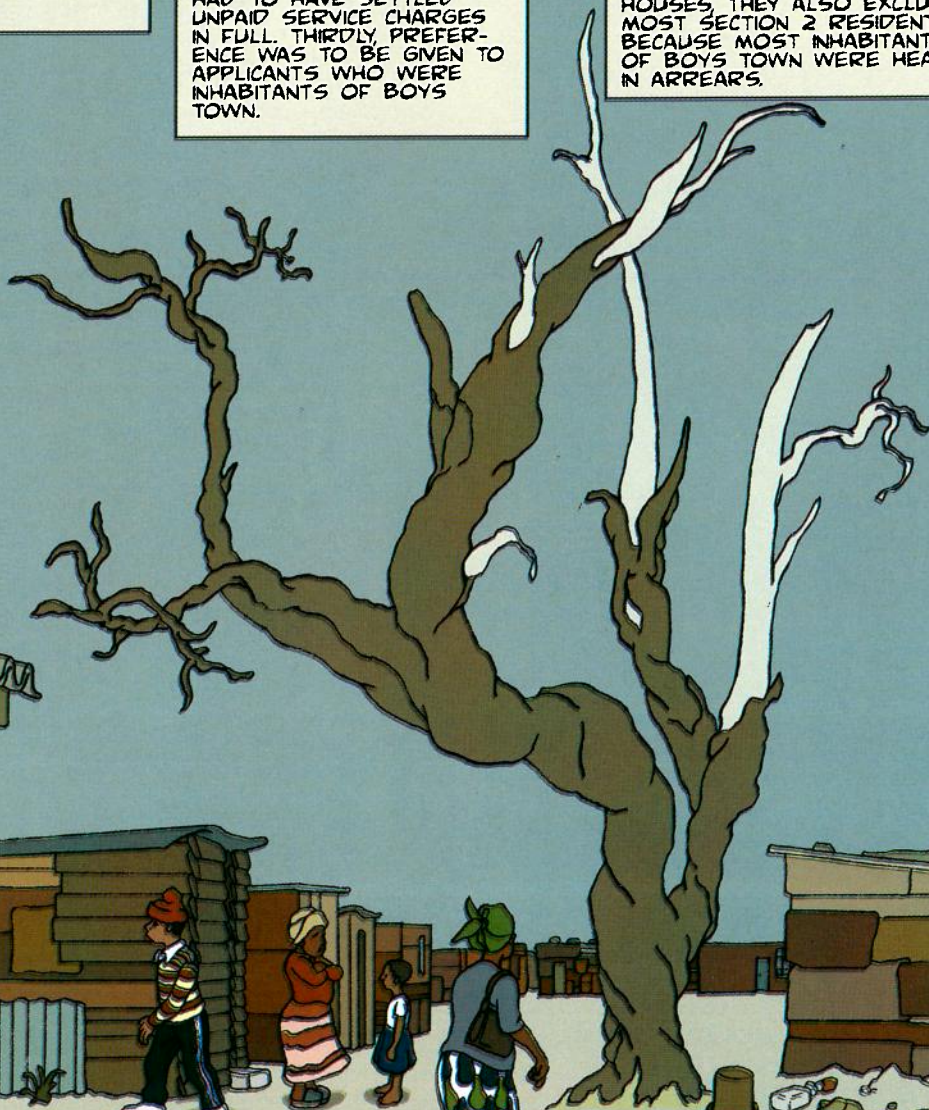




THE TOWN COUNCIL (OF WHICH NGXOBONGWANA WAS THEN THE MAYOR) DECIDED TO ALLOCATE THE HOUSES ACCORDING TO THREE CRITERIA.

FIRSTLY THE APPLICANT HAD TO PROVE TO BE A BONA FIDE INHABITANT OF CROSS-ROADS. SECONDLY, THEY HAD TO HAVE SETTLED UNPAID SERVICE CHARGES IN FULL. THIRDLY, PREFERENCE WAS TO BE GIVEN TO APPLICANTS WHO WERE INHABITANTS OF BOYS TOWN.

WHILE THESE REQUIREMENTS WERE CALCULATED TO ENSURE THAT ONLY SECTION 2 RESIDENTS CLAIMED UNATHI HOUSES, THEY ALSO EXCLUDED MOST SECTION 2 RESIDENTS BECAUSE MOST INHABITANTS OF BOYS TOWN WERE HEAVILY IN ARREARS.



BOYS TOWN RESIDENTS ARGUED THAT THEY HAD BEEN INTIMIDATED BY NGXOBONGWANA IN THE PAST NOT TO PAY SERVICE CHARGES AS PART OF RESISTANCE TO APARTHEID.

THE GOLDSTONE COMMISSION CONCLUDES THAT: IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT HAD THE PEOPLE OF BOYS TOWN WHO WERE ENTITLED TO THEIR HOUSES BEEN PROPERLY CONSULTED AND HAD THEY BEEN GIVEN A SAY IN THE DECISION AS TO THE ALLOCATION OF HOUSES, THEY WOULD HARDLY HAVE MADE IT A PREREQUISITE THAT ARREAR SERVICE CHARGES HAD TO BE PAID IN FULL.

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THREE WEEKS AFTER THE HOUSES WERE READY THERE WERE STILL NO APPLICANTS AND THE HOUSES WERE BEING STONED BY PEOPLE FROM BOYS TOWN, ALBEIT FOR DIFFERENT REASONS.

THE GOLDSTONE COMMISSION RECORDS THAT 'DUE TO INCREASING VANDALISM' OF THE HOUSES IT WAS DECIDED TO OFFER THE HOUSES TO ALL REGISTERED INHABITANTS OF CROSSROADS.

BUT RESIDENTS FROM SECTION 4 OF OLD CROSSROADS ARGUED THAT RENTS WERE TOO HIGH AND UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF JEFFREY NONGWE, ONE OF NGXOBONGWANA'S DISSIDENT HEADMEN, THEY URGED OTHER SHACK DWELLERS NOT TO OCCUPY THE HOUSES.

WHEN SOME PEOPLE MOVED IN, NONGWE'S PEOPLE STONED THE HOUSES.



PEOPLE FROM BOYS TOWN TOOK PART IN THE STONING OUT OF FRUSTRATION WITH THE UNCLEAR ALLOCATION PROCESS AND A SENSE OF ANGER THAT 'OUTSIDERS' WERE BEING ACCOMMODATED AND THAT CORRUPTION WAS AT PLAY.

THEY ALSO BELIEVED THAT SOME PEOPLE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE DISPUTE TO OCCUPY THE HOUSES ON THEIR OWN WITHOUT COUNCIL OFFICE PERMISSION.





UNATHI WAS THE FIRST AND LAST AFFORDABLE HOUSING BUILT IN CROSSROADS UNDER APARTHEID. LESS THAN 900 UNITS COULD NOT BEGIN TO TOUCH THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG IN CROSSROADS WHERE 30000 PEOPLE WERE SAID TO BE LIVING IN SHACKS IN 1991.

WHILE NO HOUSES WERE BUILT BETWEEN 1988-1998, RELOCATION CONTINUED. DURING THIS TIME PEOPLE IN CROSSROADS HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO PUT THEIR SUPPORT BEHIND ONE OF THE FEW MEN IN POSITIONS OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP.

THERE WAS NO WAY TO ESCAPE THE WAY HOUSING POLITICS PLAYED OUT IN CROSSROADS IN THE 1990'S.

MR. TOMSANA:

I WAS PERCEIVED TO BE ON NONGWE'S SIDE IN 1990, WHICH WAS ALSO SEEN BY SOME TO MEAN THE 'COMRADES' AND THE 'YOUTH.'

AS A RESULT HIS 16 YEAR OLD SON WAS KILLED WHILE LOOKING FOR HIS FATHER DURING A MAJOR MEETING HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE FOR THE PURPOSES OF 'RECONCILING' SIDES.

HIS FAMILY WAS ALLOCATED A HOUSE IN UNATHI IN 1991 BUT FEARED TO TAKE UP RESIDENCE.

HIS DAUGHTER, NOMANDLA, WHO HAD BEEN DELIVERED IN A SHACK IN CROSSROADS IN THE MIST OF A MASSIVE RAID IN THE 1970'S, EXPLAINED:

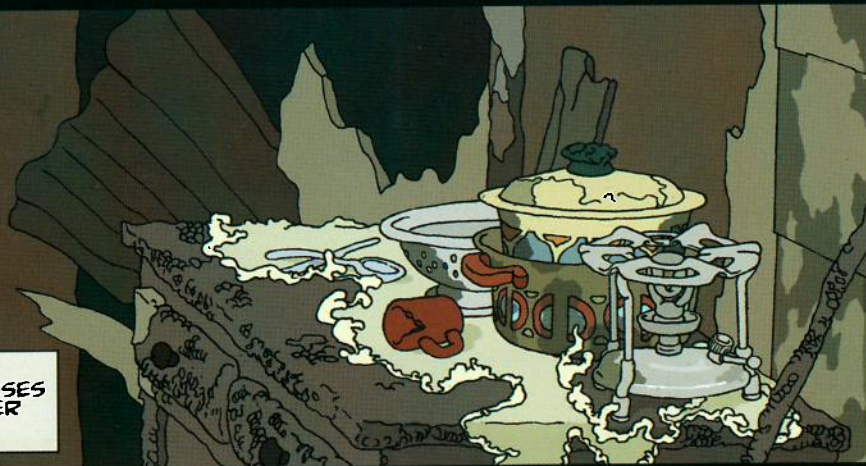
SOME OF THESE UNATHI HOUSES WERE VANDALIZED BY THE PEOPLE OF NONGWE WHO DIDN'T WANT PEOPLE TO STAY HERE.



BUT THEN THE FOLLOWING YEAR THE TOMSANAS' SHACK WAS RAZED TO THE GROUND WHEN SECTION 2 WAS BURNT OUT. THEY HAD TO MOVE AGAIN.

THE FAMILY SPLIT UP STAYING WITH EXTENDED FAMILY SPREAD ACROSS CROSSROADS.

MANY PEOPLE FLED THE VIOLENCE AND THEIR HOUSES WERE OCCUPIED BY OTHER PEOPLE.



JULIA MATISO SAID THAT SHE LEFT IN 1991 AND TOOK REFUGE IN PLASTIC SHELTERS AFTER THE FIGHTS SHE WAS AFRAID BECAUSE

QUEEN SHUGU RETURNED AT THE END OF THE FIGHTING AND CLOSED HER HOUSE WITH CORRUGATED IRON AND ZINCS TO PROTECT THE HOUSE, WHICH SHE WAS STILL FEARFUL TO MOVE INTO.

...THE HOUSE WAS ISOLATED AND I WAS ON MY OWN BY THEN.



THESE DAMAGED HOUSES BECAME KNOWN AS AMABHODLO (DILAPIDATED/STONED) AND LATER REPORTS WOULD SHOW THAT 'NO STRICT MEASURES WERE TAKEN TO CURB THE FORCEFUL OCCUPATION OF AMABHODLO.'

OVER 100 HOUSES WERE DESTROYED AND TENS OF PEOPLE KILLED IN THE 1991 CONFLICT, ACCORDING TO THE TRC.

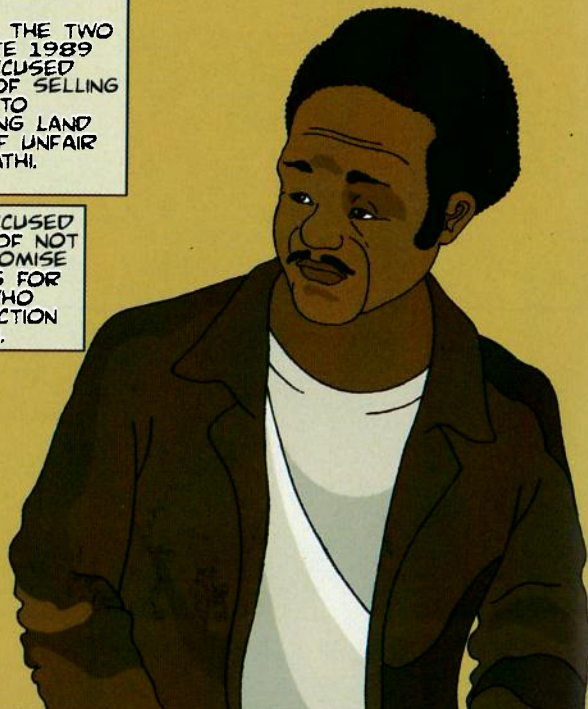
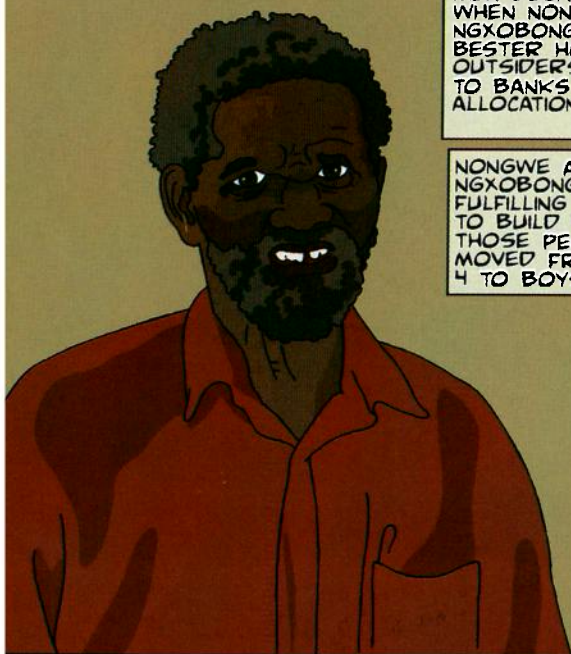




IN 1988 ELECTIONS TOOK PLACE IN CROSSROADS AND NGXOBONGWANA WAS ELECTED MAYOR WITH 21 HEADMEN OVERSEEN BY HIS NEW CHAIRMAN, JEFFREY NONGWE.

A SPLIT BETWEEN THE TWO MEN BEGAN IN LATE 1989 WHEN NONGWE ACCUSED NGXOBONGWANA OF SELLING BETTER HOUSES TO OUTSIDERS, SELLING LAND TO BANKS AND OF UNFAIR ALLOCATION IN UNATHI.

NONGWE ALSO ACCUSED NGXOBONGWANA OF NOT FULFILLING HIS PROMISE TO BUILD HOUSES FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO MOVED FROM SECTION 4 TO BOYS TOWN.



NONGWE AND 14 HEADMEN SPLIT, PRECIPITATING 'OPEN WARFARE' THAT LASTED SEVERAL MONTHS WITH MANY WOUNDED AND KILLED AND HOUSES BURNT.

CONFLICT ESCALATED BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS AND IN OCTOBER 1990 NGXOBONGWANA AND 2000 OF HIS FOLLOWERS WERE OUSTED AND RELOCATED THEMSELVES TO DRIFT-SANDS (AN OPEN SPACE OF SAND DUNE ADJACENT TO KHAYELITSHA).

DURING THIS CONFLICT, SECTION 1 WAS COMPLETELY RAZED TO THE GROUND.





MAMA TEN TEN WAS ONE OF THE WOMEN WHO FLED TO DRIFTSANDS WITH NGXOBONGWANA:

IN 1990 THERE WERE FIGHTS IN CROSSROADS AMONGST OUR NINE HEADMEN.

THEY EACH HAD A SECTION. NONGWE IN SECTION 1, NGXOBONGWANA, MAZELE WHO HAS PASSED NOW, VETWANI, TIWANE WHO HAS PASSED NOW, MBIZA WHO LIVES SOMEWHERE IN KHAYELITSHA NOW.

HOUSES WERE BURNT AND PEOPLE WERE SHOT DEAD.

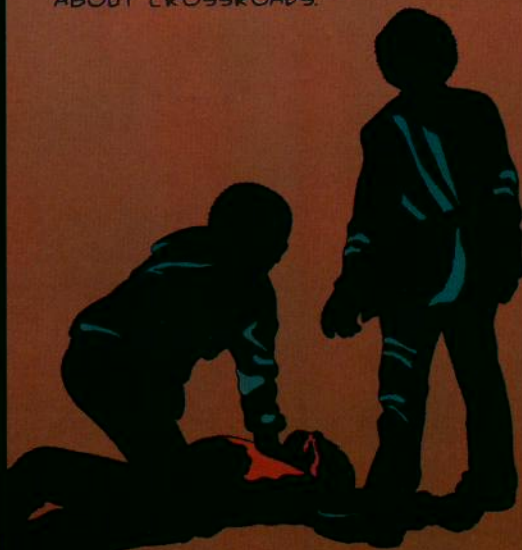


SELENA DASI DESCRIBES HOW NGXOBONGWANA'S SHIFTS IN ALLEGIANCE LED TO NONGWE'S CHALLENGE TO HIM AS A COUNCILLOR:

IN 1989 UPROAR ERUPTED BETWEEN THE GROUPS OF NGXOBONGWANA AND NONGWE. THEY WERE KILLING EACH OTHER.



'THE ONE THING I CANNOT EXPLAIN ABOUT CROSSROADS ARE THE FIGHTS. I WILL NEVER GO BACK. I HAVE NEVER GONE THERE SINCE 1990 AND I NEVER WILL. I DON'T WANT TO KNOW ABOUT CROSSROADS.'



'IF YOU ARE A PARTISAN OF NGXOBONGWANA, NONGWE'S SUPPORTERS WILL BURN YOUR HOUSE.'

'SO MY HOUSE WAS BURNT DOWN AND THEN I CAME TO STAY HERE AND OPENED UP A SMALL BUSINESS.'

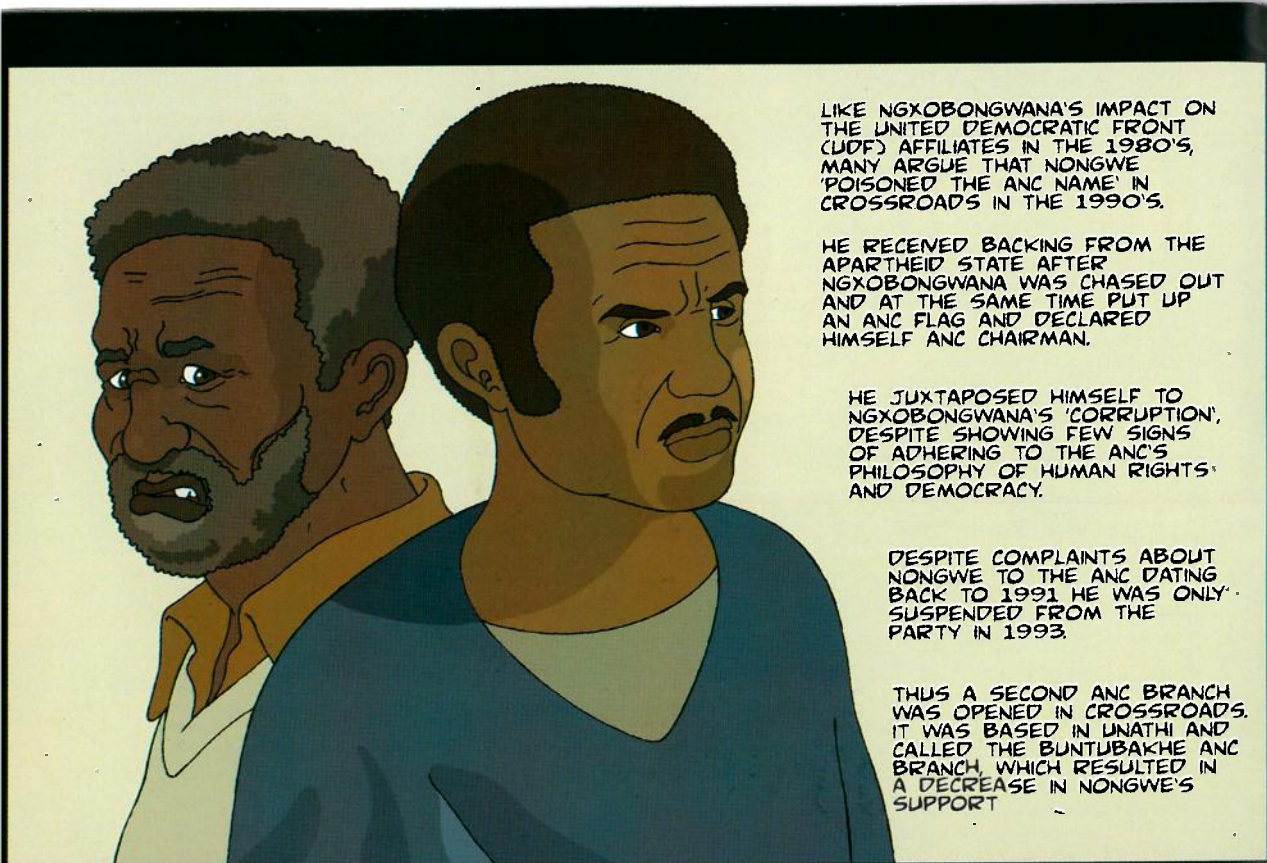
'I WAS SLEEPING AT A GARAGE WITH MY MOTHER AND CHILDREN...'



'AT THE BEGINNING NGXOBONGWANA WAS A GREAT LEADER WHO STOOD FOR PEOPLE'S RIGHTS. WHITE PEOPLE WERE ALSO SCARED OF HIM.'

'IF HE SEES THEM IT WAS AS IF HE SAW ANIMALS.'





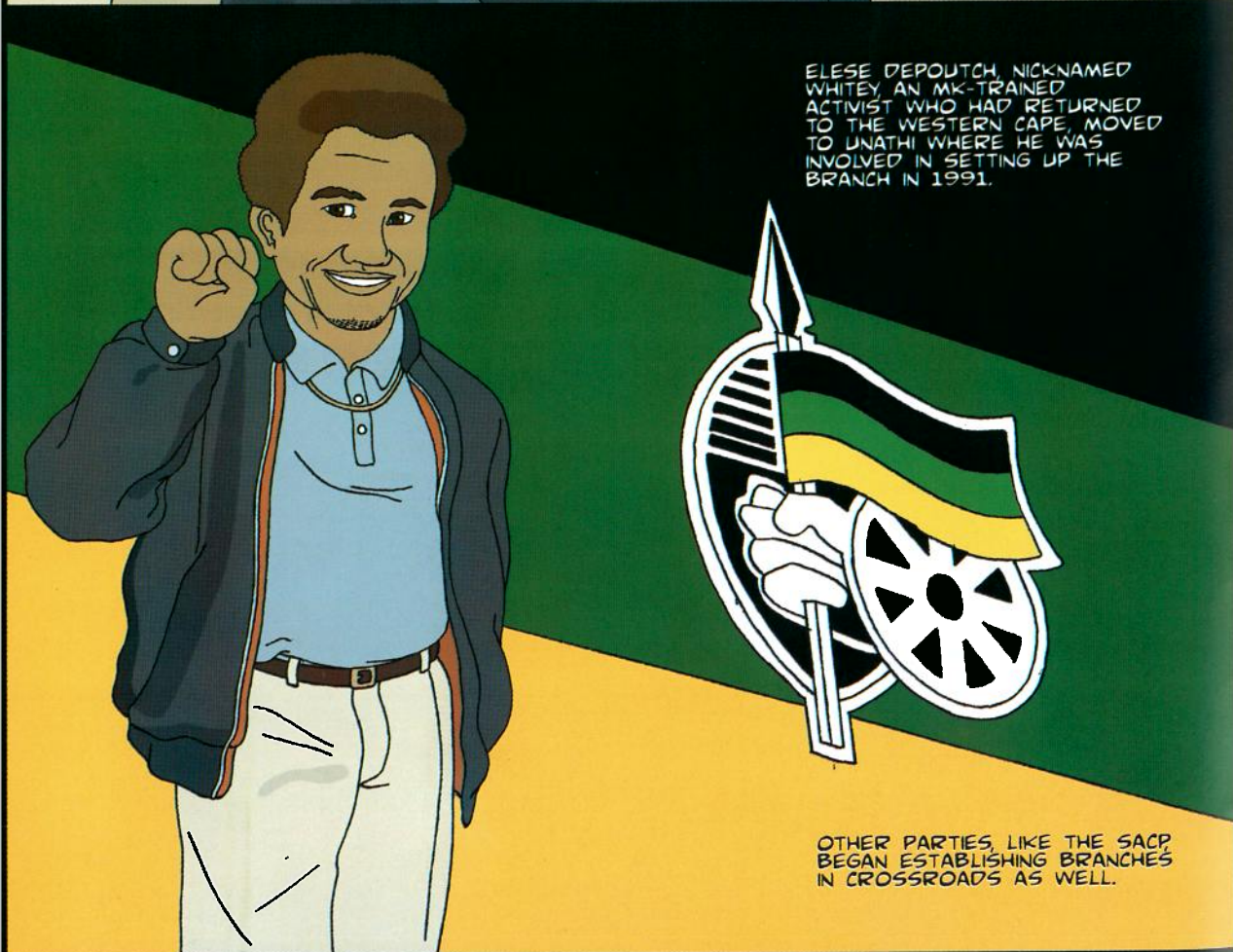
LIKE NGXOBONGWANA'S IMPACT ON THE UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT (UDF) AFFILIATES IN THE 1980'S, MANY ARGUE THAT NONGWE 'POISONED THE ANC NAME' IN CROSSROADS IN THE 1990'S.

HE RECEIVED BACKING FROM THE APARTHEID STATE AFTER NGXOBONGWANA WAS CHASED OUT AND AT THE SAME TIME PUT UP AN ANC FLAG AND DECLARED HIMSELF ANC CHAIRMAN.

HE JUXTAPOSED HIMSELF TO NGXOBONGWANA'S 'CORRUPTION', DESPITE SHOWING FEW SIGNS OF ADHERING TO THE ANC'S PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY.

DESPITE COMPLAINTS ABOUT NONGWE TO THE ANC DATING BACK TO 1991 HE WAS ONLY SUSPENDED FROM THE PARTY IN 1993.

THUS A SECOND ANC BRANCH WAS OPENED IN CROSSROADS. IT WAS BASED IN UNATHI AND CALLED THE BUNTUBAKHE ANC BRANCH, WHICH RESULTED IN A DECREASE IN NONGWE'S SUPPORT.



ELESE DEPOUTCH, NICKNAMED WHITEY, AN MK-TRAINED ACTIVIST WHO HAD RETURNED TO THE WESTERN CAPE, MOVED TO UNATHI WHERE HE WAS INVOLVED IN SETTING UP THE BRANCH IN 1991.

OTHER PARTIES, LIKE THE SACP BEGAN ESTABLISHING BRANCHES IN CROSSROADS AS WELL.



BETWEEN 1990 AND 1992 THE CAPE PROVINCIAL AUTHORITY (CPA) EMPOWERED NONGWE WITH CONTROL OVER 'UPGRADING.' THEY REGARDED HIM AS THE POPULAR LEADER AND HE WAS THE ONLY ONE CONSULTED.

THEY EXPECTED HIM TO INFORM HIS FOLLOWERS ABOUT THE PLANS AND TO PERSUADE THEM TO MOVE VOLUNTARILY TO TEMPORARY ALTERNATIVE SITES AT LOWER CROSSROADS. THE CPA ALSO EMPOWERED NONGWE TO APPOINT LABOURERS AND PRIVATE CONTRACTORS TO ASSIST IN THE RESETTLEMENT OF PEOPLE FROM CROSSROADS.

THESE RESETTLEMENTS WERE DONE BY FORCE AND VIOLENCE INCREASED BETWEEN MARCH TO JUNE 1993. THE CONFLICT WAS CONCENTRATED BETWEEN NONGWE AND HIS FOLLOWERS ON ONE HAND AND THE PEOPLE OF SECTIONS 2 AND 3 ON THE OTHER. THE HORRIFIC DETAILS OF THIS 'WAR' WHICH BEGAN IN MARCH 1993, INTENSIFIED IN APRIL AND EASED IN JUNE WHEN MOST OF SECTIONS 2 AND 3 WERE DESTROYED ARE CAPTURED IN THE PRESS AND IN THE SUBMISSIONS TO THE GOLDSTONE COMMISSION BY THE TRAUMA CENTER FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE AND TORTURE.

DISPLACED PEOPLE DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE:

'I FLED THE AREA WITH MY CHILDREN ON APRIL 15TH, AFTER THE BURNINGS. ALL WE HAVE LEFT ARE OUR TWO MATTRESSES. NOTHING ELSE. I STILL FEEL SHOCK AND AM NOT SLEEPING.'

'MY FATHER WAS SHOT. HE HAS BEEN HOSPITALIZED FOR THREE WEEKS. MY MOTHER HAS BEEN IN HIDING EVER SINCE.'

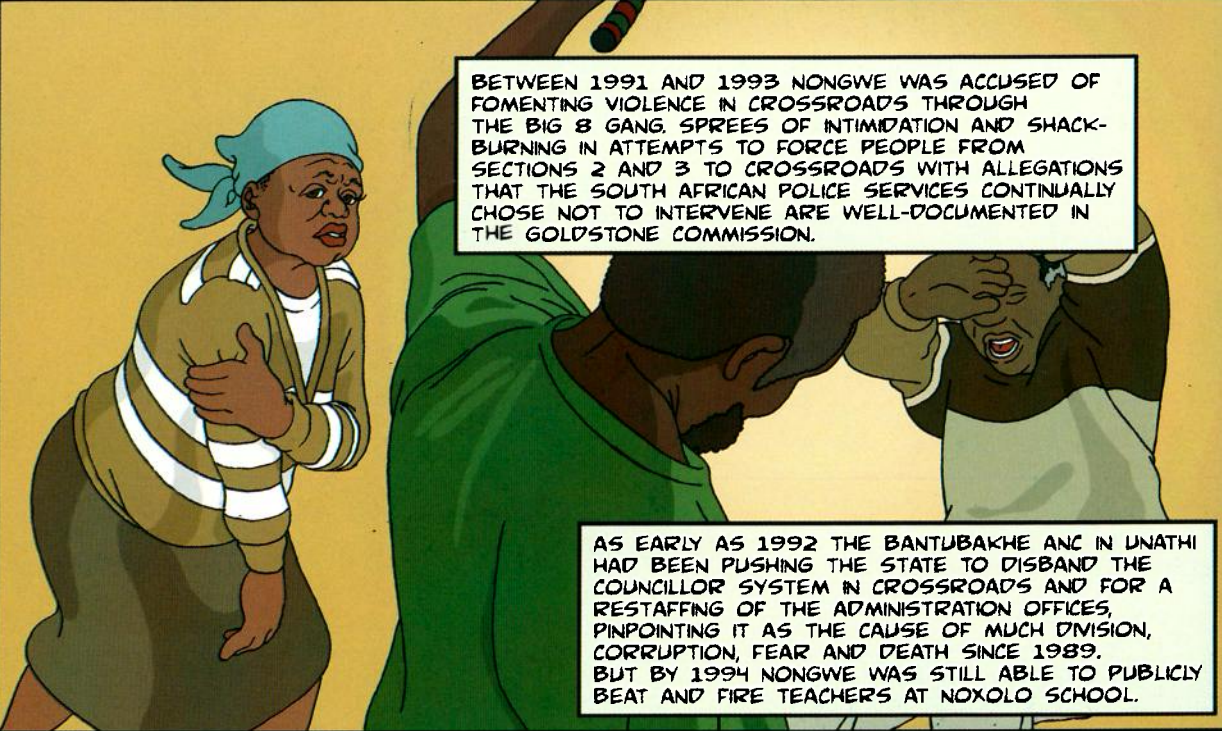
NOT ONLY WERE PEOPLE CHASED AWAY BUT THEY COULD NOT TAKE ANY OF THEIR SHACK MATERIALS WITH THEM.

NGXOBONGWANA'S 'RESIGNATION' RESULTED IN A STATE ADMINISTRATOR TAKING OVER AND NONGWE ASSUMING LEADERSHIP AS CHAIRMAN OF THE LOCAL BRANCH OF THE ANC AND THE CHAIR OF THE WESTERN CAPE UNITED SQUATTER ASSOCIATION (WECLISA).

NGXOBONGWANA'S DEPARTURE FROM THE AREA DID NOT DECREASE VIOLENT CONFLICT. THE TRC ARGUED THAT THE UNATHI CONFLICT HIGHLIGHTED THE WAYS IN WHICH THE UNDEMOCRATIC HEAD-MEN AND HOMEGUARD STYLE OF POLITICAL CONTROL WAS BEING REPLICATED IN THE ANC IN CROSSROADS IN THE 1990'S.







BETWEEN 1991 AND 1993 NONGWE WAS ACCUSED OF FOMENTING VIOLENCE IN CROSSROADS THROUGH THE BIG 8 GANG. SPREES OF INTIMIDATION AND SHACK-BURNING IN ATTEMPTS TO FORCE PEOPLE FROM SECTIONS 2 AND 3 TO CROSSROADS WITH ALLEGATIONS THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICES CONTINUALLY CHOSE NOT TO INTERVENE ARE WELL-DOCUMENTED IN THE GOLDSTONE COMMISSION.

AS EARLY AS 1992 THE BANTUBAKHE ANC IN UNATHI HAD BEEN PUSHING THE STATE TO DISBAND THE COUNCILLOR SYSTEM IN CROSSROADS AND FOR A RESTAFFING OF THE ADMINISTRATION OFFICES, PINPOINTING IT AS THE CAUSE OF MUCH DIVISION, CORRUPTION, FEAR AND DEATH SINCE 1989. BUT BY 1994 NONGWE WAS STILL ABLE TO PUBLICLY BEAT AND FIRE TEACHERS AT NOXOLO SCHOOL.

**CHALK  
DOWN**

**CHALK  
DOWN**

NONGWE'S COMMITTEE HAD INTERVENED IN THEIR 'CHALK DOWN' STRIKE, DEMANDING THEY RAISE PLACARDS SAYING 'UP TO NONGWE', OR BE DISMISSED.

**UP  
NONGWE**

**UP  
Nongwe**

TEACHERS ACCUSED HIS COMMITTEE OF 'BULLYING' AND 'DICTATING' DURING MEETINGS, DESPITE HAVING NO ELECTED POSITIONS FROM PARENTS OR TEACHERS.

THEY ALSO REPORTED A TIME WHEN HE 'SJAMBOKED AND SLAPPED THEM IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL CHILDREN.'



# CHRIS HANI



**Socialism  
is the  
Future**

THE TRAUMA CENTER ARGUED THAT THESE ATTACKS WERE 'NOT CO-INCIDENTALLY DURING THE GENERAL UNREST WHICH TOOK PLACE FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION OF CHRIS HANI.'

THE CENTER ARGUED THAT THESE WERE NOT RANDOM IRRATIONAL VIOLENCE BUT RATIONAL AND ORGANIZED TO A CERTAIN DEGREE, PLANNED TO ACHIEVE PARTICULAR OBJECTIVES. VIOLENCE HAS BEEN USED IN AN ORGANIZED FASHION TO CLEAR SECTIONS 2 AND 3 TO MAKE WAY FOR UPGRADING.



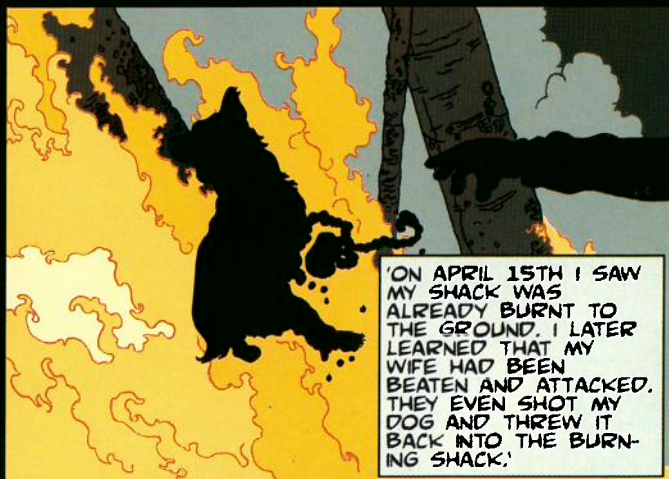
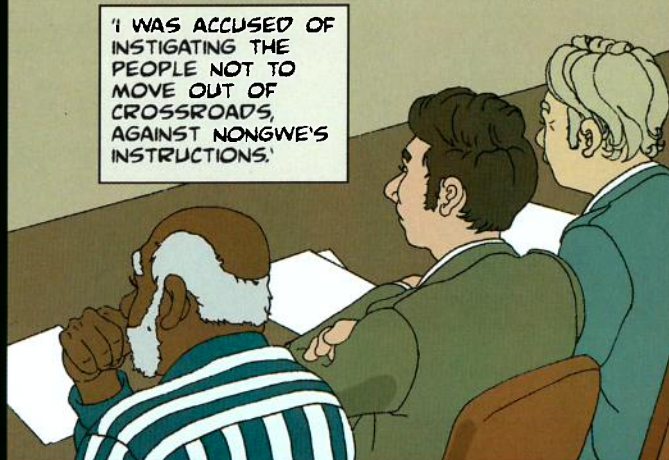
PRESS ARTICLES DEPICTED THE WAR ZONE. PHOTOGRAPHS SHOWED GROUPS OF MEN CARRYING AXES AND STATE MILITARY VEHICLES AND CASSPIRS IN CROSSROADS.

THE ATTACKS WERE POINTED AND A DIRECT RESPONSE TO PEOPLE REFUSING TO MOVE.



TESTIMONY PROVIDED AT THE GOLDSTONE COMMISSION:

'I WAS ACCUSED OF INSTIGATING THE PEOPLE NOT TO MOVE OUT OF CROSSROADS, AGAINST NONGWE'S INSTRUCTIONS.'

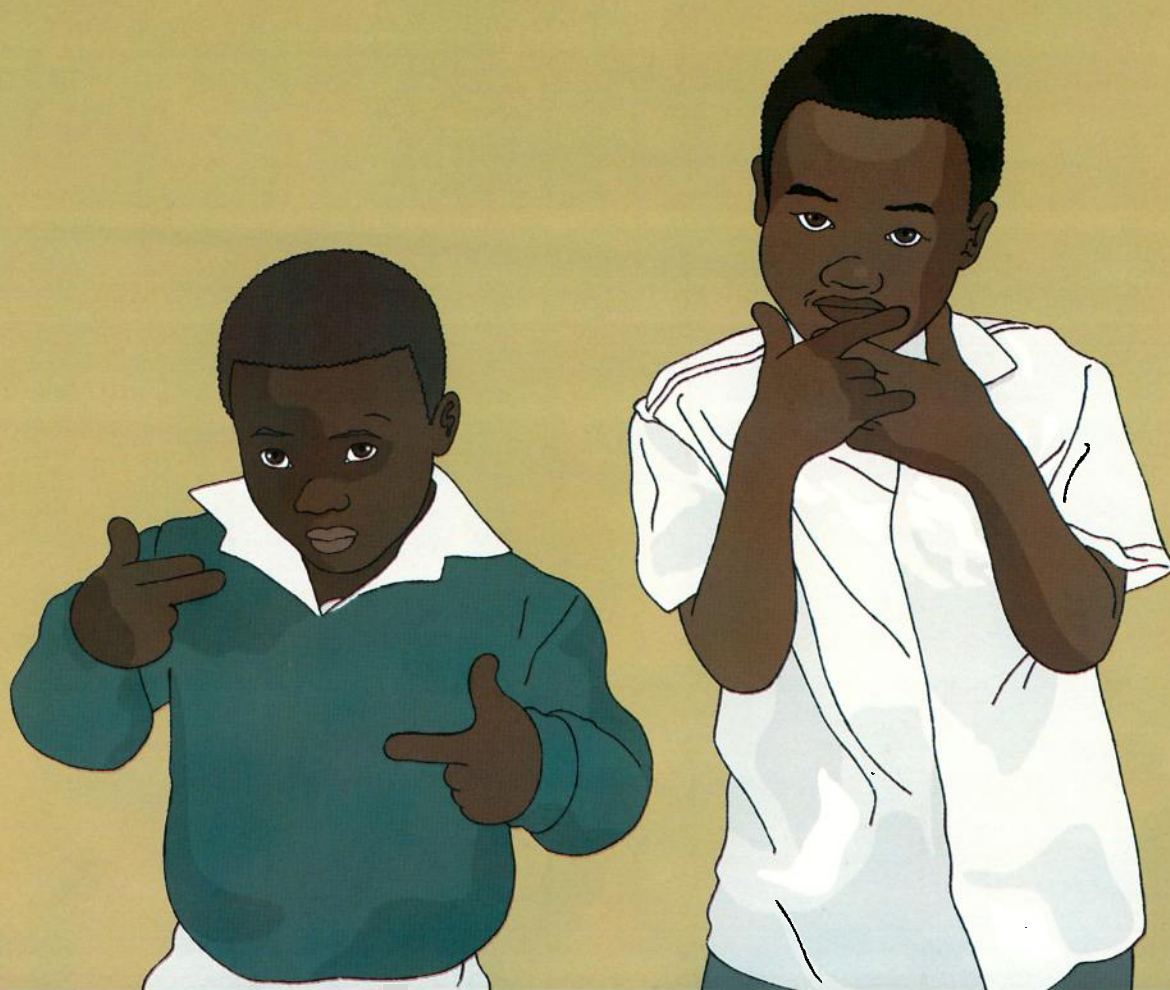


'ON APRIL 15TH I SAW MY SHACK WAS ALREADY BURNT TO THE GROUND. I LATER LEARNED THAT MY WIFE HAD BEEN BEATEN AND ATTACKED. THEY EVEN SHOT MY DOG AND THREW IT BACK INTO THE BURNING SHACK.'



BY JULY 1993 OVER 800 PEOPLE (ALMOST HALF OF WHICH WERE CHILDREN) HAD BEEN DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY ACTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF MARCH. THIS INCLUDED:

126 arsons in which people lost their homes and possessions; 50 cases of people abandoning their homes and fleeing crossroads because of violence and intimidation; 82 cases of attempted murder, resulting in serious injuries and, in some cases, permanent disability; at least 48 murders, nearly all men, nearly all breadwinners in their families; and at very minimum 10 cases of assault.





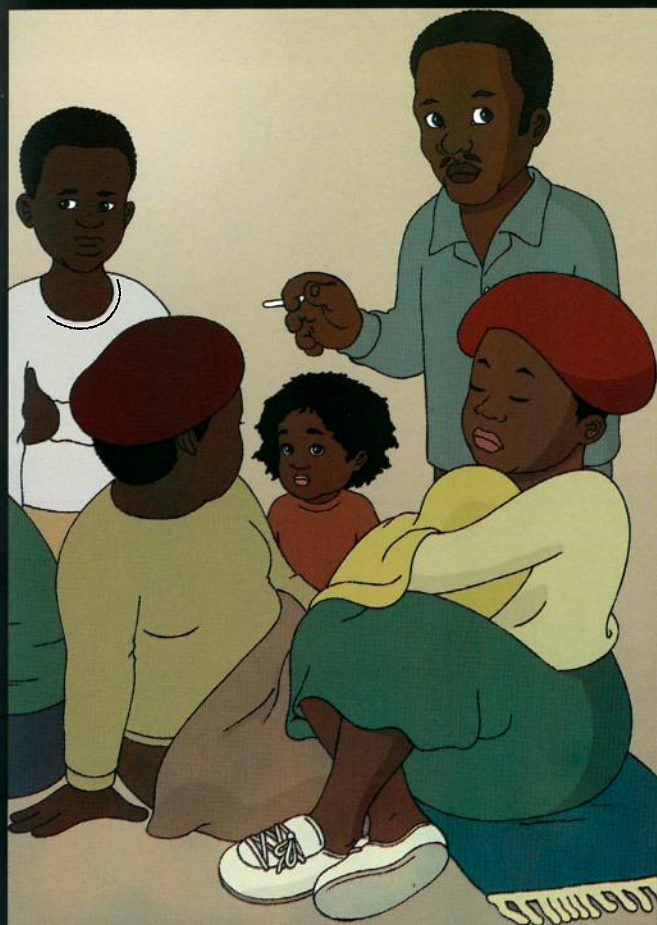


DURING THIS VIOLENCE NONGWE DEFECTORS FLED SECTION 4 IN 1993. THEY WENT TO STAY WITH FAMILIES ELSEWHERE IN CROSS-ROADS AND IN PARTICULAR THEY WERE TAKEN IN BY WOMEN IN UNATHI.

THESE WERE YOUNGSTERS ESCAPING THE TROUBLE BETWEEN NONGWE AND YOUTH, WHICH MEANT THAT NOW WOMEN WERE DIRECTLY INVOLVED AND VIOLENCE FROM EVERY QUARTER ESCALATES.

PIECING TOGETHER WHO WAS PUSHED WHERE IS VERY DIFFICULT. FOR EXAMPLE, DURING THIS TIME MANY PEOPLE HAD BEEN CHASED TO SECTION 4 WHEN A BLOODY PUTSCH REMOVED MR. TOISE FROM HIS LEADERSHIP IN BROWN'S FARM. 75 PEOPLE STAYED AT THE NYANGA POLICE STATION FOR THREE WEEKS BEFORE THEY FINALLY TOOK REFUGE WITH NONGWE IN SECTION 4 LIVING UNDER EXTREMELY HARSH CONDITIONS.

IT IS ALSO IMPOSSIBLE TO EXTRAPOLATE WHO WAS IN THE 'RIGHT' OR IN THE 'WRONG' DURING THIS TIME. THE TRAUMA CENTER DESCRIBES A SITUATION WHEREBY THE VICTIMS BECAME THE PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE IN SELF-DEFENSE AND THE PERPETRATORS BECAME THE VICTIMS.





IT WAS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT A GROUP OF WOMEN FORMED THE MOTHERS OF CROSSROADS, IN AN ATTEMPT TO BRING ATTENTION TO THE WAY THESE FORCED REMOVALS WERE BEING DONE WITH FORCE AND INCITING VIOLENCE.

THEY ATTEMPTED TO PUSH FOR PEACE AND PROTECT YOUTH WHO WERE TRYING TO GET OUT OF SECTION 4 WHERE VIOLENCE ENGULFED CROSSROADS IN 1993.



MAMA HAMSE:

THE PEOPLE OF UNATHI WERE KILLED BY PEOPLE OF SECTION 4, EVEN THIS VIOLENCE ERUPTED AMONGST THE YOUNGSTERS. THEY KILLED EACH OTHER IN THE DAM.



SINCE 1991 JOYCE NDIKISE ELESSE HAD CALLED UPON THE BLACK SASH AS HER FAMILY WAS CONSTANTLY BY THE SECURITY FORCES DUE TO THE INVOLVEMENT OF HER NEPHEW, ELESSE DEPOUTCH, WHO WOULD LATER BECOME THE ANC COUNCILLOR OF CROSSROADS. WOMAN APPROACHING THE BLACK SASH ONLY IRRITATED NONGWE. FINDING LITTLE SOLUTION TO THE GUN VIOLENCE IN THE AREA CROSSROADS WOMEN WERE JOINED BY WOMEN IN THE SURROUNDING NYANGA AREA TO JOIN FORCES IN SEARCH OF SOLUTIONS. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME IN AGES THAT NEIGHBOURS IN NYANGA DARED TO GET INVOLVED. ALMOST A DECADE AFTER WITDOEKE, VETERAN LEADER'S LIKE MAMA NTONGANA, LIVING IN NEW CROSSROADS WOULD NO MORE HAVE CROSSED INTO OLD CROSSROADS TERRITORY THAN A GANG MEMBER IN CHICAGO WOULD HAVE PENETRATED INTO SOME OTHER GANG'S TURF.



MAMA HAMSE EXPLAINS HOW THE WOMEN'S PEACE MOVEMENT WAS FORMED:

'I WAS A MEMBER OF THE WOMEN'S PEACE ORGANIZATION AT MFESANE WITH MR. DESMOND TUTU AND MRS. LEYA. I WILL TELL YOU WHY... THERE WAS A SURGE OF VIOLENCE AROUND HERE EVEN IN LOWER CROSSROAD.' 'MANY PEOPLE DIED AND I HAD TO GO TO LOWER CROSSROAD BECAUSE I USED TO LIVE WITH SOME OF THEM HERE IN SECTION 1.'

'WE SEPARATED BECAUSE OF THE FORCED REMOVALS. I ASKED THE BLACK SASH TO INTERFERE WHEN WE HAD PROBLEMS. THEN MRS. NGUNWAYO SKOTI AND VAAL CHRISTIE USED TO ATTEND THE MEETINGS.'

1994 HAD NOT BROUGHT PEACE TO CROSSROADS: 'SOME OF THE HOUSES WERE BURNT AND THEY APPROACHED RED CROSS TO SUPPLY THEM WITH FOOD AND CLOTHES.'



'WE USED TO HAVE SOME MEETINGS TO GET THEM TO BE PART OF THE ORGANIZATION SO THAT WE CAN TRY TO CREATE PEACE AMONGST WOMEN. SO WE USED TO HOLD MEETINGS WITH WOMEN AT THE NYANGA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.'

'THEN WE ASKED ANOTHER GUY CALLED ROMAN FROM THE EASTERN CAPE TO HAVE SOME WORKSHOPS WITH US. THE AIM OF THE WORKSHOPS WAS TO UNITE PEOPLE BECAUSE THE HOUSES BY THAT TIME WERE DEMOLISHED. SO VIOLENCE WAS STILL BREWING AT THAT TIME.'





THE MOTHERS OF CROSSROADS APPROACHED OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS BUT UNLIKE IN EARLIER DECADES THEY FOUND LITTLE LASTING SUCCESS.

WITHDRAWAL OF OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS HAD BEGUN IN THE MID-1980'S. BUT WOMEN PUSHED TO FIND OUTSIDE SUPPORT AND BY 1993 THEY FOUND ENCOURAGEMENT FROM CONCERNED INDIVIDUALS FROM VARIOUS CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND WOMEN NGO'S.

FROM MARCH 1993 THE TRAUMA CENTER BEGAN TO CONVENE WEEKLY MEETINGS WITH SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES, PEACE MONITORS AND CHURCH GROUPS TO SHARE INFORMATION ON VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE.

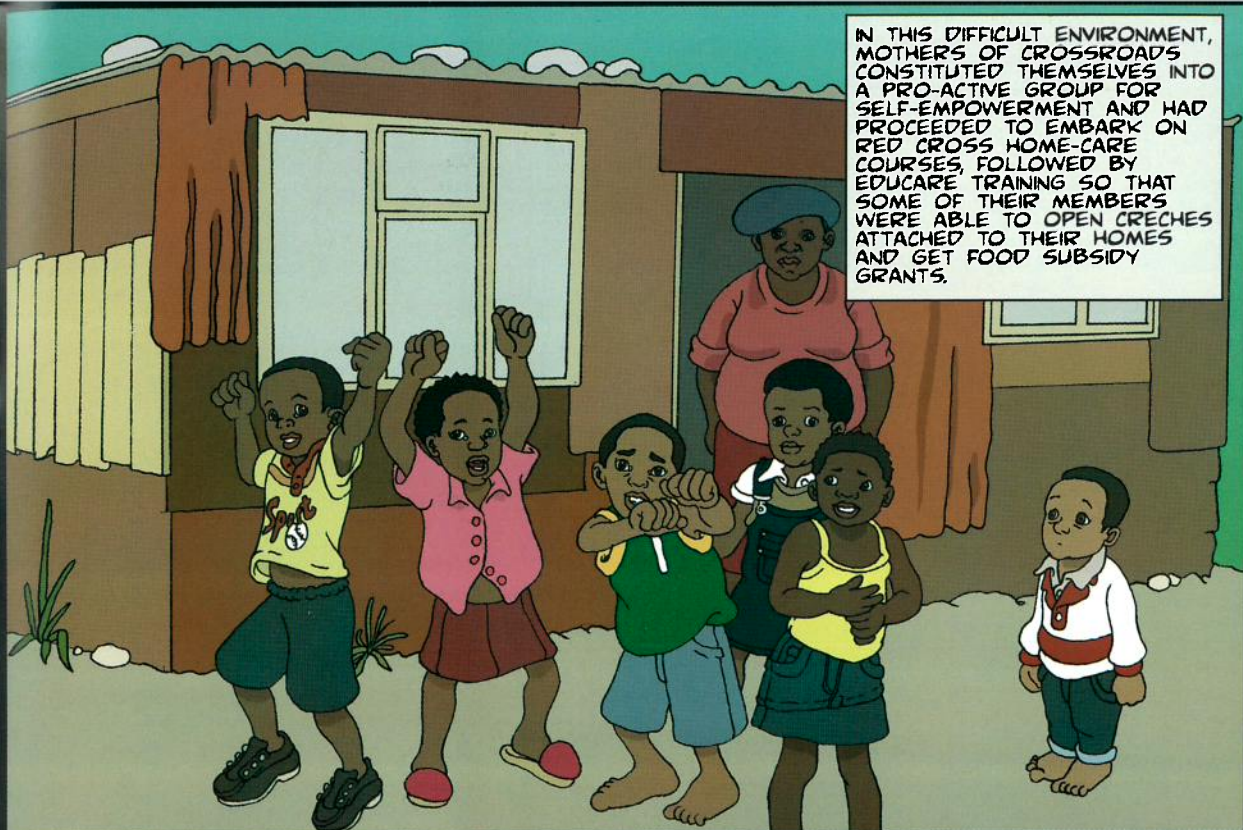
THIS INCLUDED THE RED CROSS, SHAWCO, THE LOCAL PEACE COMMITTEE, VARIOUS MONITORS AND THE BLACK SASH. THESE GROUPS WERE SKEPTICAL OF WHAT WOULD CONSTITUTE THE MOST APPROPRIATE AND POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE IN CROSSROADS AT THAT TIME.

IN 1993 CROSSROADS WOMEN SET UP A ROOM TO COLLECT FOOD AND CLOTHES; DESPITE THEIR ENERGY FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, WHEN THEY ASKED THE BLACK SASH TO RUN THE ROOM TO DISTRIBUTE FOOD AND CLOTHES, THE SASH DECLINED.

IT WAS A TIME WHEN "THE CIVICS WERE NOT ALLOWED TO BE STRONG AND OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS WERE HESITANT TO GET INVOLVED YET SAW THE NEED."







IN THIS DIFFICULT ENVIRONMENT, MOTHERS OF CROSSROADS CONSTITUTED THEMSELVES INTO A PRO-ACTIVE GROUP FOR SELF-EMPOWERMENT AND HAD PROCEEDED TO EMBARK ON RED CROSS HOME-CARE COURSES, FOLLOWED BY EDUCARE TRAINING SO THAT SOME OF THEIR MEMBERS WERE ABLE TO OPEN CRECHES ATTACHED TO THEIR HOMES AND GET FOOD SUBSIDY GRANTS.



THE MOTHERS OF CROSSROADS WAS INITIATED OUT OF CONCERN FOR YOUTH BEING KILLED IN THE HOUSING CONFLICT AND EXTENDED TO EDUCATING AND FEEDING CHILDREN. THEY ALSO STRATEGIZED ABOUT HOW TO INTERVENE IN PEACE POLITICS, INCLUDING PUSHING FOR AN ENQUIRY INTO THE CONFLICT.

MAMA HAMSE: 'WE APPROACHED WOMEN FROM LOWER CROSSROADS AND PEOPLE FROM BOYS TOWN TO TEACH THEM FIRST AID TRAINING THIS WAS OUR FIRST STEP THEY RECEIVED FIRST AID CERTIFICATES AND AFTER THAT WE HAD MEETINGS AT MFESANE. THE AIMS OF THE WORKSHOP WAS FOR WOMEN TO HAVE PRESCHOOLS, GARDENS AND SOME MUST BE INVOLVED IN SEWING.'





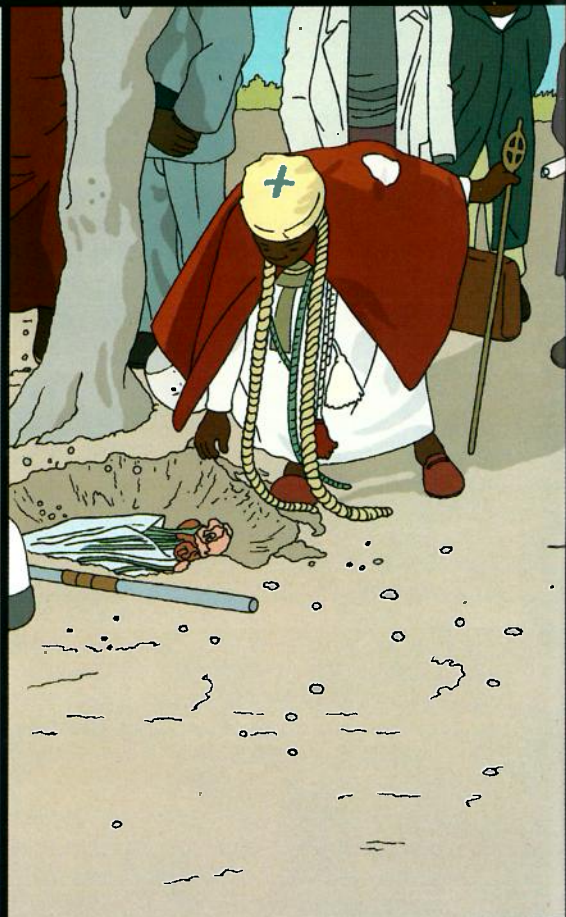
JUST AS WOMEN WERE GAINING MOMENTUM, JOYCE NDINISE ESESE WAS KILLED ON 19 MARCH 1993, WHEN MASKED GUNMEN BURST INTO HER HOUSE, ALLEGELY LOOKING FOR HER NEPHEW.

ANNE GREENWELL: 'HER DEATH PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN DEFLATING WOMEN'S MOBILIZING AS THE PRICE OF STANDING OUT AS AN INITIATOR OF ALTERNATIVES WAS CLEARLY VERY HIGH.'

JOYCE ESESE WOULD HAVE BEEN THE BACKBONE OF THE MOTHERS OF CROSSROADS BUT HER MURDER IN MARCH WAS THE FINAL STRAW IN ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE. OTHER KEY LEADERS WERE INTIMIDATED. MAMA DASI FOR EXAMPLE WAS CHASED TO KHAYELITSHA. IN RESPONSE TO NDINISE'S DEATH THE MOTHERS WENT TO LOCAL CIVICS, TO FORCE THE ISSUE AND TO GET ACTION.



THE MOTHERS OF CROSSROADS WENT TO THE PROVINCE AND DEMANDED AN ENQUIRY. THEY TOOK BIG RISKS GIVING STATEMENTS BEFORE THE COMMISSION. THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT TURNING POINT IN TENSIONS WITHIN CROSSROADS THAT THESE WOMEN NEVER RECEIVED ENOUGH RECOGNITION FOR.



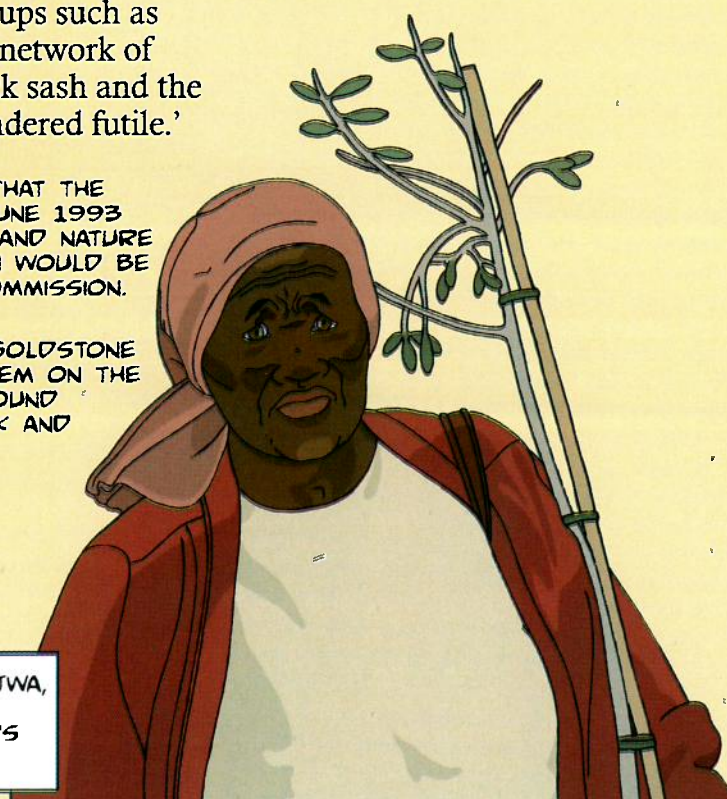


THE GOLDSTONE COMMISSION DEPICTED A SCENARIO WHERE NO ORGANIZED GROUPS HAD BOTH THE POWER AND THE WILL TO PUT AN END TO THE ARMED CONFLICT IN THE AREA:

'Violence and intimidation was of such a nature and degree that law enforcement in the area proved to be ineffectual, and efforts at peace-brokering by various groups such as the local peace committee, the network of independent monitors, the black sash and the local branch of the anc was rendered futile.'

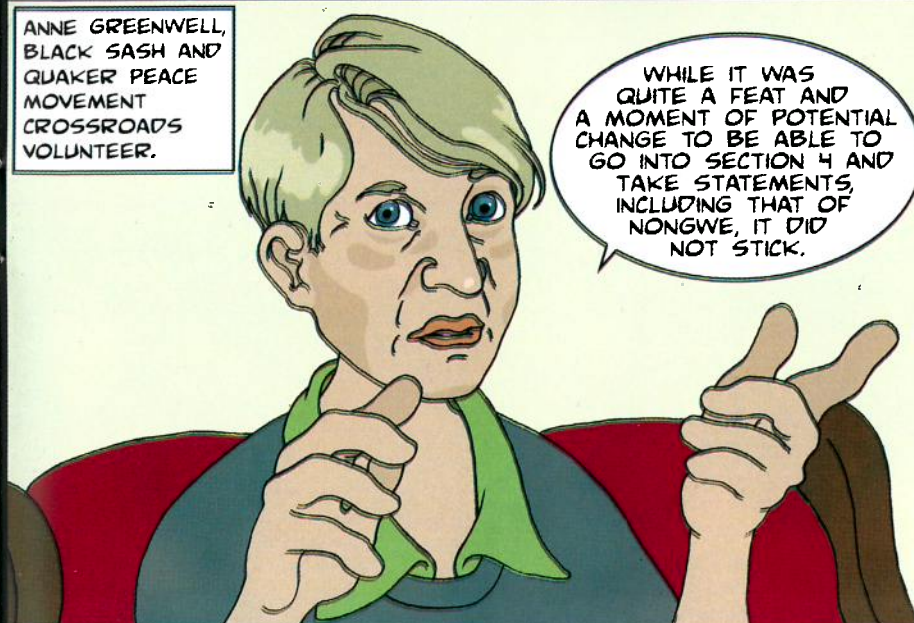
IT WAS AGAINST THIS BACKDROP THAT THE COMMISSION ANNOUNCED ON 18 JUNE 1993 THAT AN INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSE AND NATURE OF THE VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION WOULD BE HELD BY A COMMITTEE OF THE COMMISSION.

MAMA HAMSE: WE WENT TO THE GOLDSTONE COMMISSION AND LAID THE PROBLEM ON THE TABLE AND WE HAD A MARCH AROUND CROSSROADS WITH ALLAN BOESAK AND DESMOND TUTU.



SUSAN CODJWA,  
MOTHER OF  
CROSSROADS  
MEMBER.

ANNE GREENWELL,  
BLACK SASH AND  
QUAKER PEACE  
MOVEMENT  
CROSSROADS  
VOLUNTEER.



WHILE IT WAS  
QUITE A FEAT AND  
A MOMENT OF POTENTIAL  
CHANGE TO BE ABLE TO  
GO INTO SECTION 4 AND  
TAKE STATEMENTS,  
INCLUDING THAT OF  
NONGWE, IT DID  
NOT STICK.

1994 CAME AND WENT  
IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF  
ONGOING TENSION. IT  
WAS ONLY IN MARCH  
1995 THAT A PEACE  
DECLARATION WAS  
SIGNED BETWEEN  
SECTION 2, 4, BOYS  
TOWN, NEW REST  
UNATHI AND PHASE 1.



MOST BLACK WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA EXPERIENCED THE 1980'S AS WAR. WHEN SOCIOLOGIST JACKLYN COCK SURVEYED WOMEN IN THE EARLY 1980'S AND ASKED IF THERE WAS A WAR GOING ON IN SOUTH AFRICA, SOME WHITE WOMEN SAID YES AND SOME SAID NO, BUT ALL BLACK WOMEN SHE INTERVIEWED DESCRIBED THE SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA AS WAR.





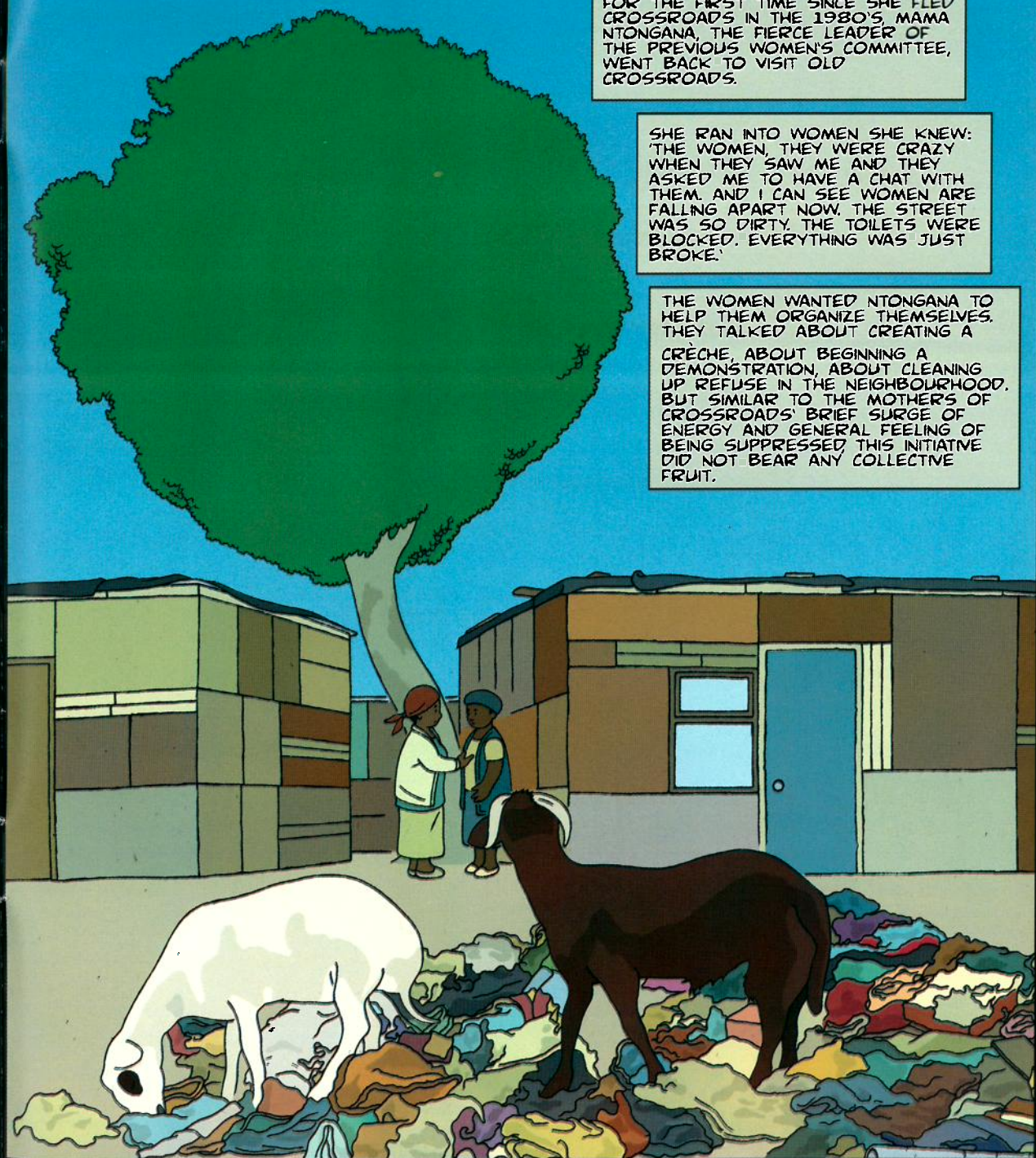
CONFLICT INCREASED  
IN THE EARLY 1990'S  
ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

IN CROSSROADS WOMEN FELT UNWELCOME  
TO PARTICIPATE IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC  
SPACES AS A GROUP, BUT INDIVIDUAL WOMEN  
CONTINUED TO ATTEMPT TO ENGAGE.

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE SHE FLED  
CROSSROADS IN THE 1980'S, MAMA  
NTONGANA, THE FIERCE LEADER OF  
THE PREVIOUS WOMEN'S COMMITTEE,  
WENT BACK TO VISIT OLD  
CROSSROADS.

SHE RAN INTO WOMEN SHE KNEW:  
'THE WOMEN, THEY WERE CRAZY  
WHEN THEY SAW ME AND THEY  
ASKED ME TO HAVE A CHAT WITH  
THEM. AND I CAN SEE WOMEN ARE  
FALLING APART NOW. THE STREET  
WAS SO DIRTY. THE TOILETS WERE  
BLOCKED. EVERYTHING WAS JUST  
BROKE.'

THE WOMEN WANTED NTONGANA TO  
HELP THEM ORGANIZE THEMSELVES.  
THEY TALKED ABOUT CREATING A  
CRÈCHE, ABOUT BEGINNING A  
DEMONSTRATION, ABOUT CLEANING  
UP REFUSE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.  
BUT SIMILAR TO THE MOTHERS OF  
CROSSROADS' BRIEF SURGE OF  
ENERGY AND GENERAL FEELING OF  
BEING SUPPRESSED THIS INITIATIVE  
DID NOT BEAR ANY COLLECTIVE  
FRUIT.





SOUTH AFRICA WAS CELEBRATED FOR ITS LIBERATION WITHOUT A WAR AND ITS AVOIDANCE OF POST-COLONIAL CIVIL WARFARE, BUT THIS IGNORES NOT ONLY THE BLOODSHED AND EXPERIENCES OF DISPLACED PEOPLE IN CROSSROADS BUT ALSO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SYSTEM THAT WOULD CONTINUE TO BENEFIT THE WHITE MINORITY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE BLACK MAJORITY, WELL BEYOND THE APARTHEID ERA.

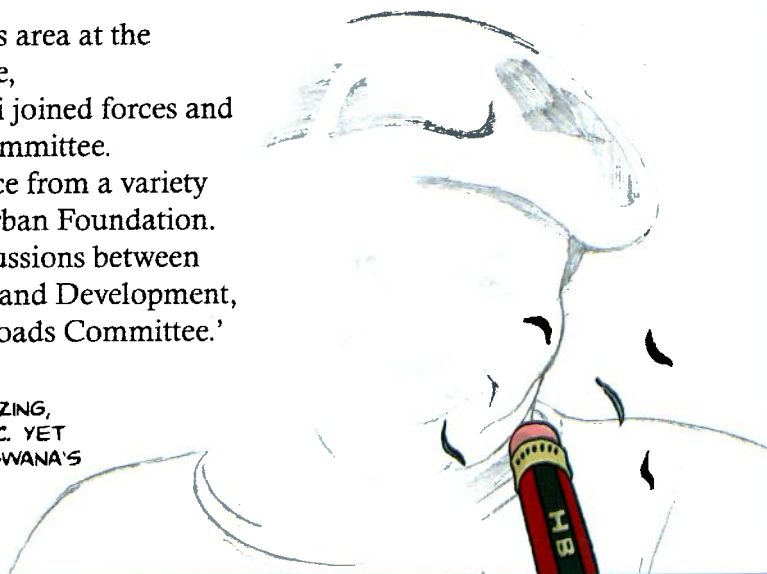
WITDOEKE PAVED THE WAY FOR A REWRITING OF THE HISTORY OF CROSSROADS.

IN THE CASE OF OFFICIAL COMMISSIONS ON WITDOEKE, THE LEADERS WERE HIGHLIGHTED. FOR EXAMPLE, GOLDSTONE DESCRIBES CROSSROADS' PAST AS FOLLOWS:



'The two leaders in the Crossroads area at the time of defiance and resistance, J. Ngxobongwana and O. Memani joined forces and formed the United Crossroads Committee. This committee obtained assistance from a variety of organizations, including the Urban Foundation. These organizations facilitated discussions between the then Minister of Cooperation and Development, Dr. Piet Koornhof and the Crossroads Committee.'

NO MENTION OF THE WOMEN'S MOBILIZING, NO MENTION OF THE BLACK SASH, ETC. YET EVERY SINGLE LEADER OF NGXOBONGWANA'S OPPOSITION IS NAMED.



THIS NOT ONLY ERASES WOMEN FROM THE PAST, IT ALSO HIDES HOW THEIR MOBILIZING WAS SPECIFICALLY ATTACKED AND THEIR ISSUES SILENCED.





## crossroads

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History: Koni Benson

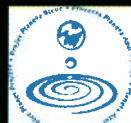
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If only capitalism feeding off of racism and sexism to determine who has shelter and water and food and all the basics was history. Watch this space and find out what happens in the struggle to survive and thrive in Cape Town over the course of twenty years.

McKENNA 2015 Nov.

Check <http://crossroads-project.eu.pn/> for further reading and references