

was a man of any parts, though he never lost his interest in engineering which stood him in good stead during critical times in his life. The author has made use of a wide range of photos, illustrations and newspaper clippings from the Warren family archives well as many other images and maps that enhance to book enormously. Most impressively, Shillington has written a most readable biography on a very interesting personality during the heyday of the British Empire. This is a book accessible to a wide readership which will surely find much to enjoy and savour within its pages.

*War party: How the ANC's political killings are breaking South Africa*  
(Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2020, 255pp, ISBN: 9780624088233)

**G Arde**

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In his monumental book *War party*, journalist Greg Arde takes readers to the controversies in KwaZulu-Natal as he reveals the deadly nexus between politics, organised crime and the notorious taxi industry. In so doing, Arde tries to tie together all the strands of the stories on political killings – especially those that are as yet unknown to the general public. He tells us that it is only a few journalists and researchers who have this information. The book is clustered into three parts. The first discusses the killing fields of KwaZulu-Natal, while part two delves into the violent actions of the taxi industry. Part three of the book looks into the African National Congress (ANC) and its control of the city of Durban.

It is key to mention that all the three parts are complementary to one another, because they resonate around the relationship between the ANC, the ruling party, which by collective action – be it through commission or omission – is instigating and perpetuating violence as a means of exerting its power and thereby gaining material benefits. The reviewer thus takes the position that for anyone who is interested in truly understanding the current issues in the ANC and why things began to fall apart during Jacob Zuma's tenure, this book is a vital source. Arde's publication is not only relevant but it is vital

reading because it explains how the ANC has changed from being a liberation movement into being what he calls a “war party”.

KwaZulu-Natal has been plagued by political violence since the 1980s and early 1990s and Arde takes the reader back to the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) *versus* ANC conflicts when the parties fought one another for political dominance in the province. Arde then goes on to highlight how inter-party conflict between two antagonists later changed into intra-party warfare, with members of the ANC fighting each other for positions in government institutions and party structures. Furthermore, political violence in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) can be traced to the assassination of Sifiso Nkabinde, a wealthy political strongman and warlord who once served as member of the ANC KZN provincial legislature. Arde explains that Nkabinde’s death in 1999 served as a starting point and breeding ground for revenge killings which took hold from the early 2000s.

The dominance of the ANC in KZN from 2004 onwards exacerbated political violence in the province. Arde’s book notes that killings associated with intra-party killings in KZN began as a result of contestation for political positions such as ward councillor and mayoral posts especially after 2007 when Jacob Zuma became the president of the ANC. Although Arde doesn’t dwell much on the socio-economic status of these hopeful ANC councillor candidates, the reviewer is of the opinion that many have little in the way of a formal educational background and do not possess administrative or managerial skills. Furthermore, they have large and extended families of dependants who rely on them for support. Thus, holding public office is seen as a way of amassing wealth by looting state resources at the expense of ordinary citizens.

At the epicentre of these killings is ANC-factionalism. Allegedly, the party has divided itself into sub-groups and Arde points out how the events of the ANC’s 2007 National Elective Conference held in Polokwane paved the way for factional politics in the ANC. For instance, the eThekweni Municipality was the primary political support base for the Zuma faction. Arde and others have highlighted that there was indeed a widespread sense in South Africa that the country was being run from Durban during Zuma’s presidency. This reviewer is reminded of the words spoken in 2014 by President Thabo Mbeki, Zuma’s predecessor. Mbeki indicated that when a minister is appointed in a certain region, officials from the same region will almost certainly be appointed in that department. This practice was termed the “homeboy” phenomenon by Mbeki.

Arde's *War party* reveals that factionalism and intra-party killings are heavily influenced by corruption committed by government officials, and that those who do not approve of such corrupt practices are intimidated and even assassinated. He provides a case study of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) general-secretary, the late Sindiso Magaqa who was assassinated for voicing his grievances about corruption in the uMzimkhulu Local Municipality. Drawing from Arde's analysis throughout the book, it is clear to the reviewer that politicians in KwaZulu-Natal tend to eliminate everything or anyone who is an obstacle to the exploitation and squandering of state resources. Political killings occur frequently in KwaZulu-Natal as a result of contestation for tenders and government contracts from different factions within the party, and this also includes ineffective policing. Because one faction wants to "eat", members of an opposition faction are targeted ruthlessly. This practice received its nickname from Senzo Mchunu who is reputed to have said: "...my turn to eat has come".

The KwaZulu-Natal provincial government established a commission of inquiry chaired by advocate Marumo Moerane, to investigate the factors perpetuating political violence in the province. Sadly, many of the findings by the commission made no difference at all to the widespread corruption. Arde quotes Bheki Cele who dismissed the commission as mere "storytelling, ... a waste of money".

This reviewer argues that in his publication Arde neglects to discuss the proliferation of firearms and ammunition in KZN and the reality that this leads to countless assassinations. There were certainly weapons that came into KZN during the conflicts of the 1980s and 1990s. Apart from those supplied to the ANC by solidarity movements and overseas anti-apartheid organisations weapons were also provided by various sources such as the apartheid government's police (known as the *Vlakplaas* weapons), from the South African Defence Force and also weapons associated with the Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging (AWB). We are told that the AWB distributed weapons to IFP members with the sole intention of destroying the ANC and its supporters. However, after 1994, many of these weapons were never recovered by the ANC government. Today they haunt KZN and lead to uncontrollable killings.

Arde provides an analysis of another site of violence in KwaZulu-Natal – the taxi industry. This is the most vital industry in the country and it serves as cover for all sorts of criminals, including taxi bosses, politicians, influential and prominent families in KwaZulu-Natal. This is the industry that moves an

estimated 75% of the population every day. Without it, the economy would grind to a halt and decline drastically. It is clear that the taxi industry generates a great deal of money, most of it is not touched by the South African Revenue Services (SARS). This being so, competition for the control of the strategic taxi routes has led to spiralling violence and assassinations.

The taxi industry is controlled by greed. Members of the different taxi associations fight each other for long distance routes and government tenders. Arde goes as far as tapping into the GO! It is a Durban initiative, the public transport system involving buses and taxis. Arde reveals how contracts for this initiative were awarded without any consultation with other taxi associations. This serves as evidence that government contracts and tenders are frequently awarded unfairly through patronage networks. In his fearless analysis of the taxi industry politics, Arde mentions names of most feared taxi families and individuals such as the Gcaba family, Elias “Sputla” Mpungose, Qithi Khumalo, Romeo Mbambo, and the Mpisane family. As a means of dominating the industry, taxi bosses tend to make use of contract killers, “*izinkabi*”, famously known as hitmen, who are employed to carryout assassinations. These hitmen allegedly work as private security/bodyguards to some of the local politicians in KZN.

Arde’s stories in chapter after chapter are linked to particular events and named people; they highlight that the controversial KZN province is a hotbed of political violence, one that has become institutionalised in South Africa. The politics of patronage and impunity continue to compromise South Africa’s constitutional state and break it down. Countless crimes committed have never been accounted for. The ANC has indeed turned into a “war party” and South Africa is increasingly becoming a mafia-state where might is right, and big guns are calling the shots.

The plague of violence has become a defining aspect of the ANC-led government and sadly, this reviewer feels compelled to conclude that never in their wildest dreams, did the founding fathers of the ANC ever imagine, when they met in Mangaung (Bloemfontein) in 1912, that they were in actual fact creating a monster, a criminal enterprise of syndicates. The post-apartheid ANC-led government seems to exist for no other reason or purpose than to loot squander state resources.

One may quote the United States Republican Party strategist, Stuart Stevens, who wrote: “A party without a governing theory, a higher purpose or a clear moral direction is nothing more than a cartel, a syndicate that exists only to advance itself. There’s no organised, coherent purpose other than the acquisition and maintenance of power.” This reviewer draws the conclusion that when Stuart made this statement, it was as if he was looking at the present day African National Congress.