

Third World Legal Studies

Volume 14 *The Governance of Internal Security Forces
in Sub-Saharan Africa*

Article 8

1-8-1997

Human Rights and the Structure of Internal Security Forces – South Africa: Historical Background

Greg Moran

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholar.valpo.edu/twls>

Recommended Citation

Moran, Greg (1997) "Human Rights and the Structure of Internal Security Forces – South Africa: Historical Background," *Third World Legal Studies*: Vol. 14, Article 8.

Available at: <http://scholar.valpo.edu/twls/vol14/iss1/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Valparaiso University Law School at ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Third World Legal Studies by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE STRUCTURE OF INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES

SOUTH AFRICA: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

By Greg Moran *

The apartheid policies that characterised most of the period of colonial rule, both formally (after 1948) and informally before, left an indelible mark on the consciousness of South Africans, (and on the map of the country prior to 1994). The policy of creating separate homelands for each of the black ethnic groupings and pushing these to independence to ensure the survival of white South Africa, lead to the creation of numerous police and armed forces. The records of all of these are severely blemished and their histories steeped in blood.

At present, moves are afoot to incorporate all of these security forces into unified bodies: the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) and the South African Police Services (SAPS). This process is slow and not without difficulty, but there is a sense that at last these forces will be used to protect citizens, rather than wage war on them.

I. EARLY HISTORY 1652-1910

The first white settlers arrived in South Africa in 1652, when Jan Van Riebeck arrived at the Cape. Van Riebeck set up the first settlement as part of the Dutch East India Company. The Cape remained under Dutch control until it was annexed by Britain in September 1795. The British returned the colony to the Batavian Republic in 1803, but re-occupied it in 1806. The colony was formally ceded to Britain after the defeat of Napoleon in 1815.

Apart from the latter part of the 19th Century, when the Boer Republics of Orange-Vrysaat (subsequently the Orange Free State) and the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (subsequently the Transvaal) were independent of British rule, the defences of internal policing policies

* Lawyer with the Constitutional Law Project, South Africa

of South Africa were determined by the British, who retained control of South Africa until independence was granted in 1961.

Early police and armed forces in South Africa were usually expected to perform both police and defence roles. Dutch settlers in 1652 were immediately faced with problems of theft and attacks on their settlement by indigenous people. The original settlement was defended by a small detachment of mercenaries from Holland. The outlying farmers formed small bands to protect their property.

In 1657, a Fiscal was appointed to oversee defence of the infant colony. He was succeeded by a "Ratelwag" (estimated: 3 July 1686 and consisting of ten settlers under the command of a Sergeant and a Corporal). The role of the Ratelwag was to prevent, rather than investigate crime; it continued in this form until 1792. It was during this period that the first police station opened in South Africa. The Ratelwag then became the Dienaars, to serve during daylight hours, and a night watch known as the Nagwag.

The Nagwag and Dienaars were retained by the British when they annexed the Cape in 1795. Police personnel at the time were all male and were drawn from the ranks of discharged sailors and soldiers. On 1 November 1835, the Nagwag and Dienaars were replaced by the Cape Constabulary. At the same time, a number of semi-military police forces had been established in the outlying areas of Cape Town. All existing police units in the Cape were re-organised into one force in 1885: the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police (FAMP). The FAMP was intended to perform police duties, but the succession of frontier wars against local inhabitants meant that this force was often involved in warfare rather than police duties.

Dutch settlers, unhappy with British rule, had been fleeing the Cape for some time. In the 1850s, they set up two Boer Republics. (The term "Boer" literally translates as farmer. This term has become synonymous with the Dutch settler, most of whom were farmers). The two Republics became known as the Orange Free State and Transvaal. They re-introduced the system of Commandos to act both as a military

and police force. In 1862, the Orange Free State created the Orange-Vrystaat Republikensche Politie (OVRP).

In 1877, Britain re-annexed the Transvaal, but was eventually driven out by the Boers, who formed the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek Politie (ZARP) in 1881. In 1878, the FAMP was disbanded and replaced by the Cape Mounted Rifles (CMR). The Cape Police were replaced by the CMR in 1882. In the British colony of Natal, the Natal Mounted Police came into being in 1884.

The British continued seizing land around the borders of the Boer Republieks, which culminated in the Boer war of 1899. The British finally overcame the Boers in 1902, and talks of unifying the Cape-the two previous republieks and the Natal-colony began. In 1910, this culminated in the creation of the Union of South Africa. Although the Union Government had wide powers, South Africa remained a British colony until 1961.

The Cape Police were replaced by the Mounted Police in 1882. The ZARP and OVRP were disbanded and replaced by the Transvaal Police and the Orange River Colony Police, after the Anglo-Boer war.

II. FROM UNION TO INDEPENDENCE 1910-1961

The end of the Anglo-Boer War brought forth questions of unification for the colonies. The Union of South Africa was created by an agreement reached in 1910.

Under the unification agreement of 1910 a variety of provincial, municipal and rural police forces were set up. Government began looking at ways to unify the various forces and in 1912, the Police Act was passed. It came into operation on 1 April 1913. Two forces were initially established; the South African Police (SAP) and the South African Mounted Riflemen, which was in effect a purely military force.

The new unification Government also had to deal with the Boer Commandos. In 1912, the Defence Act was passed to integrate these

Commandos and regular volunteer British units into one force. From 1912 onwards, it was anticipated that the army and the Police would perform very different services. However, the blurring of roles that characterised early colonial police and armed forces would continue throughout the ensuing period, culminating in the use of the army to quell internal unrest and perform a wide variety of police functions in the turmoil following the Soweto uprising of 1976.

With the Defence Act 13 of 1912, defence of the Union was the responsibility of all citizens. The Defence Act required military service of every European between the ages of seventeen and twenty. Service could be performed either inside South Africa, or outside the Union.

In addition, every citizen was subject to undergo military training in the Active Citizen Force or the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. This requirement covered a period of four years between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five. A certain percentage was called up for this each year, while the remainder were expected to join various Rifle Associations for the same period. Although people not of European descent were not subject to the same obligations, they were entitled to volunteer for service.

The Permanent Force was established in 1913. In reality it was a military constabulary tasked with performing police work. It consisted of five regiments and a battery of artillery for each regiment. Each was made up of 103 officers; 348 Non-Commissioned Officers; 1,565 riflemen; and 2,000 black and Indian constables.

The Active Citizen Force and Cadet Organisation were also established in 1913. By 31 December 1913, the Active Citizen Force and Coast Garrison had a combined force of 23,462 men, while the Cadet Organisation was 11,318 strong. Moves were taken to set up Rifle Associations and 42,000 members joined within a year. Many of these were volunteers and they were armed with a rifle, a bandoleer and free ammunition.

The first test for the fledgling army came in January 1914, when it was used to quell an uprising amongst coal miners. In August of that year, the First World War was declared. The British Government requested the Union Government to seize control of German South West Africa, which led to three prominent UDF (and former Boer) commanders rebelling, together with several thousand supporters. Within weeks, the UDF had mobilised 30,000 troops to overcome this rebellion, which collapsed in December 1914. By 9 July 1915, the German army in South West Africa had capitulated, and South Africa had taken control of the area, control that it would not relinquish for nearly three quarters of a century.

UDF were then sent for active duty elsewhere, including East Africa, France, and Egypt. By the end of the war, a total of 254,666 South Africans had served in the UDF.

In 1920, the South African Air Force was officially formed with 100 aeroplanes, and in 1922, the South African Naval Services came into being with three ships, thirteen officers and 110 other ranks.

In February 1922, white mineworkers on the Rand began a strike that rapidly escalated into an attempt to topple the government. They formed themselves into Commandos and clashed with police. By March, the police were unable to cope and the UDF was called in to assist. Martial law was declared in several magisterial districts. It was enforced until the collapse of the strike on 17 March 1922.

From 1922 onwards, the UDF diminished radically in size and by 1927, the size of the Permanent Force had dwindled to 151 officers and 1,259 other ranks. The Great Depression during the 1930s saw further reductions in the number of personnel. A new period of growth began in 1934 with the creation of the Special Service Battalion, which was set up to provide employment for those affected by the depression. This growth continued until the Second World War. By September 1939, the Permanent Force consisted of 352 officers and 5,033 other ranks, while the Citizen Force consisted of 918 officers and 12,572 other ranks.

A total of 334,324 volunteers served the UDF during the Second World War: 211,193 whites; 45,892 "Coloureds" and Indians; and 77,239 blacks. South African soldiers saw service in East and North Africa, Madagascar and Italy. On 1 February 1943, South Africa's first armoured division was created. Although very little modern equipment was available at the outbreak of the war, with the development of an arms industry, South Africa was able to produce nearly 6,000 armoured cars, light tanks, about 600 guns and ammunition of all types.

Demobilisation of these forces began almost immediately after the war ended in 1945. Two divisions remained in force, but the number of volunteers diminished so rapidly that many brigades were disbanded.

Another consequence of the lack of volunteers was the introduction of a ballot conscription system in 1953. Conscripts were required to spend three months in training during the first year and twenty-one days each year for a further three years. In 1956, the UDF was re-organised into thirty-two Afrikaans Defence Forces (SADF).

The South African Police (SAP) was created by the Police Act of 1912. The act was designed to cover all existing police forces in the Union. The only exceptions to this were the cities of Durban and Pietermaritzburg, which elected to retain their municipal forces. Initially, the force was split into the South African Police and the paramilitary South African Mounted Rifleman, which was disbanded and its members incorporated into the SAP in 1920. From then on, there would be only one national police force in South Africa, although each "homeland" would create its own force, to act within its territories.

The initial strength of the police when they began operating in 1913 was 5,938. Of these, all but 1,470 were white, and all 101 officers in this group were also white. The highest rank a non-white member of the force could hope to achieve was the rank of sergeant.

The first test for the SAP came at the end of 1913, when they were used to quell a miners' strike in January 1914. At the end of the strike, twenty-two miners were dead, and eighty-eight hospitalised with gunshot wounds.

The SAP became the force that would suppress strikes and demonstrations by disenfranchised blacks in the early years. This pattern continued throughout the period under review. Fears of the communist threat, which was believed to come from the north, led to the creation of the notorious Security Branch in 1947. This arm of the police became a secret force that was used against any political opponents of Apartheid. It had the worst human rights record. Its members would torture or kill those unlucky enough to fall into their hands. The entire branch was shrouded in secrecy; its members were rarely exposed and never prosecuted for their reign of terror.

The Police Act allowed the police to be used in military roles, which further blurred the distinction between the security forces. The Police were used in combat during both the First and Second World Wars.

The racial bias continued throughout this period, and it was only in the 1950s that the numbers of black police personnel were radically increased. Not surprisingly, this was the result of apartheid policies that created black homelands in rural areas and black townships near urban areas. The upper echelons of the SAP were against using white policemen to patrol these areas, and so a drive was started to recruit black members for this duty. They were paid less than their white counterparts, had fewer opportunities for promotion, were less well armed and worked in appalling police stations. In addition, they were seen as sell-outs and, from 1976 onwards, were increasingly the target for violence in their areas.

III. TROUBLE AND STRIFE 1985

The National Party came to power in 1948 and began implementing its policy of Apartheid with great zeal. In 1961, South Africa gained independence from Britain and became the Republic of

South Africa. During the 1960s, newly independent African states began calling for and implementing an arms embargo against the Apartheid regime. News broke in 1967 that the police were fighting alongside the Rhodesian police and army against liberation movements in Zimbabwe, that SAP members were being used to patrol the border between Angola and Namibia, that they were often involved in border skirmishes with the members of the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO), and that the government, fearing invasion and terrified of the perceived communist threat North of its border, decided to radically increase the size of the SADF. The ballot system of conscription was unable to keep up with the growth. On 1 January 1968, a new national service was introduced for white males (although other races were still able to volunteer for service). With the new system, conscripts were required to serve a period of one-year continuous service followed by ten years in the Citizen Force.

In 1968 a state company, ARMSCOR, was created to cater to South Africa's military equipment needs.

Members of the liberation armies of the banned African National Congress (ANC) and its affiliates and SWAPO began infiltrating South Africa and South West Africa respectively during the early 1970s. In 1973, the SADF took over the responsibility of defence of South West Africa from the police. Conscripts were encouraged to sign on for an additional year of voluntary service in 1974, and in 1975 the SADF intervened in the Angolan civil war on the side of UNITA. A contingent numbering "no more than 2,000" (according to official figures) was sent to assist UNITA in its war against the communist-backed MPLA.

The United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution in November 1977 that formalised and extended the arms embargo against South Africa. South Africa retaliated by pumping massive government funding into ARMSCOR, which led to the development of numerous infantry fighting vehicles: air to air missiles, helicopters, surface to surface missiles, heavy tanks, and the upgrading of existing Mirage fighter aircraft to Cheetahs. In 1978, the period of national service was increased to two years. In 1983 the requirement for

service in the Citizen Force, after completion of national service, was increased to 720 days over a period of twelve years, plus an additional twelve days per year until the age of fifty-five.

On 4 May 1978, South Africa launched its first official operation against SWAPO bases in Angola. These attacks continued until South Africa's withdrawal from South West Africa/Namibia, and included attacks against the Angolan army such as Operation Protea in 1981, which at the time was the largest mechanised operation of South African forces since the Second World War.

Between 1981 and 1986, South Africa's foreign policy towards neighbouring states was one of destabilisation. The SADF struck at ANC bases and strategic sites in Mozambique, Botswana, Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and continued to assist anti-government forces in Angola. The South African government also began actively assisting Super Zupu forces in Zimbabwe and Renamo forces in their war against the Frelimo government of Mozambique. They supplied arms, ammunition, training, communication systems and intelligence gathering. The October 1986 air crash that killed then Mozambican President Samora Machel was widely believed to have been caused by South African security forces.

By the mid 1980s, political unrest in South Africa had grown to enormous proportions and the government introduced the ADF into the townships for the first time to cope with battles that raged throughout South Africa. The Security forces also became embroiled in politics during the states of emergency. This occurred during the late 1980s, at both the national and local levels. The role of the security forces during this period will be examined in the section on states of emergency below.

IV. BRIEF HISTORY OF UMKHONTO WE SIZWE (MK)

The ANC launched its armed wing, MK, on 16 December 1961. At present, it is second only to the SADF in terms of numbers, and it is necessary to look briefly at its history.

Shortly after its inception, the leaders of MK, including Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, were arrested. They were tried and jailed for life. Those who escaped set about establishing the ANC and MK externally, with subsequent bases in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, England and, much later, Tanzania, Uganda, India and Ghana.

It was from this basis that MK co-ordinated attacks on South African targets and recruited members from within South Africa. MK was conceived as, and remained a political army, engaged with the ANC in the revolutionary struggle against the apartheid regime. Its leadership was linked with the leadership of the ANC. Training and weapons were provided by Eastern block countries, Cuba and Algeria.

Although initial targets included electrical supply stations and attacks on military and police personnel or buildings, the later strategy, implemented for creating a "people's war" included bomb attacks on civilians. MK's official strength of trained soldiers stood at 12,000, the people's war eventually lead to the development of Self Defence Units (SDUs) within the borders of South Africa. These were perceived as parts of the revolutionary army and were tasked with attacking security force patrols within the townships. Some members were trained outside South Africa and then return to train fellow SDU members within the borders. During the 1990s, the ANC lost political control over the SDUs, which had grown in numbers substantially, and they now pose a problem to the new government. There are presently moves to demobilise the SDUs and return younger members to school, while incorporating the rest into South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and South African Police Services (SAPS).

V. STATES OF EMERGENCY AND THE ROLE OF THE SECURITY FORCES 1985-1990

Opposition by the then legal ANC and recently formed Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) during the late 1959 and early 1960 led to public demonstrations against the pass law system that required all blacks to carry identity documents proving their right to remain in urban areas at all times. One such demonstration in Sharpeville (a

township near Johannesburg) on 21 March 1960, resulted in police opening fire on the crowd. Official figures state that sixty-nine people were killed and 180 injured, although eyewitness accounts suggest the numbers were much higher. News of the massacre spread rapidly causing further confrontations, and the government responded by banning public meetings in all trouble spots. On 28 March 1960, the government introduced legislation banning the ANC and PAC and began arresting members of these organisations under the first emergency regulations passed in South Africa and which would last for the next three months. The state of emergency extended to 122 of the Union's 265 magisterial districts; it empowered the government to prohibit gatherings, impose curfews, detain people without trial, impound publications, search premises and do whatever was necessary to maintain public order. During this period, police detained an estimated 18,000 people. Most were released after screening, but over 5,000 were convicted and sentenced for various offences. Many were held for lengthy periods without trial. Included amongst those convicted were the leaders of the PAC and ANC.

In 1963, although no state of emergency was declared, legislation was passed enabling the police to detain people without trial for the purposes of interrogation. This legislation continued until it was incorporated into one piece of legislation, the Internal Security Act of 1982. Although figures are not readily available for this period, David Webster estimates approximately 16,000 people were detained between 1963 and 1985.

The second state of emergency began on 20 July 1985 and was limited to certain areas. A short break in the emergency took place between 7 March and 20 June 1986, when the first of a series of annual emergencies came into place of the entire country. This annual emergency was re-imposed on 11 June 1987; 10 June 1988; and 9 June 1989. On 8 June 1990, the government decided to re-impose the emergency in selected areas only. This reduced emergency remained in place until 18 October 1990.

Regulations were passed during this period banning political meetings, severely restricting the press from reporting on political

activities or violence, empowering police and security forces to arrest and detain people without trial, and banning political organisations and their members.

By 1988, state power and executive decision-making authority had become concentrated in the Office of the State President, which itself had become largely dependent on the National Security Management System (NSMS). South Africa had become a virtual police state with growing levels of unrest and violence in the country. Through the inclusion of the Ministers of Law and Order (Police) and Defence in the structures of the NSMS, particularly the State Security Council (SSC), which was at the head of the NSMS, the security forces came to play an increasingly powerful part in the governance of the country. A network of over 500 Joint Management Committees (JMCs) was also created, under the control of the National Joint Management Committee (NJMC), which itself fell under the control of the SSC. These JMCs were situated in almost every settled community within the country, and were designed to manage security force involvement at the local level. They invariably consisted of two major committees to provide a carrot and stick approach to security: the first, the security committees, were staffed by security police, riot police, and military officers and were to co-ordinate the implementation of security strategies laid down by the SSC. The second committee, the welfare committee, was designed to win the hearts and minds of the population away from the liberation movements and saw to the implementation of development programmes within communities.

The SADF and SAP began creating and assisting groups of vigilantes to fight against anti-government forces in the townships, in addition to political policing and army involvement at both the national and local levels.

These vigilantes were often linked to the predominantly black municipal police forces operating in the townships that were set up to serve the needs of the unpopular black local authorities. They attacked liberation movement members or supporters either with police backing or in full view of security forces that refused to intervene. Political assassinations, intimidation and kidnapping of prominent liberation

movement members in and outside South Africa also began, most of which appear to have been performed by death squads made up of members of the security police establishment. These included the Paris assassination of ANC civilian emissary to Europe, Dulcie September; David Webster (an academic whose work, ironically including an investigation into assassinations, has been used during the compilation of this report); and the attempted assassination of prominent ANC academic Albie Sachs who was seriously injured in a car bomb attack in Mozambique.

Tens of thousands of activists were detained during this period, either under the state of emergency regulations, or under the Internal Security Act, both of which provided for detention without trial for an indefinite period. From 1985 to 1986, 8,000 people were detained, while from 1986 to 1987, 25,000 were detained. Many of these people spent more than two years in detention. Those who were released were served with restriction orders by the police immediately after their release. The power given to the police with emergency regulations to "restrict" people amounted in reality to the ability to ban people from belonging to certain organisations, preclude them from attending or addressing meetings, and, in many instances, deny them employment. Although the number of people detained after 1987 decreased, this owed more to the security establishment finding more effective ways of dealing with activists (such as long periods of detention for key figures in organisations rather than mass detentions, banning of organisations and their members, assassinations and kidnapping) rather than a realisation of the error of their ways.

The states of emergency that dominated the late 1980s did not immediately effect the use of the SADF in destabilisation of neighbouring states. The war in Angola continued, as did the funding and support of rebel forces in Mozambique and SADF raids into Zambia, Botswana, Mozambique and Swaziland.

By 1988 though, a turning point was reached in the regional struggle. The war in Angola was costing the South African government R4-billion per year, a sum that could no longer be justified in the sanctions-fuelled recession that was gripping the country. In

addition, the SADF suffered its biggest military defeat in Angola at the hands of the Cuban trained and equipped Angolan army. It was clear that South Africa had lost control over southern Angola and that future defeats with attendant massive loss of life were inevitable.

By late 1988, the South African government had signed an accord agreeing to withdraw from Angola and to begin withdrawing from Namibia in anticipation of Namibia's independence. Internal and international pressure on South Africa, including condemnation of Renamo brutality and sanctions against South Africa, had begun to tell, and it became clearer that drastic steps would be necessary to prevent full-scale civil war. These drastic steps were realised in early 1990, when political organisations such as the ANC and its affiliates were "unbanned", their leaders released from prison and a period of negotiations was embarked on to clear the way for the first democratic elections in 1994.

From 1990 onwards, President De Klerk took steps to reign in the SAP and SADF. He wrestled decision-making control away from the security establishment and appeared committed to negotiations with previous enemies of the state. Nevertheless, the period leading up to the 1994 election was not without difficulty. Continuing violence in the townships led to the imposition of "mini states of emergency" imposed under the Internal Security Act and Public Safety Act. These acts conferred wide-ranging powers on the security forces to arrest and detain people and to search premises without warrants. Although the SAP and SADF were more restrained during this period, there were shocking incidents of violence. For example, in March 1990, SAP members fired at demonstrators in Sebokeng township, killing eighteen and injuring over 200.

A scandal involving the payment of R250,000 to Inkatha (a conservative black political party) to organise anti-ANC rallies led ultimately to the dismissal of the Ministers of Law and Order (police) and Defence. The SAP was also frequently criticised for failing to curb, and even actively supporting vigilante groups within the townships. There were also allegations that a "third force," consisting of conservative members of the security forces, was operating to

disrupt the negotiation process and that security forces were involved with hit squads operating against ANC. Evidence presented to the Goldstone Commission of Inquiry, appointed to investigate allegations of security force misconduct, provided some support for these allegations, and allegations that SAP and SADF personnel were providing training and assistance to Inkatha and other conservative black groups.

The situation calmed down somewhat in 1993-1994, when some control over the security forces was given to the Transitional Executive Council that was appointed to clear the way for the election. Nevertheless, violence in KwaZulu/Natal in the months preceding the election necessitated a further state of emergency in that province alone. This was declared on 31 March 1994 and lapsed on 7 September 1994.

Besides states of emergency, both the National Party Government and the present Government of National Unity (GNU) have resorted to legislation that allows for areas to be declared "unrest areas." Once an area has been so designated, the police are given wider powers than usual (such as the power to search without a warrant) in an attempt to quell the unrest. Areas are periodically declared unrest areas for short periods, whenever the security forces are unable to cope with unrest, which still continues despite the election.

VI. COUPS AND STATES OF EMERGENCY IN THE TVBC STATES

In keeping with South Africa's apartheid policy, ten homelands were created in which blacks were expected to live. Four of these (Transkei, Venda, Bophuthatswana, and Ciskei, known collectively as the TVBC states) were granted "independence" from South Africa and were allowed to create their own armies. The remaining "self governing" areas were entitled to create their own police forces, which acted more as paramilitary forces.

Interestingly, all four of the TVBC states, with their puppet leaders appointed by South African government and not by democratic election, had experience with coups and attempted coups. Many of

these were put down with assistance from the SADF, although South Africa steadfastly maintained these areas were independent. The history of conflict in these areas is examined briefly below.

Transkei was granted "independence" on 26 October 1976. As with all of the TVBC states, South Africa was the only country in the world to recognise their independence.

In September 1987 after allegations of government corruption, South Africa convened a commission of inquiry to perform an investigation. Shortly afterwards, reports of a coup in Transkei were hotly denied by both the Transkei and South African governments, despite evidence that force had been used to obtain the resignation of six members of the cabinet.

On 30 December 1987, Major General Bantu Holomisa lead a bloodless coup against the government. Martial law was declared for one day, restrictions were placed on political activity and the constitution was suspended. A council of ministers and a military council headed by Holomisa were set up to govern the country.

In January 1988, Holomisa accused the South African government of trying to assassinate him. Fourteen people were arrested. In November 1990, twelve people were killed trying to overthrow the government. Holomisa accused South Africa of complicity in the failed coup attempt, which the South African government obviously denied. By January 1991, a further thirty-two people had been arrested for their roles in the attempted coup, including the first President of Transkei, Chief Kaiser Matanzima. It was also apparent that Holomisa had forged strong ties with the recently unbanned ANC and PAC.

In August 1992, the Transkei Defence Force detained several army officers and ministers, although Holomisa was adamant that this was not another attempt to overthrow the government, but only the result of a protest about low wages. South Africa accused Holomisa of harbouring PAC members who had launched attacks against whites in South Africa, and relationships between the two governments

deteriorated to such an extent that SADF troops were deployed along the border.

As with all TVBC states and homelands, the Transkei was incorporated into South Africa on 27 April 1994, the date of the first democratic election and the date on which the new Interim Constitution came into effect.

Venda was granted independence on 13 September 1979. Its history is fairly tame, but a military coup in April 1990 led to President Ravele and his cabinet being overthrown by Colonel Gabriel Ramushwana, deputy chief of the Venda Defence Force

Bophuthatswana was granted independence on 6 December 1977 under the leadership of President Mangope. In February 1988, South African troops were called in by the government to help put down a coup attempt by dissident members of the Bophuthatswana Defence Force. Five people were killed and 190 detained. Of the 190 detained, 125 were found guilty of high treason and seventeen guilty of terrorism.

After the ANC was unbanned in 1990, it gained great support in Bophuthatswana, much to the chagrin of Magope, who was adamant that Bophuthatswana should retain a large degree of autonomy after the election. In early March 1990, a demonstration in favour of re-incorporation into South Africa was met with army and police intervention. Several demonstrators were killed, culminating in a state of emergency being declared until March 1991. In November 1990, forty ANC members were arrested and accused of plotting to overthrow the government.

In one of the most bizarre incidents leading up to the election, anti-Mangope demonstrations in early 1994 became increasingly violent. The President retreated to his official residence; members of the arch conservative, all white, Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) crossed into Bophuthatswana to assist the beleaguered autocrat. They were met by members of the Bophuthatswana Defence Force, many of who were ANC supporters, and were convincingly repulsed.

The Ciskei, bordering on the Transkei and similarly composed of mostly Xhosa speaking people, was granted independence on 4 December 1991, the last of the homelands to accept this.

In July 1983, President Lennox Sebe thwarted a rumoured coup by accusing his brothers Charles Sebe (head of the Central Intelligence Service and Security) and Namba Sebe (Minister of Transport) of trying to overthrow him. Namba fled to neighbouring Transkei, but Charles was arrested and sentenced to twelve years imprisonment.

In October 1989, protest marches took place in the small rural area of Nkqokqweni, whose residents were unhappy that the area had recently been ceded to Ciskei by the South African government. One hundred were arrested and 800 forcibly evicted from their homes. Needless to say, President Sebe's popularity was waning fast.

In March 1990, whilst President Sebe was abroad, the government was overthrown in a military coup by General Joshua "Oupa" Gqozo. The office of the President was abolished and the national assembly dissolved and replaced by a military council. The coup was followed by widespread violence, since Gqozo was no more popular than Sebe and was violently anti-ANC. A state of emergency was declared and, at Gqozo's request, South African troops were sent to Ciskei to quell the unrest.

On 27 January 1991, General Charles Sebe, freed from prison by Gqozo, and a former member of the military council were killed by government forces while trying to seize power from Gqozo. In early February of that year, a new constitution came into place that included plans for re-incorporation into South Africa. Shortly afterwards, a further attempt to overthrow Gqozo was put down with assistance from SADF troops.

A state of emergency was imposed in Ciskei, in late October 1991, over a dispute with the ANC. It lasted until November 1991, during this time several hundred ANC supporters were arrested.

During 1992, Gqozo changed tack and began calling for Ciskei to have a high degree of autonomy, if not independence, after the election. Economically destitute and unviable as Ciskei is, this attitude was not universally shared by its citizens. In August 1992, 30,000 ANC supporters, demanding immediate re-incorporation into South Africa and Gqozo's resignation, were denied entrance to Ciskei. They began marching on the capital, Bisho, about 30 kilometers from the border, and were fired on by the Ciskei Defence Force, leaving twenty-eight dead and 200 injured.

VII. PRESENT COMPOSITION OF DEFENCE FORCES IN SA

The defence force in South Africa is undergoing a massive change as "independent" defence forces and old enemies are incorporated into the new SANDF. By 1994, the old SADF consisted of a standing force of approximately 40,000; approximately 25,000 white male conscripts; 27,000 civilians; and reserves totalling almost 440,000.

For fairly obvious reasons, the SADF was characterised by its racial bias in favour of whites. The number of coloureds, Indians and blacks did increase steadily from the early years of this century. Repugnant as these racial classifications are, it is impossible to describe racial issues in South Africa without reference to them, since people were officially classified in terms of these definitions. By 1986, the SADF was 76% white; 12% black; 11% coloured; 1% Indian. The SADF was also structured in such a way that members of different race groups were never included in the same battalions. From 1994, the SADF began changing from a system that relied primarily on white male conscription to a new system based primarily on volunteers. The period of national service, which provided approximately 25,000 servicemen a year, was reduced in the late 1980s from two to one year's service and compulsory national Service has now been phased out. The defence budget has also been reduced from 4.3 percent of the gross domestic product from 1983 to 1984, to 2.6 percent in 1993 to 1984.

Black representation in the TVBC states' armies was understandably much higher than in the SADF, although leadership

usually was vested in officers seconded to them from the SADF. Estimated strengths of these armies are:

Bophuthatswana Defence Force:	3,500 and 5.300 reserves;
Ciskei Defence Force:	2,000 and 2,000 reserves;
Transkei Defence Force:	3,500 and 3,300 reserves; and
Venda Defence Force:	1,800 and 2,000 reserves;

The TVBC states were created along ethnic lines and, not surprisingly, their respective armies show corresponding ethnic homogeny.

Along with the legitimate armies within South African borders, a number of additional armies came into existence during the struggle for democracy. These were the ANC's MK; the PAC's Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA); and the Azanian People's Organisation Azanian Liberation Army (AZANLA).

With the unbanning of these political organisations in 1990, members of these armies returned to South Africa to await incorporation into the new defence force. Their estimated respective strengths in 1994 were:

MK:	12 000 (excluding SDU members);
APLA:	200; and
AZAPO:	200.

These are all to be incorporated into the new SANDF.

Much debate as to the future of the security forces is taking place, particularly around the incorporation into the national police and defence forces of police and defence forces of previous "independent" states and homelands and armed wings of the various liberation movements. There is also some debate as to the impact of the Interim Constitution on the defence forces. An example of this is the argument of Commodore Dunstan Smart, who argues that the death penalty and corporal punishment should be retained for members of the security forces (in apparent contradiction with the Constitution);

and that the protective rules relating to detained, arrested and accused persons contained in the Constitution should not be extended to military trials.

VIII. PRESENT COMPOSITION OF POLICE FORCES IN SA

As with the defence forces, apartheid policies led to the establishment of eleven police forces in South Africa, each with its own empowering legislation, commissioners, uniforms and standards. These were the South African Police (SAP) and police forces in each of the TVBC states and self-governing territories.

At present, these forces are all in the process of formal incorporation into the new South African Police Services (SAPS), although informal incorporation has already taken place.

The SAPS consists of 141,388 members¹ made up as follows:

Permanent Staff (all ranks):	
Non-Head Office Staff:	103,426
Head-Office Staff:	7,575
Civilian Members (all ranks):	
Non-Head Office Staff:	25,312
Head-Office Staff:	5,075

Of these forces, approximately 115,000 are drawn from the old SAP. The racial makeup is 54% black; 35% white; 8% coloured; and 3% Indian. Males make up 82% of all forces.

Formal integration is continuing and as of this writing it is expected that the National and Deputy National Commissioners will be appointed in early March 1995. The appointment of Provincial Commissioners for each of the nine provinces is expected to take place before the end of March 1995, and the new Police Act, which will

¹ Figures supplied by Peter Gastrow, chairman of the Interim Advisory Team dealing with the incorporation of all forces into the SAPS in a private telephone conversation and are based on the figures from the Police Resource Audits of April 1994.

complete the formal incorporation, is expected to be promulgated in August 1995.

IX. VULNERABILITY OF SA TO SECURITY FORCE TAKE-OVER

Despite the number of coups and attempted coups in the TVBC states, South Africa has never been close to coups by the military or police. The simple reason for this, particularly from the 1970s onwards, is that the security forces have been politicised to the extent that they were used to enforce apartheid and put down any resistance to the government, and they did so without any dissent. As mentioned above, South Africa from 1988 onwards was itself a virtual police state, and decision-making vested largely with the National Security Management System. Also, both the SAP and the SADF were heavily racially biased in favour of whites, and all key positions were held by conservative whites appointed by the government.

However, developments in the 1990s have not been supported by these conservative elements and there was some fear that they might well revolt against the government's initiatives to move the country towards democracy.

This problem was addressed by then President F.W. De Klerk who reclaimed civilian control of the state from the security establishment. The state President's office and the cabinet replaced the state security council as the seat of state power; the NSMS was replaced by a national co-ordinating mechanism and the JMCs were replaced by joint co-ordinating centres. The National Party government also found it necessary during 1993 and 1994 to purge the leadership of the SAP and SADF of arch-conservative officers with particularly suspect human rights records. This lessened the potential for direct takeover. Many of these officers joined the fascist-leaning AWB, a paramilitary organisation demanding a homeland for Afrikaners free from black rule. A number of white police and SADF junior personnel have also been suspected of membership in this and the other militant Afrikaner groups. It was feared that they might resist the period of change by beginning some form of armed struggle.

Nevertheless, the change to democracy has happened remarkably peacefully and the AWB and its allies appear to be a spent force. Although they still have access to weapons and personnel within these forces, the integration of all armed forces and police into the combined SAPS and SANDF and the appointment of more representative leadership has diminished the threat of takeover by right wing elements.

The new GNU faces enormous challenges in righting the wrongs of apartheid and providing for those most disadvantaged by apartheid policies. They have limited resources to perform this massive task, and there is some concern that people might become impatient for real and visible change. This could lead to more militant left-wing groups gaining support and could lead to conflict with the GNU. However, the prospect of a coup at this time seems rather remote.

X. CONCLUSION

It is never easy describing events in South Africa, particularly those that relate to or are influenced by apartheid. It is difficult to follow the breakup of the country into separate homelands; the banning of political organisations; the armed resistance struggle and developments since 1990. Much is complicated and hidden that has yet to be acknowledged.

South Africa is a brand new country, with a brand new democracy, a brand new Constitution and a brand new government. It is difficult to assess how successful this transition to democracy has been and how long the tenuous peace will hold. It is clear that previous governments have an extremely poor human rights record, and that it has been the internal security forces who have committed many abuses in order to perpetuate and protect the entire racist state.

Enemies now find themselves sleeping side-by-side in the police and armed forces. Whether this sleep will be peaceful or not remains to be seen. While there is great cause for hope, there is also concern that the same people who committed human rights violations against the people of the country are still in service and that all South Africans

have now to look to them for protection. If ISFs fail to change or if they are ever again used as political tools, the chance of lasting peace returning to South Africa will be slim, indeed.

Bibliography

AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA (23d ed. 1994) (Published by Europa Publications Ltd., London).

D. Camack, *South Africa's War of Destabilisation*, in 5 SOUTH AFRICAN REVIEW (G. Moss & I. Obery eds. 1989) (Published by Ravan Press, Johannesburg).

T.R.H. DAVENPORT, SOUTH AFRICA: A MODERN HISTORY (4th ed. 1991).

R. Davies, *South African Regional Policy Before and After Cuito Cuanavale*, in 5 SOUTH AFRICAN REVIEW (G. Moss & I. Obery eds. 1989).

MARIUS DE WITT DIPPENAAR, DIE GESKIEDENIS VAN DIE SUID-AFRIKAANSE POLISIE, 1913-1988/HISTORY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE, 1913-1988 (1988) (Published in Afrikaans and English in parallel columns by Promedia Publications Ltd., Pretoria).

STEEDS KAMPIOENE: SUID-AFRIKAANSE WEERMAG 1912-1987/STILL CHAMPIONS: SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE FORCE 1912-1987 (H.R. Heitman ed. 1987) (Published by Walker-Ramus Trading Co., Durban).

Gen. G.L. Meiring, *Taking the SA Army into the Future*, SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE REVIEW, issue 14, Jan. 1994.

G. Mills & G. Wood, *Ethnicity, Integration and the South African Armed Forces*, SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE REVIEW, issue 12, Oct. 1993.

T. Motumi, *Umkhonto We Sizwe - Structure, Training and Force Levels (1984 to 1994)*, AFRICAN DEFENCE REVIEW, issue 18, Aug. 1994.

L. Nathan & M. Phillips, *Cross-Currents - Security Developments under F.W. De Klerk*, in 6 SOUTH AFRICAN REVIEW (G. Moss & I. Obery eds. 1992).

Brig. B. Swart, *An Overview of the Changing South African Defence Force*, SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE REVIEW, issue 13, Nov. 1993

Comm. D. Swart, *The Revision of South African Defence Legislation - A Personal View*, AFRICAN DEFENCE REVIEW, issue 14, Aug. 1994.

M. Swilling & M. Phillips, *Emergency State: Its Structure, Power and Limits*, in 5 SOUTH AFRICAN REVIEW (G. Moss & I. Obery eds. 1989).

D. Webster, *Repression and the State of Emergency*, in 4 SOUTH AFRICAN REVIEW (G. Moss & I. Obery eds. 1987).

D. Webster & M. Friedman, *Repression and the State of Emergency: June 1987-March 1989*, in 5 SOUTH AFRICAN REVIEW (G. Moss & I. Obery eds. 1989).