



PW BOTHA

Volume **SIX** • Section **FIVE** • Chapter **SIX**

**Findings and
Recommendations
HOLDING RIGHT-WING
GROUPS ACCOUNTABLE**

Holding the Right-Wing Groups Accountable

■ INTRODUCTION

1. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (the Commission) made findings against right-wing opposition groups in its Final Report.⁷⁹ These findings were based on the evidence and testimony it received. This included speeches that had been made by senior leaders inciting followers to commit acts of violence against those labelled 'the enemy', the arming of supporters in contravention of the law, and random racist attacks on black civilians.
2. The Commission noted that an important aspect of the insurrection was the clandestine collusion between right-wing forces, members of the security forces and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). This led to the commission of gross human rights violations and the training of IFP paramilitary forces in the hope of preventing the ANC from coming to power.
3. In addition, particularly in the period leading to the holding of the first democratic elections, right-wing supporters embarked on a campaign to destabilise the country and to prevent the holding of elections. The storming of the World Trade Centre and the assistance rendered to the Bophuthatswana homeland by the right wing are examples of this. In terms of the leadership of the right wing, the Commission specifically held Generals Constand Viljoen and Peter Groenewald and Mr Eugene Terre'Blanche accountable for the reign of terror carried out by the various groups and their individual supporters.
4. At the time when the Commission made its findings on the right wing, a number of right-wing amnesty applications had already been heard. However, the Commission decided that findings would be revisited once all decisions of the Amnesty Committee became available.

⁷⁹ Volume Five.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

5. The Commission stated in its Final Report:

In the late 1980's and early 1990's, a number of Afrikaner right-wing groups became active in the political arena. They operated in a loose coalition intent on securing the political interests of conservative Afrikaners through a range of activities seemingly intent on disrupting the negotiations process then underway. Operating both within and outside the negotiations process, members of these groups undertook actions which constituted gross violations of human rights.

6. Specifically:

The Commission finds that the Afrikaner Volksfront and structures operating under its broad umbrella were responsible, between April 1993 and May 1994, for gross violations of human rights of persons perceived to be supporters and leaders of the ANC, SACP, UDF, PAC, National party and other groups perceived not to support the concept of Afrikaner self-determination or the establishment of a volkstaat, to that end, the movement's political leaders and military generals advocated the use of violence in pursuit of the movement's aims and/or in an attempt to mobilise for an insurrection.

REVIEW OF FINDINGS

7. It is important to review the findings in the light of evidence that has emerged from the amnesty process.

Membership of right-wing groups

8. The amnesty applications reveal that many amnesty applicants claimed membership of one or more right-wing groups. In total, 107 applications were received for amnesty, with 71 per cent of the applicants claiming membership of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), 10 per cent of the Conservative party and the remaining 19 per cent claiming membership of a variety of right-wing organisations. The most prominent group was the AWB, under the leadership of Eugene Terre'Blanche. More than forty of his supporters applied for amnesty. Of these, 68 per cent of applications were granted.

Nature of violations

9. Most amnesty applications pertaining to the period prior to 1990 relate to attacks that were intensely individualist, uncoordinated and extremely racist in nature. Amnesty applications for the period after February 1990 reveal a more co-ordinated plan, with better organised and more orchestrated attacks. Two of the best-known incidents were the occupation of the World Trade Centre in 1993 and the support by members of the AWB of the Bantustan administration in Bophuthatswana in 1994.
10. The Commission agreed to the request by President Mandela that it extend the period available for amnesty applications in the interests of reconciliation in order to accommodate the right wing and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), the majority of whose violations took place after the original date and during the run-up to elections. This decision proved fruitless as the Commission received no further applications, particularly for the two incidents described above. Thus the argument forwarded by General Viljoen that extending the date would promote reconciliation did not impact on the process.

CONFIRMATION OF FINDINGS

Collusion between the right wing and the security forces

11. Amnesty applications confirm that in a number of incidents, covert units within the security structures assisted in arming right-wing groups. The amnesty application of Mr Leonard Veenendal⁸⁰, a member of the Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB), confirms this.

Collusion with the IFP

12. Right-wing amnesty applicants confirmed that they formalised their ties with the IFP. They were responsible for supplying the IFP with weapons and also worked very closely with IFP groups on the north and south coasts of KwaZulu-Natal. In at least two instances, joint attacks were planned and carried out – at the Flagstaff police station and on the Seychelles restaurant. Mr Walter Felgate, formerly a member of the IFP, testified at a section 29 hearing that the right wing had offered to procure weapons to the IFP. The amnesty applications of Messrs Gerrit Phillipus Anderson and Allan Nolte confirm this.

⁸⁰ See Veenendal case in Section Three, Chapter Six; [AM3675/96].

Links with international right-wing groups

13. Amnesty applications also confirm that right-wing groups had links with other international right-wing groups. However, deeply held suspicions regarding an international right-wing conspiracy in respect of the murder of Mr Chris Hanu were not confirmed in the amnesty process, due to a number of factors.

Attacks on individuals

14. In their evidence, amnesty applicants confirmed that they had targeted and attacked those they regarded as the enemy. The attack by Mr Eugene Terre'Blanche and his supporters on Professor Floors van Jaarsveld⁸¹ is an example of such an attack. His children testified in the amnesty hearing that this attack had contributed to the humiliation of their father and his loss of standing in his community. While the expressed motive for the attack was that that they regarded the new direction that Van Jaarsveld had given to Afrikaner history as contrary to the then South African Constitution, which recognised God as the highest authority, it became quite clear during the hearing that the real motivation for the attack was his willingness to accommodate change.

Attacks on black people

15. The right wing carried out a number of racist attacks⁸². One of the worst of these was carried out by Mr Barend Strydom, a member of the Wit Wolwe ('White Wolves'). The attack was carried out indiscriminately against black people, eight of whom were killed. Strydom filed an amnesty application for this attack but later withdrew the application.
16. Members of the Orde Boerevolk attacked a bus full of black commuters in Durban in which seven people were killed. The motivation they expressed for the attack was an earlier Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) incident. In another incident, Mr George Mkomane was killed because he was in a so-called 'white' area at night without permission.⁸³ What is sickening is the random indiscriminate nature of the attacks on people simply because they were black. Despite attempts by amnesty applicants to justify the political nature of these attacks, their testimony reveal that, in most instances, their motives had been

81 See Section Three, Chapter Six in this volume.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

purely racist. One of the worst attacks was carried out by the AWB on innocent civilians outside Ventersdorp, which led to the killing of four people, including two children.

Possession of arms, explosives and ammunition.

17. The Commission received thirty-one amnesty applications for the illegal possession of arms, explosives and ammunition – stolen, in a number of instances, from military bases.

Sabotage of the transitional process

18. The Commission received thirty-five applications for a range of violations involving attempts to sabotage the negotiations process. These consisted of attacks on individuals and included assassinations. A number of innocent individuals were killed for no apparent reason. The killing of Mr Chris Hani by Messrs Clive Derby Lewis and Janusz Walus threatened the stability of the country in the period leading up to the elections. The constraint shown in the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the African National Congress (ANC) and the vast majority of the country in dealing with the killing is testament to how deeply people were committed to making peace work.

Bombings

19. The AWB, the Boereweerstandsbeweging (BWB) and the Afrikaner Volksfront (AVF) all engaged in bombing activities during the pre-election period. Much of the bombing was designed to sow terror and to destabilise the country in the period leading up to the elections. A number of offices belonging to the ANC, schools that admitted children of different race groups, and magistrates' courts were attacked. Businesses belonging to Indians were also targeted. The offices of the Independent Electoral Commission in a number of areas, as well as other institutions and offices associated with the election, were targeted and bombed, as were railway lines and power installations.

CONCLUSION

20. The evidence that emerged from the amnesty applications and hearings confirms the original findings made by the Commission in respect of right-wing groups. The testimonies of the applicants were tantamount to confessions that the right wing embarked on a campaign of terror and violence designed to destabilise the country at an extremely sensitive time. Right-wing groups were responsible for committing gross human rights violations as defined by international human rights law. In most instances, the victims were innocent civilians whose only 'sin' was the fact that they were black. The motive for these violations was that members of the various right-wing groups were opposed to majority rule and to a change in their way of life. There was no nobility or morality to their cause, despite their attempts to justify their actions.

21. Having considered the amnesty applications and hearings on the right-wing, the Commission has no reason to change the findings it made in its Final Report. ([...p726](#))