

# The Role of Violence in State Security Strategies 1984 – 88

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## **Violence by the state is strangely absent from most discussions of the problem of violence. (Archer and Gartner, 1978:219)**

The focus of this paper is state violence. It will be argued that South African state security strategy in the period 1984-1988 is characterised by an increasing violence which is sanctioned by law. This violence is either inscribed in the law or is unrestrained by the law. It is mainly directed against anti-apartheid activists both within and without South Africa's borders. In all cases the state's aim is "destabilisation" – the disorganisation and atomisation of individuals, organisations and sets of social relations. During the 1986-88 period state violence has become more covert and selective. This is in accord with post-war counter-insurgency theory and involves the state attempting to intimidate without antagonising the majority of the population. While very different forms of violence are used, they all involve the spread of "terror". This is mediated by a number of different agencies including the SADF, the SAP, and vigilantes. The terror is directed from within the authority structure. The "specialists in violence", as Laswell termed military men, are an important source of this direction.

This argument is presented in a number of connected stages.

- A definition of violence as a base line from which to examine the relation between violence, terrorism and war in the South African context.
- The mobilisation of resources for war which is part of the South African state's response to increasing black resistance.
- The state's reliance on the "politics of terror" to contain this resistance during the 1984-86 period.

- Whether this reliance means that South Africa should be conceptualised as a terrorist state.
- The main forms of state violence.
- The place of these forms of state violence in post-war counter-insurgency theory.
- Conclusion: the shift towards more covert and selective forms of violence.

## Defining Violence

Violence is often defined very loosely. For example:

**Violence is present when human being are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realisations are below their potential realisations. (Galtung, 1969: 168)**

"Structural violence" is then equated with injustice and discrimination<sup>1</sup>

The danger in this approach is that the notion of violence is used in so broad a sense that it becomes empty.

**Violence marks an important threshold (both morally and preentially) which rational beings must learn to recognise if they are successfully to conduct their affairs and to co-operate. (Scruton, 1987:298)**

Therefore violence is used in this paper to mean direct physical injury to persons or property.

Some degree of violence has always been considered a legitimate instrument of the state.<sup>2</sup> Other sources of violence are generally viewed as illegitimate or pathological.<sup>3</sup> However, violence is sometimes sanctioned as a political weapon in wars of national liberation.

## Violence and Terrorism

Political violence is used here to means acts of destruction that are intended to impact on power relations in society. Terrorism is usually defined as political violence exercised by one's opponents.<sup>4</sup> Other definitions are anchored in a distinction between military and civilian personnel. For example,

**Terrorism is "Acts of intimidation, injuring unarmed, presumably innocent civilians." (Said, 1988:50)**

**Terrorism is political violence directed against non-combatants. (Craig Williamson interviewed on *Network SABC-TV*, 11 November 1988)**

*The notion of 'non-combatants' and 'civilians' rests upon a precise demarcation of the battlefield.<sup>5</sup> This is increasingly difficult to draw in a revolutionary situation.*

Terrorism is also said to operate outside of international law and definitions of human rights.

**"Terrorists kill and maim defenceless men, women and children", while freedom fighters "seek to adhere to international law and civilised standards of conduct". (President George Bush. Cited in the *Mail & Guardian*, 13 January 1989)**

In this sense terrorism is anarchic and devoid of any moral content. Rich argues that it is the features of amorality and unpredictability of terrorism that distinguish it from 'guerrilla warfare'.

**In its assumption that the use of armed force against state power is a logical extension of existing political objectives, guerilla warfare exhibits a far greater degree of predictability, and political morality than terrorism. (Rich, 1984:70)<sup>6</sup>**

Terrorism is used here to mean a strategy of political violence that involves systematic acts of destruction aimed at altering or maintaining power relations through spreading extreme fear. An important distinction is that drawn by Walzer between a 'siege of terror' and a 'regime of terror'. The distinction hinges on whether terror works against or coincides with the dominant power structure. The first type he calls a 'siege of terror'. This is oriented toward overthrowing a system of authority such as a state. Its purpose is to destroy the authority system by creating extreme fear through systematic violence. This type of terrorism has received the most attention from political scientists.<sup>7</sup> The second type, which has received far less attention, is the 'regime of terror'. In this case systems of terror coincide and co-act with systems of authority and are directed by those who control the ordinary institutions of power.

## Violence and War

The notion of 'war' is frequently used to legitimate widespread political violence. The ANC presents its strategy of 'armed struggle' as a form of guerrilla warfare. It is said to be one phase of a much wider strategy of political mobilisation culminating in the notion of 'people's war'.

In a recent treason trial Brigadier Hermanus Stadler maintained that the ANC cannot be regarded as being at war with the South African government. Instead the government is facing a 'revolutionary onslaught'. Stadler quoted in *The Star*, 2 August 1988). In another treason trial Brigadier Stadler said that South Africa was at war in Angola, but inside South Africa only acts of terror took place. He said:

**The security police regarded these acts of terror as criminal actions and not actions of war. Unrest does not make a war. There is a definite difference between terror and war. (Quoted in *The Star*, 29 November 1988)**

In a different court case in 1988 the state did describe itself as at war. In this case the state's argument was that the SADF was beyond the reach of the courts and outside the law. In this application the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) brought a Supreme Court action against the SADF to restrain it from illegally harassing the organisation. Lieutenant-General Jan van Loggerenberg, former Chief of Staff Operations and now Chief of the Air Force, said in an affidavit that the SADF was on a 'war footing'. (*Mail & Guardian*, 2 September 1988)<sup>8</sup>

While Hannah Arendt's definition of war as "the massification of violence" implies a simple relation between the two phenomena, it is clear that the conflict in South Africa does not easily fit into other conventional definitions. For example,

**Warfare is socially organised physical coercion against a similarly socially organised opponent. (Kaldor, 1982:263)**

**War is an open armed conflict in which regular, uniformed forces are engaged, on at least one side; the fighters and the fighting are organised centrally to some extent; and there is some continuity between armed clashes. (Kidron and Smith, 1983:3)**

MK (the military wing of the ANC) and the SADF are not "similarly socially organised opponents". Nor is there "continuity between armed clashes." Much of the violent confrontation is episodic.<sup>9</sup> Clearly one of the sites of struggle in contemporary South Africa is the definition of the struggle itself.

In this paper the conflict in South Africa is understood as a low-level civil war, or a situation of 'low intensity conflict.' War is viewed along a continuum of violent conflict, ranging from low intensity conflict through conventional war to nuclear, or high intensity war.

However, the term 'low intensity conflict' (LIC) is also used in the literature to mean a particular strategy as well as a conflict situation. It has been used to describe current state counter-insurgency strategy in South Africa. This is a military strategy; a blueprint to defeat liberation movements without engaging in full-scale conventional war. It involves the mobilisation of resources for war at political, economic and ideological levels. The SADF have been a central source of direction of this process.

## The Mobilisation of Resources for War

This mobilisation defines a process of militarisation.<sup>10</sup> This definition implies a distinction between three related phenomena:

- The military as a social institution; a set of social relationships organised around war and taking the shape of an armed force.
- Militarism as an ideology. The key component of this is an acceptance of organised state violence as a legitimate solution to conflict. Other components involve a glorification of war in terms of which actors and encounters are portrayed in heroic terms and an acceptance of what have been termed 'military values' – hierarchy, discipline, obedience and the centralisation of authority (Merryfinch, 1981:9)
- Militarisation as a social process that involves a mobilisation of resources for war at political, economic and ideological levels.

However, these phenomena are closely related. Militarisation involves both the spread of militarism as an ideology, and an expansion of the power and influence of the military as a social institution.<sup>11</sup>

The impetus to this militarisation is increasing resistance to minority rule and the apartheid system. From about 1975 SADF personnel referred to a 'total onslaught' against the South African state. The state's response of 'total strategy' provided the basis for legitimising an increasing military involvement in decision-making. In this sense total strategy was the launch-pad for the militarisation of South Africa.

The following indicators may be used as flags to point to the militarised nature of South African society:<sup>12</sup>

- **Militarisation at the Economic Level**
  - An arms embargo and increasing sanctions have stimulated the development of a local armaments industry. Armscor is now one of the largest corporations in South Africa making the country the fifth largest arms producer in the world. Growing links between the SADF and the private sector are clear in an extensive reliance on defence force contracts, arrangements such as the Defence Manpower Liaison Committee, and the payment of salaries and benefits to National Servicemen.
  - South Africa's defence budget has risen in recent years, and now absorbs a large percentage of total state expenditure.
- **Militarisation at the ideological level**
  - The ideology of militarism which legitimates state violence as a solution to conflict is promoted by a number of agencies such as white schooling. Particularly important are veld schools, cadets, and youth preparedness.<sup>13</sup> This has

**involved the conscious creation of a social atmosphere that makes military service seem attractive, military responses to policy issues sensible, and great military**

**strength and expenditure seem acceptable – one which in general, prepares the population for conditions of siege and war. (Grundy, 1983:109)**

- Militarism is also promoted through the state-owned and -controlled radio and television networks which glorify the SADF, criminalise political opponents, and 'demonise' the ANC which "is almost invariably reported on in terms of violence and terrorism". (Tomaselli, 1988:22)
- A consumerist militarism is evident in the popularity of war toys, games and films which romanticise military encounters, parades and displays of military strength. War games are advertised as "the family game of the future." An advertised demonstration by two of the country's top war games teams promised "an ideal opportunity to experience a war-type situation and to have fun at the same time". Experiences include a "leopard crawl through the bush" and "hunt a terrorist". (*Northern Review*, 3 July 1987). A local toy manufacturer recently sold 25 000 models of a toy Casspir.
- Militarisation at the ideological level is evident in the extent to which the status of soldier is 'privileged' in white society. Soldiers are held in esteem, are entitled to discounts on a range of services and products from air travel to hotel accommodation, and the media promotes a glamourised image of the SADF generally. For example, a recent media article in *Scope* magazine gives a particularly glowing account of the 'parabats'. 'Operation Reindeer' in May 1978 is described as "the Parabats' finest moment." 'Operation Reindeer' was the code name for what has come to be called the Cassinga Massacre in which 600 Namibian refugees – mostly women and children – were killed by SADF paratroopers. Another privilege enjoyed by soldiers is their potential exemption from prosecution in the courts. On two occasions President Botha has issued certificates of indemnity effectively banning legal proceedings against SADF members.

● **Militarisation at the Political Level**

- It is generally agreed by analysts that the military are positioned at the centre of state decision-making. For example Frankel maintains that

**Militarisation is always measured by the appearance of soldiers as public decision-makers and the growing influence of the South African military is finally and perhaps most importantly reflected in the penetration of top government institutions by Defence Force personnel, on either a formal or informal basis. (Frankel, 1984:103)**

Informal penetration is important. Lowy and Sader have emphasised that the militarisation of the state may be open and explicit or it may take more indirect 'subterranean' forms. In the latter case,

**... the armed forces do not occupy the front line in the political sense. They do not govern directly, but exercise rather tight control over the formal holders of power. (Lowy and Sader, 1985:9)**

In the South African case this control operates through the National Security Management System dominated by the SADF and the SAP.

The most significant site of power within the NSMS is the State Security Council (SSC). This has replaced the cabinet as the most influential decision-making body (Grundy, 1986; Selfe, 1988). The NSMS gives the military direct influence in decision-making down to local government. At a regional level this operates through Joint Management Centres (JMCs) which co-ordinate local strategies to deal with potential security problems. Eleven out of the twelve JMC chairmen are SADF officers. There are sixty sub-JMCs which work alongside the Regional Service Councils and 350 mini-JMCs at the local level. The bottom level is the local management centre headed by the SAP station commander and SADF company commander. Thus the reality is a complex network of some 50 committees, co-ordinating massive resources and operating under the control and direct chairmanship of the military and the police.

- A further indicator of the militarised nature of South African society is the extent to which the SADF incorporates all white South African males. They are required to complete two years initial, continuous service in the SADF, followed by camps of a maximum of 720 days spread over 12 years.<sup>14</sup> This incorporation is not only physical, but also ideological in that increasing numbers of white males are exposed to the SADF's understanding of South African society, especially the threat of communism and the dangers of the 'revolutionary onslaught'. While Andreski's measure of a military participation ratio (MPR) would only indicate a high level of militarisation if applied to the white population alone, there is a sense in which

**... virtually every member of the white and black populations is immersed in the militarisation of (South African) society either as wielders of coercive and restrictive power or as objects or respondents to that power. (Grundy, 1983:10)**

- The SADF has played a crucial role in South Africa's regional policies. It has maintained a military occupation of Namibia and been involved in Angola since 1975. The SADF has also been active in destabilisation activities in neighbouring countries particularly Mozambique.
- The final indicator of militarisation at the political level concerns the role of the SADF in repression.<sup>15</sup> The SADF has increasingly been used to maintain minority rule and the apartheid system. During the 1984-86 period of intensified resistance the SADF was widely used in the townships. During 1985 alone 35 000 troops were used in townships throughout the country. In October 1984

army units joined the police in patrolling Soweto. This was followed by Operation Palmiet when 7 000 soldiers sealed off the township of Sebokeng, carrying out house-to-house searches and making at least 350 arrests. This represented a strategic shift away from a reliance on the police force alone to maintain what the state called 'law and order'. Since that time the SADF has been used increasingly in internal repression in diverse arenas of black experience such as health, housing, labour and education. The army has been employed in evicting rent defaulters in an effort to break the rent boycott and has occupied classrooms in an effort to break the schools boycott. In August 1985, 800 children, some only seven years old, were arrested after a curfew was declared forcing Sowetan children to stay inside classrooms during school hours. In 1986 this was enforced by the occupation of black schools by white soldiers and "stories of children even having a military escort to visit the lavatory were not uncommon." (Hawarden, 1987). The SADF has been deployed to guard polling booths, to invade health clinics to identify the injured, in maintaining beach apartheid, in removals, monitoring demonstrations, suppressing resistance to homeland independence, organising student registration at Turfloop University, and strike-breaking.

The SADF has also been involved in the 're-education' of political detainees and in the interrogation of detainees.<sup>16</sup> A recent example of this was reported as follows:

**A terrifying account of assaults and interrogation with the use of a live snake emerged following the brief detention of at least seven youths in the St Wendolins area near Durban two days before the municipal elections. Armed soldiers allegedly forced a number of youths to lie on their backs, then stood on their stomachs, beat them all over their bodies and questioned them about their 'leaders' and the whereabouts of firearms. The interrogators also put a live snake around one of the youth's neck during his brief detention. (*New Nation*, 10 November 1988)**

This report is significant because it illustrates the role of the SADF in repression and its reliance on terror to achieve its purpose.

### The Politics of Terror

During the 1984-86 period there is a good deal of evidence of SADF violence directed against township residents generally and young people particularly. The Detainees' Parents' Support Committee reported a pattern which involved soldiers picking children off the streets at random, and holding them for several hours in military vehicles or in remote areas of veld. The children describe being beaten with fists and rifle butts and even being subjected to electric shock treatment.

During this period the SADF often acted together with the SAP. Their activities were indistinguishable to many township residents as they fused in a pattern of indiscriminate violence.

**Today's army is lions. They hate a person. If one of the police or army come towards you, you are so scared. You know that the first thing they may do is beat you up and then shoot you. (Crossroads squatter, *Out of Step*, May 1987)**

It was the arbitrary and indiscriminate nature of the violence that intensified the spread of extreme fear.

**In our streets, one day it's all right. The next day, you can cross the street when a Casspir (police vehicle) comes round the corner, and you'll die. It's like Beirut. (Soweto resident, *Sunday Star*, 8 September 1985)**

The degree to which the SADF and SAP were linked in this period, in suppressing black resistance, is an important indicator both of the level of violent conflict in this society and of the role of the SADF within that conflict. This role changed during 1986 as surrogate forces in the shape of vigilantes and municipal constables came to be agents of violence and fear.

Vigilantes first emerged in 1985. Haysom defines vigilantes as

**... violent, organised and conservative groupings operating within black communities, which, although they receive no official recognition, are politically directed in the sense that they act to neutralise individuals and groupings opposed to the apartheid state and its institutions. (Haysom, 1989)**

In this sense their violent actions are markedly to the advantage of the South African state. However,

**... it is virtually impossible to establish the actual links between vigilantes and the state, more so under the emergency restrictions which effectively permit vigilante activity to go unreported. Nevertheless there is growing evidence which suggests tacit and active approval by the state for vigilante groups. (Levin, 1987:26)**

Such evidence relates to diverse areas, such as Crossroads, KwaNobuhle and Queenstown as over the past two years vigilante attacks on progressive community organisations and leaders have become common across the country. The effect of

vigilante groups are to disorganise and destabilise such organisations and individuals. Haysom points out that this effect holds whether the police actively sanction and support the vigilantes or whether they merely appear capable of or reluctant to curb vigilante activities.

A case study which illustrates how vigilantes operate violently without legal consequences is the community of Leandra, a black township on the East Rand. Residents had been involved in a grassroots campaign to prevent their forced removal which enjoyed such popular support that the authorities were forced to negotiate with one of the residents' association leaders, Chief Mayise. Vigilante attacks culminated in a mob assault on Chief Mayise's house in January 1986 during which he was hacked to death. To date no-one has been prosecuted for his killing. This illustrates how vigilante groups disorganise and destabilise opposition through spreading violence and extreme fear.

The reliance on vigilantes as a disorganising force represents a shift away from a reliance on the SADF and SAP to suppress black resistance. However it is crucial to appreciate that this shift is part of a military strategy – strategy of counter-insurgency. The vigilante phenomenon illustrates both the neutralisation of opponents and use of surrogate forces that are key elements of this strategy. However the use of surrogate forces also extends to new forms of policing.

This involved two new police forces deployed in 1986 at the height of the uprising against the apartheid state. An additional 16 000 'kitskonstabels' (special constables) and municipal policemen were added to the police force.

**These hastily trained black policemen were deployed in large groups in all areas where resistance was strong. From the beginning they used excessive violence. Their brutality created an atmosphere of fear that was not only aimed at activists but at intimidating entire communities. The behaviour of the new police is characterised by an arrogant disregard for the law. (CIRR, 1988:13-14)**

A township resident describes them as follows:

**... they are the dogs of the SAP doing all their hunting and watching. (Quoted by CIRR, 1988:19)**

In some communities the new police forces established what the CIRR publication describes as a 'reign of terror'. The violence involved both systematic torture and beatings. For example, Mr VB of Duncan Village (the African township near East London) was bundled into a van driven by municipal policemen and

**I was taken into a building where I was instructed to lie on my stomach. Three policemen wielding metal bars then struck me on the back. When they hit me, I tried to jump up.**

**I grabbed one of them and pleaded with him to help me as I did not know where the firearm was. Another one then grabbed me by the throat and choked me. I lost consciousness. When I woke up I was lying beneath a tap with water running over me.**

After more interrogation, Mr VB was burned with cigarettes on the arm and foot. (CIRR, 1988:61)

Clearly, the effect of this kind of violence is to spread extreme fear. This fear becomes extremely widespread when the pattern of violence is arbitrary, and seems to be directed not only against anti-apartheid activists, but also against ordinary township residents.

**One day I came home late from work. It was 6.30 pm. A taxi stopped near my house and a woman got out. She was carrying a lot of parcels and as she passed my house some 'greenflies'(municipal police) stopped her. They just started beating her with sjamboks. She cried out to them, 'What have I done? I have come from work.' They gave no reply. The 'greenflies' saw that I was watching this and they told me to go into my house. The woman had dropped her parcels and her groceries were lying all over the street ... you just can't send your children to the shop after half-past-six any more. It seems that is how they want to control the townships. They want the people off the streets. (Duncan Village resident, Quoted in CIRR, 1988:53)**

This arbitrary and indiscriminate pattern of violence that generates widespread fear is also reported from Bhongoletu, a black township outside Oudtshoorn. It has been reported that

**... a feeling of constant fear of assault by the constables was widespread. (CIRR, 1988:37)**

This is also reported by Van Eck who writes, of a "campaign of terror" being waged by black policemen against township residents in Valhalla Park and Elsie's River. (Van Eck, 1989:22)

**We heard detailed eyewitness accounts from ordinary people: men, women and children being sjambokked viciously for no other reason than being outside their homes; of a young woman seriously wounded by buckshot**

## **while trying to get into her own yard, of a boy shot dead at point-blank range. (Van Eck, 1989:19-20)**

When the fear of arbitrary imprisonment is added to a fear of assault, the effect is to freeze anti-apartheid activity. A municipal policeman interviewed in the Eastern Cape is reported to have said

## **... now everyone is afraid of going to jail without any reason, no-one is causing any trouble. (CIRR, 1988:1)**

During 1984-86 many black South African townships were reconstituted as what Walzer termed 'zones of terror'. Within these areas relationships were structured around violence and fear. It is important to note that the violence and fear was largely confined to these areas. Outside the townships power relations followed the conventional rules of authority for most people not involved in anti-apartheid activities.

The law has been used to blanket these zones of terror in secrecy and to indemnify the agents of state violence. At the start of the uprising the government banned all information about SADF involvement in joint police-army activity. This placed black townships

## **in the same category as war zones or battlegrounds. (Cape Times editorial, 8 November 1984)**

In 1986 the government extended press restrictions prohibiting any publication of 'security action'; and banning journalists, the "little jackals", as the State President called them, from 'unrest areas.'

The other way in which the law has been used to maintain the politics of terror relates to the legal status of the agents of state violence. The Emergency Regulations gave enormous powers and freedom of action to the 'security forces'. They can issue orders (and use force to ensure obedience), arrest and detain persons for up to 30 days without warrant, enter and search premises and seize any object or article. The Emergency Regulations granted policemen and soldiers indemnity from civil and criminal prosecution for any act performed "in good faith", with the intent of ensuring the safety of the public of the maintenance of public order.

'Kitskonstabels' have the same powers as ordinary policemen. Under the State of Emergency, they also have the power to detain people. The municipal police do not have the same powers as the police and are not given extra powers by the State of Emergency. However the Black Local Authorities Act gives them very wide powers: in an emergency they can do whatever they deem necessary to restore law and order. (CIRR, 1988). Thus the four principal agents of state violence – the SADF, the SAP, the municipal police and the 'kitskonstabels', operate with lawful powers which protect them from prosecution. (The fifth agency – the vigilantes – also escape prosecution, at least by default.)

It is important to note how the law is being manipulated in this process of repression.<sup>17</sup> The extended powers the State of Emergency regulations give to state agents are justified by appeals to 'law and order'. The notion of a 'fight against terrorism' is mobilised to deal with resistance to state power. The notion provides a

justification which screens and legitimates the state's own violence against its opponents.<sup>18</sup>

The 'politics of terror' implies a reliance on violence which is calibrated to the level of resistance. The violence has the following characteristics:

- It is largely covert; it is planned in secret arenas which are not open to public scrutiny.
- It is systematic – it is planned rather than spontaneous.
- The pattern of violence has a particular relation to the law. It is either (a) unrestrained by the law – operating outside of the courts and legal processes as in the case of vigilante violence, or it is (b) embedded in the legal system as in the case of executions and detentions.
- The violence is apparently random, indiscriminate, arbitrary and capricious – all are potential victims.
- The violence is unconventional – it violates established norms, values and social patterns.
- The violence is frequently clandestine and perpetrated by anonymous actors.

The outcome is to atomise and disorganise the opposition forces. 'Destabilisation' captures the extent of this disorganisation. While the term is conventionally used to mean the disruption of established governments, in the context of this paper it refers to the atomisation of individuals, organisations and entire communities. The targets are active or potentially active anti-apartheid forces.

This raises the question of whether or not South Africa is a 'terrorist state'. The phrase 'terrorist state' appears to involve a contradiction in terms. 'Terrorism' is usually defined as illegitimate violence and the source of legitimacy is conventionally defined as the state. In terms of President Bush's criteria of terrorism – the violation of international law and human rights – the Ebrahim case illustrates both in the state's use of kidnapping and torture. It will be shown below that both these forms of state terrorism are extensively practised in South Africa. They are among the forms of state violence which led Van der Vyver to point to a pattern of "state-sponsored terror violence." (Van der Vyver, 1988).

However state violence is not practised here on a scale that is comparable to the situation in the South American countries that have been termed terrorist states. The scale and intensity of terror is not comparable to the situation in El Salvador, for instance, where there were over 10 000 killings of trade union leaders, peasant activists, teachers, students, professors and journalists in 1980. Nor is it comparable to the Argentine during the years of rule by the military junta when

**The scope of state terror ... embraced whole neighbourhoods and a broad array of occupational groups in the cities, towns and countryside. Peasant victims were found in mass lime graves in the countryside; workers' bodies were strewn at busy bus stops or floating down the Mapocho; students dropped from helicopters disappeared**

**into the Pacific; 30 000 dead, many times that number arrested and tortured. (Petras, 1987:321)**

It has been implied that killings on such a scale are unlikely in South Africa because the state is constrained by three factors – its commitment to Judeo-Christian principles, a desire for international acceptance, and its concern to maintain internal political cohesion. He gives most weight to the last factor.

**If the security forces start killing demonstrators randomly they jeopardise a state's most precious asset – the cohesion of the ruling elite ... . Any large-scale massacre perpetrated by the South African security forces would produce a pervasive sense of self-doubt among the ruling elite. When such feelings get the upper hand the days of a repressive regime are numbered. (Giliomee, 1988:130)**

The implication of this argument is that South Africa is not a terrorist state and is unlikely to become one. However Giliomee's argument implies that the sole criterion of a terrorist state is the large-scale and well-publicised massacre of political dissidents. This paper suggests that the terrorist state may be conceptualised in broader terms which hinge around the extent to which the state maintains its authority largely by the spread of fear through an organised and sustained policy of violence.

There is more agreement that South Africa has practised what Laquer terms 'state-sponsored terrorism' as foreign policy.<sup>19</sup> This evidence relates to both Zimbabwe and Mozambique (Davies, 1988; Hanlon, 1987). However this paper suggests that there are parallels in external and internal policies which are best understood in terms of destabilisation. It is suggested that this destabilisation occurs on four different levels – internal and external, organisational and individual.<sup>20</sup> At the internal level the key process involved is an 'atomisation'. Through this social movements are disorganised and political opponents are neutralised.

The agents involved in internal and external destabilisation are not co-terminus though there is some overlap. An activist in Mamelodi, the black township outside Pretoria, described an SADF raid as follows:

**Whenever they go and raid an activist, they go as if they are raiding Angola, because they come with tanks and everything. For instance, with me, they came with a tank, and pointed it at my shack. (Quoted by Borraine, 1988:4)**

Borraine comments

**This comparison with 'border' duty is certainly not lost on the SADF itself. In a visit to the Mamelodi East SADF base in December 1987, the Deputy Minister of Defence, Mr Willie**

**Breytenbach wished the troops of the Overvaal Regiment and the 7 Unrest Unit a "Merry Christmas", and thanked them for all they had done. He said that their presence in Mamelodi "was just as important as the presence of troops in Namibia and Angola." (Borraine, 1988:4)**

Clearly the power base of the state is the armed forces in the shape of the army and the police. However it was demonstrated above that the agents of violence in many black communities are increasingly surrogate forces such as vigilantes who are particularly effective in spreading fear through systematic and brutal violence. The politics of terror is enforced by a variety of agents including the SADF itself, the SAP, the municipal police, 'Kitskonstabels' and vigilantes. However the terror is mediated by a shadowy and sinister figure – the informer.

The informer is the ultimate source of fear and intimidation. This fear depends on the process of anonymity, disguise and infiltration. It is an effective means of achieving social atomisation.

**This atomisation ... is maintained and intensified through the ubiquity of the informer, who can be literally omnipresent because he is no longer merely a professional agent in the pay of the police but potentially every person one comes into contact with. (Arendt, 1970:55)**

The informer does not perpetrate acts of violence or destruction but is a crucial source of the security intelligence that all counter-insurgency theorists prioritise. The informer is an essential element in the spread of fear.

The state violence that generates this fear takes many different forms ranging from death – through legal executions, torture and assassination – to neutralisation through detention – to the destruction of property through bombings and arson – to demoralisation through harassment and intimidation. What unites these different forms of state violence is the notion of destabilisation, the disorganisation and atomisation of anti-apartheid organisations and individuals.

A number of these forms of violence surfaced in the recent Bethal trial. The case of Ishmael Ebrahim may be used as a board to peg some questions about state violence in contemporary South Africa.

### The Ebrahim Case

Ebrahim, one of the most senior members of the ANC to go on trial in recent years, was sentenced in January 1989 to 20 years imprisonment. He had been active in anti-apartheid politics since his early teens, participating in the defiance campaigns of the 1950s and attending the Congress of the People in 1955. At this time he was firmly committed to non-violence and an admirer of Gandhi's teachings. The Sharpeville Massacre and the banning of the ANC were key influences upon him. His commitment

was to "the establishment of a free democratic society", and in his view, "the banning of the ANC removed our hopes of achieving this through peaceful non-violent means ... . A chapter closed in our history. We decided to fight rather than surrender. We decided to meet the repressive violence of the state with the revolutionary violence of the people." (Court statement)

It was at that point that Ebrahim joined Umkhonto we Sizwe. He was first convicted in 1964 when he was found guilty on three counts of sabotage. "I was arrested in 1963, detained and tortured, and finally tried and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment", which he served on Robben Island. After his release he was banned and heavily restricted. He went into exile in 1980 and continued his ANC work, until in 1986 he was allegedly abducted by South African state agents from Swaziland.

**I was kidnapped from a foreign state by the South African security forces. At that point I was carrying an Indian passport, issued to me by the government of India. The lack of any judicial restraint has given the security forces of apartheid a free hand to continue their abductions with impunity. The violation of the borders of the neighbouring state, of its independence and sovereignty, is itself a great offence against international law and has in the past resulted in countries going to war. Kidnapping people and forcibly bringing them across the border fences into South Africa is an act of state terrorism.**

He said his abduction took place four days after the kidnapping of a Swiss couple, a Swazi woman and the murder of a registered South African refugee from Swaziland. He asked

**Are these abductions and murder not acts of state terrorism? We in the ANC never advocated a policy of murdering or abducting South African personnel abroad. Yet it is now the accepted policy of the South African security forces to assassinate and abduct the opponents of the apartheid regime in foreign lands.**

He said his abduction was followed by police torture involving electronic sound, "to the point where I nearly lost my mind."

During the trial he told the court that the use of violence "was a painful necessity. But there was no other way out. One hated the racist system and knew it was violent and found oneself forced to use force." As a member of the ANC he said he supported all four pillars of the struggle – "one of them, the armed struggle, inevitably involves violence and, in its ambit, includes white farmers on the borders, because they have become part and parcel of the defence machinery". The judge said he did not impose

the death sentence only because no-one had been killed by the landmines placed in these border areas.

The Ebrahim case points to a number of different forms of violence.

## Forms of State Violence

### Capital Punishment

Capital punishment involves a bizarre combination of both covert and overt violence in that while the legal process is public, the identity of the executioner and the process of execution are secret.

This secrecy was underlined when, after an incident at Pretoria Central Prison when teargas was used to force four men out of their cell to the place of execution, a member of parliament asked the Minister of Justice the following questions: How long condemned prisoners have to wait after arriving at the gallows before being executed? How often it was necessary to use physical force or teargas to force condemned prisoners to the gallows? The Minister said he did not want to answer the questions because they were "too gruesome". The sensibilities of the public (this time of the relatives) is also cited as the reason for secrecy around the date of execution.

This form of state violence has increased recently. Amnesty International maintains that the death penalty was used in South Africa on an "unprecedented scale" in 1987 (*The Star*, 5 October 1988). In that year a total of 164 people were hanged, which represents a substantial increase from 115 in 1984, 137 in 1985 and 121 in 1986 (*Mail & Guardian*, 1 December 1987). According to the Lawyers for Human Rights, about 700 people have been executed in South Africa since 1983. (*New Nation*, 6 October 1988)

An increasing number of these hangings involve political offences. According to official figures a total of 101 people have been sentenced to death for "unrest-related incidents" since 1985. There were 8 in 1985, 12 in 1986 and 48 in 1987. Some of those hanged have been members of Umkhonto we Sizwe and there have been pleas that they should be treated as prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention.

At present there are thought to be about 300 prisoners on "Death Row". This figure includes 39 from the Eastern Cape, of which 19 have been sentenced for "political killings". According to the Minister of Justice, 83 of the people currently on Death Row were convicted for "politically-motivated offences" (*The Star*, 18 November 1988). Almost half (47%) of a 1989 study of a sample of people on Death Row were found guilty of "politically-related offences."

### Death Squads and Disappearances

The murder and disappearance of prominent anti-apartheid activists and the fact that their killers and kidnappers have not been brought to court has provoked speculation that there are 'death squads' operating in South Africa. These are a familiar feature of some Latin American states such as Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru.

They are a means of obscuring the responsibility of the terrorist state for the violent acts it commits.

The assassination of apartheid's opponents outside the country is increasing. The assassinations go back to the parcel bomb which killed Abraham Tiro in Botswana in 1974 and include the attacks on Joe Gqabi (gunned down in his Harare home in 1980), Ruth First and others. However Moss has suggested that

**... in the last few months action against opponents of apartheid – in particular ANC members – appears to have changed from random slaughter to a sustained campaign; from individual covert hits to generalised policy – a policy that would dovetail almost exactly with the statement: 'Wherever the ANC is, we will eliminate it'. (A statement made by Magnus Malan on 19 February 1988)**

**Every twelve days since the beginning of the year there has been at least one armed attack on an ANC member living outside South Africa. (Moss, 1988:25)**

Moss writes

**Assassination and deception, destabilisation and disinformation: these are the weapons of war that have replaced John Vorster and Jimmy Kruger's era of legally sanctioned repression. They reflect the dominance of Magnus Malan's military structures within the state, and raise dilemmas of universal significance for all touched by South Africa's expanding civil war. (Moss, 1988:27)**

Death squads may be operating not only against ANC leaders in Europe and the USA but within the country as well. Since the murder of sociologist Rick Turner a decade ago, there have been a number of unsolved political crimes. These include the killings of a number of anti-apartheid activists such as the civil rights attorney, Griffith Mxenge, murdered in 1983 and his wife, murdered two years later, four community leaders from Cradock, Matthew Goniwe, Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkhonto and Sicelo Mhlawuli in 1985, and Fabian Ribeiro and his wife killed in Mamelodi in 1986, as well as the IDASA director, Eric Mntonga murdered in 1987. The DPSC worker Sicelo Dhlomo was killed mysteriously in 1988, along with at least 10 other anti-apartheid activists. No-one has been charged with these killings. It is widely believed that the victims were killed by state agents acting in terms of the state's counter-revolutionary strategy as expressed by Major-General C H Lloyd when he said

**sometimes you have to take out the revolutionaries if they are controlling the people. (*Christian Science Monitor*, 11 November 1988)**

There have also been a number of disappearances; of anti-apartheid activists, such as the Anglican Bishop of Lebombo, Denis Sengolane, who was reported missing in April 1988 and at least 3 trade unionists. The most recent disappearance is the case of Stanza Bopape who was in detention when, according to the police, he escaped from custody. It is extremely difficult to prove connections with the state in all these instances. It is simply not possible to establish with any certainty whether certain forms of state violence, such as death squads, are operating under the formal direction of state agents or with their informal sanction. Moss writes

**Linking the South African state to each and every assassination or bomb blast aimed at ANC members may not be possible. But evidence is mounting that South Africa is ruled by a rogue government which will not balk at international terrorism as a means of controlling opposition to its apartheid-ruled society. (Moss, 1988:27)**

#### Legal Police Killings

Police shootings have made South Africa notorious since 1961 when 69 African protesters against the pass system were shot by police in what came to be known as the 'Sharpeville Massacre'. This was followed by the Soweto Revolt – initiated on 16 June 1976 when around 10 000 students in Soweto protested against Bantu Education and met with police violence. Some sources put the death toll on that day at 25, while others placed it at nearer 100 (Hirson, 1979:184). The Soweto protest became an uprising that lasted a year, during which some 700 African people were killed. This has been followed by the police shootings at Langa near Uitenhage when 21 people were shot dead by police in March 1985.

Police shooting is more common than these dramatic events would suggest. South African police may shoot to kill in the defence of persons or property, to prevent the escape of certain subjects or to effect the dispersion of a riotous and dangerous crowd. Police shootings have increased in South Africa in recent years. In 1987 more than 1 000 people were wounded or killed by the South African police. (Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, reported in the *Sunday Times*, 3 April 1988). Between September 1984 and May 1987, of the 2 517 civil unrest fatalities in South Africa, the security forces had killed 1 002 or 40% of all deaths (Riordan, 1988:6).

#### Detention Without Trial

This way of 'neutralising' political opponents is a familiar strategy of counter-insurgency and has been used in many different social contexts. In South Africa detention without trial has been lawful since the 1960s. For the purposes of this argument what is significant about this form of state violence is the recent increase in the numbers of detentions as well as in the length of the detention period.

Since 1984 the numbers of people detained without trial has increased very dramatically.

**From an estimated 1 130 detentions in 1984, the figure rose to over 8 000 in the first seven months emergency in 1985/86. Since June 1986 approximately 30 000 people have been detained. (DPSC, 1987:101)**

Altogether, an estimated 51 000 detentions have taken place since August 1984, which is over 70% of the detentions that have occurred in South Africa since 1960 (Human Rights Committee, 1988). In January 1989 about 1 500 people are estimated to be in detention under emergency regulations. (Human Rights Commission reported in the *New Nation*, 2 February 1989)

Many of these detentions have involved extremely lengthy periods. For example, Chris Ncgobo is one of about 200 people who spent over 2 years in detention. On 15 June 1986 he

**was asleep in Room 263 when about 200 men covered by balaclavas and brandishing rifles surrounded Glyn Thomas dormitory in the middle of the night. They stormed the hallways of this residence for black students at the University of the Witwatersrand, forcing the monitor at gunpoint to open up rooms with his pass key. The security forces roused sleeping students, tore off their blankets and marched several of them, including Mr Ncgobo, into waiting vans. (The *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 June 1988)**

The violent and frightening circumstances of this arrest are significant. Christopher Ncgobo has recently been released with severe restriction orders.

The Human Rights Commission reports that since 1988 the state has resorted to these more sophisticated methods of silencing its opponents, such as restriction orders on individuals and anti-apartheid organisations. The HRC points out "restriction orders are more often the rule than the exception when detainees are released". (The *New Nation*, 19 January 1989)

The main target of restriction orders and detention has been the United Democratic Front (UDF). During the 1984-86 period ordinary members as well as leadership figures were detained. It is in this sense that detention has been random as well as prolonged. It does not seem to have been aimed at extracting information, as "interviews with some 200 detainees (from the Eastern Cape) revealed that many were never questioned". (Roux and de Villiers, 1988)

The effectiveness of this destabilisation strategy depends on the fear associated with detention without trial. This fear is well-founded given that approximately 70 detainees have died while in custody – the most famous case being Steve Biko in September

1977. Many detainees are held in solitary confinement which is an acknowledged form of torture. However, the forms of torture documented in South Africa extend further than isolation.

#### Torture

Torture is an important element in modern 'counter-revolutionary war'.<sup>21</sup> Trinquier (one of the architects of the 'pacification' programme in the Casbah in Algiers) emphasised the necessity of this.

**Torture is not only considered as a means of obtaining information on clandestine networks, at any price, but also as a means for destroying every individual who is captured, as well as his or her sense of solidarity with an organisation or a community. (Trinquier, cited by Mattelart, 1979:415)<sup>22</sup>**

Thus torture is an effective instrument of social atomisation, a function which may be more important than obtaining information. As a destabilisation strategy this theory draws on what Hitler wrote on psychological warfare in *Mein Kampf*.

**Our strategy consists in destroying the enemy from inside, and making him the instrument of his own conquest. (Quoted by Mattelart, 1979:423)**

Guilt and isolation dislocate the individual from any sense of identification with the group. The outcome is an exaggerated individualism and sense of aloneness – it is in this sense that social organisations are fragmented and social relations atomised.

Torture is widely used in South Africa to achieve this. A study done at the University of Cape Town established that 85 per cent of a sample of 175 ex-detainees had suffered physical torture. (Foster et al, 1987)

Among the forms of physical torture that have been detailed are assault, electric shock, suffocation and immersion in cold water. (DPSC Memorandum on Security Police Abuses on Political Detainees, Quoted in *The Star*, 1 August 1988)

#### Bomb Attacks

There have been numerous bomb attacks on the homes and headquarters of anti-apartheid activists and organisations, and there is a widespread suspicion of state responsibility or sanction. In 1988 there have been three serious attacks on such organisations which have severely disrupted their work. In August 1989 a powerful bomb shattered the interior of Khotso House in Johannesburg which housed the offices of the South African Council of Churches, the Black Sash and other anti-apartheid organisations. In October 1988 a fire raged through Khanya House in Pretoria, the headquarters of the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference, after an explosion. In November a firebomb exploded in the head office of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) destroying files and causing considerable damage. To date no-one has been charged or convicted of these offences.

However, South Africans have been charged and convicted of similar offences against ANC officials in neighbouring states like Zimbabwe. Recently three South African agents were found guilty of murdering the driver of a car laden with explosives which blew up outside an ANC house in Bulawayo in January 1988 (*The Star*, 18 November 1988). South African state agents have also been involved in raids and bombings of alleged ANC facilities in Zambia, in both Livingstone and Lusaka; in bomb attacks on South African exiles in Zimbabwe; in a raid on Maputo in Lesotho in December 1982 which led to 37 deaths, and so on. The scale of this pattern of state-sponsored terrorism led Rich to point to the risk of the SADF turning the entire Southern African region into a 'zone of terror' (Rich, 1984:84). Since Rich's warning the same pattern of covert violence has been directed against anti-apartheid individuals and organisations within the country as well.

### Theories of State Security

These forms of state violence need to be understood in relation to post-war counter-insurgency theory. This theory draws on the experience of Algeria, Cuba, Malaya and Vietnam to produce sophisticated tactics, rooted in a long-term view.

According to a number of analysts including Baynham (1987) and Swilling and Phillips (1988), a counter-insurgency theorist who has been particularly influential in the formulation of South African state policy is the American J J McCuen. McCuen's main point is that the principles and strategy adopted by the insurgents in a revolutionary war must be put into reverse by the state.

**... a governing power can defeat any revolutionary movement if it adopts the revolutionary strategy and principles and applies them in reverse to defeat the revolutionaries with their own weapons on their own battlefield. (McCuen, 1966:29)**

According to McCuen 'terrorism' and 'intimidation' are important revolutionary weapons, and lie at the centre of revolutionary strategy.

**As recent history proves, revolutionaries have developed grim forms of terrorism: murder, massacre, torture, mutilation, bombings, arson, kidnapping, anything that will intimidate. (McCuen, 1966: 32)**

The principle of reversal implies that the governing power is necessarily committed to these methods as well.

However state violence must be precisely calibrated to intimidate without antagonising the general population. This is because unlike conventional war, which aims at winning territory, the aim of counter-insurgency is to win the hearts and minds of the people.

Swilling and Phillips have argued that current state security strategy represents a shift in state thinking away from 'total strategy' informed by the French strategist, Andre Beaufre, to 'counter-revolutionary war', or 'winning hearts and minds', WHAM, informed by the writings of McCuen.

Both 'total strategy' and 'WHAM' are military strategies which involve comprehensive social engineering. Both strategies emphasise the psychological dimensions of counter-insurgency. The understanding that the war was only 20% military did not mean that the SADF should confine itself to military aspects. Instead this legitimised an increasing military involvement in all spheres of decision-making. The role of the military in co-ordinating resources and tying the strategy together has become increasingly important. In the words of Colonel John D Waghelstein, counter-revolutionary war

**... is total war at the grassroots level – one that uses all the weapons of total war, including political, economic and psychological warfare with the military aspect being a distant fourth in many cases. (Cited by Saul, 1987:3)**

Both strategies emphasised the need for 'economic action' but according to Swilling and Phillips, WHAM takes this further. They write

**The fundamental difference between 'total strategy' as conceived in the early 1980s and the WHAM programme that has been implemented since 1986, is that the latter is no longer concerned primarily with restructuring the access points to political society. (Swilling and Phillips, 1988:22)**

Instead the focus is on recasting the foundations of civil society so as to maintain control. This is achieved partly through economic development – material upliftment or upgrading in a way that is intended to 'win hearts and minds'.

The importance of such economic action is emphasised by a number of state security strategists. For instance McCuen's 'The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War' is thought to have influenced two important military men – Major General F L Meiring and Major General C J Lloyd. Major General Lloyd has stated that the counter-revolutionary strategy of the state involves three tactics:

- The countering of planned subversion on all fronts;
- The elimination of the revolutionaries; and
- The reform of the environment. (Cited by Swilling and Phillips, 1988)

Economic reform is also emphasised by another counter-insurgency theorist who has influenced at least one military man – General C L Viljoen (Chief of the SADF at the time) – Robert Thompson (Viljoen, 1984:2). Thompson's ideas are derived from his experiences of counter-insurgency in Malaya from 1948 to 1960, and have much in common with McCuen, who also refers a great deal to the British experience in

Malaya (as well as the French experience in Algeria). Like McCuen, he emphasises "material well-being" as a tactic to

**... create a situation in which people will not willingly sacrifice either their present standards of living or their prospects of future progress. (Thompson, 1966:66)**

Both McCuen's and Thompson's writings are centred in a materialist model of man. Man is characterised by a "natural cupidity" (Thompson, 1966)

It could be argued that while overt violence was necessary to 'Total Strategy', WHAM relies on forms of violence which are more covert (in the sense that the source is not revealed), clandestine and unconventional. 'Winning hearts and minds' implies that state violence must be carefully balanced to intimidate without antagonising. Thus during the 1984-88 period the role of state violence has changed. It has become both more covert and more selective. During the 1984-86 period the violence appeared to be overt and arbitrary in the sense that although the primary targets were anti-apartheid leadership, targets widened to include township residents and members of anti-apartheid organisations more generally. After 1986 the violence appears to be more selective. This is necessary in order to win popular support.

Winning popular support is necessary to achieving a level of political quiescence. State violence is not the only means of achieving this.<sup>23</sup> It is when people's political aspirations have been blurred, their organisations fragmented and their political will weakened, that material incentives can take root. This is the significance of the state's linking of 'repression' and 'reform'. It is hinged on achieving a level of individuation or atomisation from which people's aspirations can be redirected into privatised, consumerist ends. It is in this sense that the state intends to distract the oppressed majority through home ownership, television and soccer stadiums – a new, more sophisticated version of 'bread and circuses'. It is in this sense that the state's use of covert violence is linked to the upgrading programmes.

It is important to appreciate the extent to which both are military strategies. In 1987 General Magnus Malan announced that he had taken 'personal responsibility' for the upgrading projects in the black townships of Alexandra, Mamelodi, Bonteheuwel and New Brighton. These are some of the 34 townships in South Africa that have been designated 'oilspots'. They are conceptualised as "strategic bases" from which the security forces believe they can regain control over the oppressed majority (Swilling, 1988). Malan stated this strategy as follows:

**I want to see to what extent I can better the living conditions of the people, to what extent I can get the people to accept the government so that they don't break with the authorities and drift into the hands of the terrorists. (*Cape Times*, 30 March 1987. Cited by Borraine, 1988:1)**

This is totally in accord with the emphasis on 'economic aid', which is a key element of counter-insurgency strategy. Therefore it is not surprising that SADF personnel have been actively involved in upgrading projects in a variety of capacities. For example,

SADF soldiers have been used to sell houses in townships in an attempt, to quote an SADF spokesperson, to "contain the total onslaught" and help "beat the rent boycott". (*Sowetan*, 29 September 1987. Cited by Borraine, 1988:14)

## Conclusion

In conclusion this paper has argued that since 1984 state violence has become increasingly widespread, systematic, covert and terrifying. It includes hanging, detention, torture, bombing, and assassination. The agents of violence are the SADF, the SAP, the municipal police, 'kitskonstabels' and vigilantes. Because the SADF are an important source of direction of this violence it seems appropriate to end by quoting the words of a prominent military man, the previous head of the SADF, General C J Viljoen.

## **South Africans must be prepared to accept certain levels of discomfort, disruption and even violence in their everyday lives. (Viljoen in Hough, 1984:6)**

In this process of 'acceptance' some of us are in danger of losing our freedom, property and even lives. All of us are in danger of losing our humanity.

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> For example, "The violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances". (Galtung, 1969:171)

<sup>2</sup> "Public support for official violence is so pervasive that the definition of violence is itself affected. In a 1969 survey (in the USA) for example, 30% of a national sample said that 'police beating students' was NOT an act of violence, and an astonishing 57% said that 'police shooting looters' was NOT an act of violence. The same survey asked respondents what violent events were of greatest concern to them. Even though the survey occurred during the Vietnam War, only 4% of those interviewed mentioned war". (Archer and Gartner, 1978:221)

<sup>3</sup> The Marxist tradition is critical of such violence. According to Marxism man does not create himself through violence but through labour.

<sup>4</sup> Walther points out that ever since the French Revolution, 'terrorist' has been an epithet to fasten on a political enemy. (Walther, 1969:4)

<sup>5</sup> Attempts to locate the distinction between 'war' and 'terrorism' in a separation between military and civilian targets has been difficult for some time. Shaw makes the point that during World War II, "the combination of politics and military technology meant that attacking civilian population centres, not merely as economic targets but because of their significance for political morale, became a 'normal' feature of warfare. The escalation of this strategy, initiated by German, became a central feature of Allied activity. It culminated in Europe in the fire-bombing of Dresden, which was of neither

major military nor economic significance, only months before the final defeat of Hitler". (Shaw, 1988:79)

<sup>6</sup> However, Rich correctly warns that "there is a high terrorism potential in any strategy of urban guerrilla warfare". (Rich, 1984:76)

<sup>7</sup> In many revolutionary wars terrorism is practiced by both sides. It is outside the scope of this paper to establish whether or there is a 'siege of terror' in South Africa at present. Certainly there have been cruel acts of political violence perpetrated in the name of the liberation struggle. These acts have included the burning and stoning to death of suspected informers and 'collaborators'. There were almost 400 'necklace' murders between 1984-87 and some of the perpetrators are among those currently on 'Death Row'. Furthermore bomb attacks on civilian targets have increased dramatically in 1988.

<sup>8</sup> He said leave was restricted, operation centres were manned around-the-clock, senior personnel were permanently on call and training was now geared to prepare trainees for immediate enemy engagement.

<sup>9</sup> While it seems accurate to describe the pattern of violence as 'episodic', it is important to note how this violence is escalating. According to official statistics a total of 238 guerrilla attacks took place in the first 10 months of 1988, compared with 234 during the whole of 1987, 230 in 1986, 136 in 1985 and 44 in 1984. This means that there has been a 640% increase in the number of guerrilla attacks; from 3,6 a month in 1984 to 23,4 a month in 1988. (Gavin Evans writing in the *Mail & Guardian*, 23 December 1988). It is important to appreciate how official censorship has obscured much of this violence. "The result: the war being waged behind a myriad images of protest has gone unnoticed by vast numbers of South Africans and foreigners alike". (Davis, 1987)

<sup>10</sup> 'Militarisation' is a contested concept. For a discussion of this see Cock in Cock and Nathan, 1989.

<sup>11</sup> "Militarism" is used to mean different things. "... first to mean an aggressive foreign policy, based on a readiness to resort to war, second the preponderance of the military in the state, the extreme case being that of military rule; third, subservience of the whole society to the needs of the army which may involve a recasting of social life in accordance with the pattern of military organization; and fourth, an ideology which promotes military ideas". (Andreski, cited in Gould and Kolb, 1964:429)

<sup>12</sup> A good deal has been written about the difficulties of establishing the level of militarisation with any precision. No single indicator is sufficient. Nor is it possible "to agree on a few key variables and to develop a list of criteria against which any given country could be checked". (Berghahn, 1984:70)

<sup>13</sup> This ideology has a number of components. Mann defines militarism as "a set of attitudes and social practices which regard war and the preparation for war as a normal and desirable social activity. This is a broader definition than is common among scholars. It qualifies people other than John Wayne as militarists. But in an age when war threatens our survival it is as well to understand any behavior, however mild in appearance, which makes war seem either natural or desirable". (Mann, 1987:35)

<sup>14</sup> The structure of the SADF shows an extensive reliance on conscripted manpower. The periods of compulsory military service have been progressively extended over the last 20 years in a chronology that parallels increasing black resistance to the apartheid state.

<sup>15</sup> There is no one-to-one relationship between militarisation and repression. "One cannot look at the extent of militarism in a given country – whether judged in terms of military expenditure as a percentage of GNP, the number of soldiers per head of population, or the size and sophistication of the weapons system – and draw any automatic conclusions about the intensity of repression there ... . The US is more heavily armed and has a higher number of soldiers per head of the population than Guatemala or Haiti or Indonesia, yet repression and social exploitation is far more intense in these countries than it is in the US". (Randle, 1981:86)

<sup>16</sup> In 1986 the Prisons Service disclosed that 27 national servicemen were involved "in programmes to prepare detainees for 'reintegration into society'. The servicemen run recreation and educational courses aimed at altering detainees' hostility towards the government" (*Mail & Guardian*, 24 October 1986). In 1987 the Minister of Law and Order admitted in parliament that six members of the SADF had interrogated Father Smangaliso Mkatshwa, the Secretary-General of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, while he was detained under the Emergency Regulations. Mkatshwa said in an affidavit that "during his detention he was left standing on the same spot for 30 hours, blindfolded and handcuffed. He also said his genitals and buttocks were exposed for 29 hours, a watery substance was smeared on his legs and thighs, two shots were fired behind him, and a creepy substance or instrument was fed into his backside". (*Mail & Guardian*, 9 October 1987)

<sup>17</sup> The status of the law in counter-insurgency theory is an important question that lies outside the scope of this paper. Galula is one theorist who believes that in a revolutionary war legal niceties often have to be disregarded. "Nothing ... is normal in a revolutionary war. If the counter-insurgent wishes to bring a quicker end to the war, he must discard some of the legal concepts that would be applicable to ordinary conditions. Automatic and rigid application of the law would flood the courts with minor and major cases, fill the jails and prison camps with people who could be won over, as well as with dangerous insurgents" (Galula, 1964:126). However Thompson stresses that one of the basic principles of counter-insurgency is that the government must function in accordance with the law (Thompson, 1966). (Thompson writes on the basis of his experience in Malaya where the 'Emergency' lasted 12 years, from 1948 to 1960. In South Africa the declaration of the State of Emergency in June 1985 (and re-enacted in June 1986, 1987 and 1988), marked a significant departure from the ordinary law. The State of Emergency is hinged on the opinion of the State President that current circumstances seriously threaten the safety of the public or the maintenance of law and order and the ordinary law of the land is inadequate to deal with these threats.

<sup>18</sup> Of course the South African state is not unique in this. Said shows how both the USA and Israel stake their foreign policy on the fight against terrorism. "... Israeli policy-makers began in the mid-1970s the discipline of describing as terrorism everything done by Palestinians to combat Israel's military occupation". (Said, 1988:51)

<sup>19</sup> According to Laquer this state-sponsored terrorism "is gradually becoming the predominant mode of warfare (by proxy) in our time" (Laquer, 1987:8). Petras (1987) gives an insightful analysis of this strategy.

<sup>20</sup> The application of 'destabilization' to individuals is taken from Hall and Roux, 1988:44.

<sup>21</sup> The three main elements are, according to Mattelart, population transfers; political indoctrination; and the systematisation of torture.

<sup>22</sup> McCuen describes Trinquier's book as "a must". (McCuen, 1966:81)

<sup>23</sup> There are many other forms of repression and coercion which the South African state uses to destabilize anti-apartheid organisations and individuals. They include elaborate and crippling restrictions on 18 anti-apartheid organisations (mainly UDF affiliates) in February 1988, and restriction orders on a number of individuals. The courts are also used to neutralise anti-apartheid leaders. An important illustration of this is the Delmas Treason Trial which linked UDF leaders to the ANC and the violence in the Vaal area which broke out in September 1984. The effect is to criminalise peaceful anti-apartheid actions.

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