

## CHAPTER 2

# EVOLUTION OF THE WHITE RIGHT

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The emergence of the contemporary extreme white right must be understood against the background of the rise of Afrikaner nationalism, and the divisions that have plagued Afrikanerdom for over a century. Moreover, that throughout their history Afrikaner nationalists tended to believe that the only way to confirm and protect the status and identity of the Afrikaner, and to prevent the group from being dominated by other ethnic groups or races, was to exercise power through self-determination in an ethnically homogenous territory.

### 1899–1947: Ethnic mobilisation

The Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) was an event of great consequence in Afrikaner right wing mythology. The courageous manner in which the outnumbered Republican Boers fought the war against the might of the British Empire, the suffering of non-combatants in British concentration camps (leading to the death of some 28,000 Boer women and children), the aggressive post-war Anglicisation policy, and the resultant poverty and loss of freedom, left an indelible mark on the national consciousness of the Afrikaner.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the guerilla war which the Boers fought with considerable success against the British created popular heroes still revered by right wing Afrikaners today.<sup>12</sup>

Towards the end of the Anglo-Boer War deep divisions developed among the Boers between the *bittereinders* (literally die-hards; those who fought to the bitter end) and the *hensoppers* (those who surrendered prematurely), over whether or not to continue the war. This emotionally charged distinction is used by the right wing today to describe FW de Klerk's (and even retired General Constand Viljoen's) 'capitulation' to the ANC.<sup>13</sup> A related theme derived from the war is that of treachery, used in this context to describe the behaviour of any member of the Afrikaner people who is deemed to have turned his back on his people.<sup>14</sup>

The Anglo-Boer War and the disastrous consequences of defeat left the Afrikaners in the conquered Boer Republics demoralised, who "seemed destined to be

absorbed by British culture, without ever having had a reasonable opportunity of establishing themselves as a distinct and coherent nation".<sup>15</sup>

In the face of this adversity Afrikaner nationalism blossomed. The notion of being second-class citizens boosted Afrikaner nationalism and led to ethnic mobilisation—a process which eventually led to the electoral victory of the National Party in 1948. Central to the mobilisation process was a secretive organisation restricted to professional protestant Afrikaner males, the Broederbond (Band of Brothers). The Broederbond played a crucial role in the "three-pronged strategy to promote and establish Afrikaner nationalism and to promote a separate Afrikaner identity by creating consciousness among Afrikaners based on their language, religion and traditions".<sup>16</sup>

In 1914 the National Party of General JBM Hertzog opposed South Africa's participation in the First World War. With South Africa's participation in the war a rebellion broke out. The rebellion, led by former Afrikaner military leaders who opposed South Africa's participation on the side of Britain, virtually resulted in an Afrikaner civil war. The suppression of the rebellion by government troops led to the death of a number of Boer heroes from the Anglo-Boer War and the execution in 1915 of an army officer, Jopie Fourie, who had joined the rebels without resigning his commission.

According to an article published in a right wing newspaper in 1990, "the rebellion imprinted a great truth into the consciousness of the Afrikaner, namely that the nation's honour is often saved by small groups of men and women who face the greatest odds against them".<sup>17</sup> The rebellion also produced legends and martyrs (such as Jopie Fourie) which would inspire the Afrikaner right wing in the years to come.

In 1939 South Africa's prime minister, Jan Smuts, decided to enter the Second World War on the side of Britain. This resulted in many of the old anti-British and anti-imperialist feelings being rekindled among Afrikaner nationalists, who again refused to fight on the side of Britain. Initially the nationalists were themselves divided between the National Party on the one hand, and the paramilitary organisation, the Ossewa Brandwag or OB (lit. Ox-wagon Sentry), on the other.

The OB espoused a local version of National Socialism (with a strong Christian flavour) and attempted to disrupt South Africa's war effort through acts of intimidation, sabotage and assassination.<sup>18</sup> During 1940 and 1941 a total of 25 bomb explosions occurred in the Witwatersrand (Gauteng) area alone, targeted mainly

at newspaper offices, cinemas, shops and railway lines.<sup>19</sup> The OB enjoyed considerable support among Afrikaners, with almost half a million members at its peak.<sup>20</sup> When Germany's defeat appeared inevitable, the Ossewa Brandwag's popularity began to wane and many of its members placed their loyalty firmly behind the National Party.<sup>21</sup>

## 1948–1993: Growth and militarisation

With its electoral victory in 1948 the National Party under the leadership of DF Malan made it a priority to maintain Afrikaner unity. Malan focused on bringing closer together the party and other Afrikaner organisations such as the Broederbond, the Afrikaans press, and Afrikaner business and civil society organisations. To strengthen its support among Afrikaners the National Party introduced measures aimed at promoting Afrikaner interests, reaffirmed its commitment to creating a republic, and actively endeavoured to reduce the English speaking dominance in the economic and political sphere. It also implemented stringent new racial laws.<sup>22</sup>

Already in the early 1960s—under the premiership of Hendrik Verwoerd—discontent was developing on the right fringe of the National Party. A group led by Robert van Tonder, who later founded the Boerestaat Party or BSP (Boer State Party), voiced its dissatisfaction with the government's white immigration policy.<sup>23</sup> The government's policy strongly encouraged European immigration to boost white numbers in the country. However, most of the immigrants came from the United Kingdom and not the Afrikaner's ancestral homelands of the Netherlands, Flanders and Germany. According to the Van Tonder group, British immigrants could not be assimilated into the Afrikaner culture and threatened to make a minority out of Afrikaners among whites in South Africa.<sup>24</sup>

In 1969 four Members of Parliament (MPs) were expelled from the National Party because of their opposition to the government's decision to allow the New Zealand rugby team to include a Maori in its tour of South Africa. The rebels formed the Herstigste Nasionale Party or HNP (Reconstituted National Party) under the leadership of Albert Hertzog.<sup>25</sup> The founding of the HNP had been preceded by a bitter power struggle between the *verkramptes* (conservative; right wing) and *verligtes* (moderates) of the Afrikaner community.<sup>26</sup>

Months prior to his expulsion, Hertzog delivered a speech dealing with the influence of Calvinism on Afrikaners. Hertzog felt only Afrikaners with their

Calvinistic value-system could survive the “onslaught against whites in Africa, since liberalism formed an integral part of the English-speaking psyche”.<sup>27</sup> Like the aforementioned Van Tonder group, the HNP was opposed to the immigration of English speakers and Catholics.

The HNP’s support base has always been largely class-based, rooted in the Afrikaner working class and poor farmers.<sup>28</sup> The HNP’s economic policy contains socialist elements and favours the creation of jobs and businesses for Afrikaners with the help of the state. The HNP interprets world affairs, and domestic political developments, through the lens of a conspiratorial world view whereby a small international moneyed elite manipulates world affairs and strives to create a centralised one-world government (see text box).<sup>29</sup>

### **Conspiracy theory**

The extreme right tends to interpret important historical and political events in the context of a perceived worldwide conspiracy.<sup>33</sup> The primary aim of the conspirators is to create a totalitarian and secular One-World Government or ‘New World Order’. To achieve their aims the conspirators seek to destroy national and cultural differences and the sovereignty of nations. Institutions such as, for example, the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank are believed to be tools of the conspirators.

The conspirators are most commonly said to be the world’s financial elite, usually international bankers and financiers. Through their wealth this financial elite is said to control most of the world’s media, politicians and other important opinion formers such as academics, the media and religious leaders. Other popular conspiratorial agents are, among others, Freemasonry, Zionism, New Ageism, the World Council of Churches and the Vatican.

According to conspiracy theory, international bankers have for centuries reaped vast fortunes by financing nations in the wars against each other. As one popular book on the conspiracy theory states: “History records that these nations were being plundered, pillaged and bled dry by war debts to the bankers. Only one group won in every war: the big bankers!”<sup>34</sup>

A school of thought popular among the religious right is that the conspiracy began with the formation of the ‘Illuminati’, a secret organisation found-

ed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is argued that the word Illuminati is derived from the word Lucifer, meaning bearer of the light.<sup>35</sup> This interpretation implies that the conspirators are not only after power and wealth but that their ultimate aim is to destroy Christian civilisation and create a one-world government ruled by the anti-Christ. Seen like this, politics is a struggle between good and evil with no room for compromise.

It is alleged that the Illuminati's plans for South Africa have always been to establish a surrogate black government which can be easily controlled and manipulated by the conspirators. To achieve this the conspirators had to destroy Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid. A booklet published by 'Think Right' in the late 1980s puts it as follows:

Before the New World Order can be imposed, racial identity and a sense of nationhood have to be eradicated and mankind standardised into a passive, hybrid society... This can be brought about only through the integration of blacks with whites... The election to power in South Africa of a segregationist government in 1948 caused great consternation among the one-worlders. Ethnic self-determination was anathema to their plan and could not be allowed to succeed.<sup>36</sup>

The white right's opposition to the government's white immigration policy and the inclusion of a Maori in the New Zealand rugby team is a good example of the complex interplay in white right discourse around race and ethnicity. For the white right—or more correctly, the Afrikaner right—politics revolves around protecting the *volk*. White English speaking South Africans, while an irritation to the Afrikaner right, did not constitute a real threat to the survival of the Afrikaner *volk* provided they remained a minority among whites (i.e. those who had the vote), and Afrikaners were not assimilated into the English or Anglo-Saxon culture. However, with the immigration of a large number of British people and other whites who would not assimilate with the Afrikaner *volk*, Afrikaner political dominance, and by implication Afrikaner self-determination, was threatened.

In respect of black South Africans, the Afrikaner right could not afford to be as generous as it was to white English speakers, given the numerical dominance of the former. Moreover, much of the Afrikaner right's discourse at the time was based on the presumption of white superiority. In principle, how-

ever, the perceived threat black people or large numbers of British immigrants posed to the *volk* was very similar for right wing Afrikaners.

At the time of the New Zealand rugby tour, the Afrikaner right interpreted the inclusion of a Maori in the New Zealand team as the beginning of the end for Afrikaner self-determination.<sup>30</sup> The Afrikaner right's argument was that the inclusion of a Maori in the team would necessitate racial mixing in social events surrounding the rugby tour. If this was accepted it would, in principle, be difficult to oppose racial mixing in a social setting between black and white in South Africa generally. Mixing on a social level would make the segregation of places of entertainment untenable which, in turn, would undermine segregated public amenities, schools and residential areas. Invariably, the Afrikaner right argued, this would culminate in South Africa becoming a multi-racial society with a common voters' roll. At that point the Afrikaner *volk* would lose political control of the country, resulting in a loss of Afrikaner self-determination.

In principle, therefore, the Afrikaner right feared domination by white English speakers as much as by black people. In practice, however, many on the Afrikaner right expressed their views less in ethnocentric and more in racist terms. Moreover, significant sections of the Afrikaner right entered into tactical alliances with white right wing English speaking South Africans. This was especially the case in the 1980s when a white right victory at the polls seemed within reach, and the Afrikaner right needed to augment its electoral strength with as many white votes as it could get. As a result, the claims by many supporters of Afrikaner right wing organisations, and even those of some of their leaders, that their aspirations are based on ethnicity and not race often appear insincere and expedient.

The frequently confusing and even paradoxical discourse around race and ethnicity among the white right can be illustrated with an example from a militant Afrikaner right wing organisation, the Afrikaner-Weerstandsbeweging or AWB (Afrikaner Resistance Movement). Although the leader of the AWB, Eugene Terre'Blanche, denies that his organisation is racist, he is on record as saying: "We will govern ourselves with our own superior white genes."<sup>31</sup> Yet, in the early 1990s the AWB formed a non-aggression pact with the Transvaal branch of the Inkatha Freedom Party—a Zulu based political movement.<sup>32</sup>

Following the HNP's poor showing in the 1970 election, the AWB was founded in 1973, to act as an extra-parliamentary pressure group alongside the HNP.<sup>37</sup> The AWB emblem—three black sevens in a white circle surrounded by a red background—remains controversial given its similarity with the

swastika. The AWB argues that the three sevens represent the diametric opposite to the triple-six of the anti-Christ, while the red background symbolises the blood of Christ.<sup>38</sup>

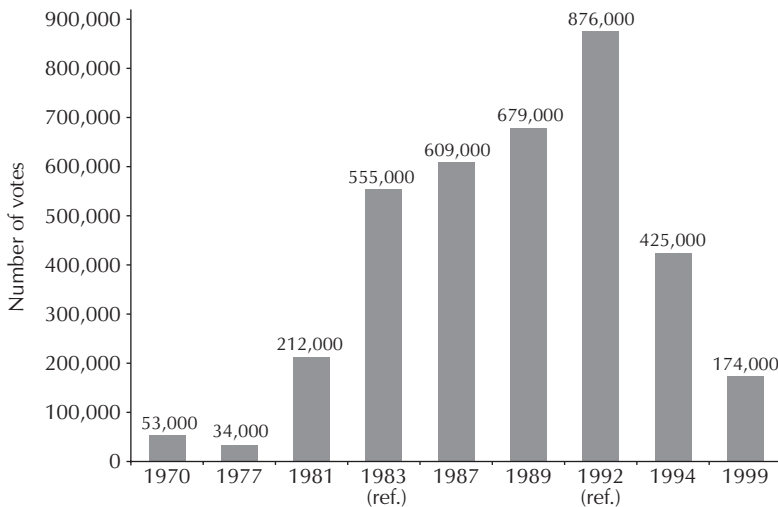
According to the AWB, its main purpose is “to assure the survival of the Afrikaner Boer nation free in his own country”, and “to establish a free, Christian, republican Afrikaner Boer Nation-state, seceded from the RSA [Republic of South Africa] on the grounds of the nation’s inalienable right to the Boer Republics”. The AWB’s philosophy is based on, *inter alia*, that “the Afrikaner Boer nation came into being through Divine Providence, and is called to live in service to Him”.<sup>39</sup>

The AWB has not been averse to the use of violence to further its aims. In the early 1980s members of the AWB were convicted of terrorism for possessing explosives and arms, and conspiring to blow up the casino resort Sun City, a multi-racial hotel in Pretoria and the President’s Council in Cape Town. AWB leader, Eugene Terre’Blanche, was convicted of the illegal possession of arms and ammunition, and received a suspended sentence.<sup>40</sup> These incidents were a harbinger of more violent acts to come from the side of the AWB in the run up to the country’s 1994 election.

In 1982, 18 National Party MPs formed the Conservative Party (CP) under the leadership of Andries Treurnicht. The CP’s initial constitutional policy was one of partition, which largely implied a return to Verwoerdian apartheid. However, beginning in the early 1990s the CP’s policies, under pressure from moderates within the party and changing political circumstances, began moving closer to the concept of Afrikaner self-determination in a smaller white, Afrikaner homeland.<sup>41</sup>

In comparison to the HNP, the CP had a much wider appeal among middle class Afrikaners and public servants, including a small number of English speaking whites. The formation of the CP was a watershed in white—and especially Afrikaner—politics. After 1982 the white right became a significant electoral force, at times seriously obstructing the government’s reform programme which sought at first to reform, and then to dismantle, the country’s apartheid policy (Figure 1).

In the 1981 whites-only national election the right obtained 212,000 votes (about 16% of the vote). In 1983 a referendum was held among whites on the government’s proposal to enact a new constitution which provided for power-sharing with coloureds and Indians at central government level. Some

**Figure 1: Number of votes received by the white right, 1970–1999**

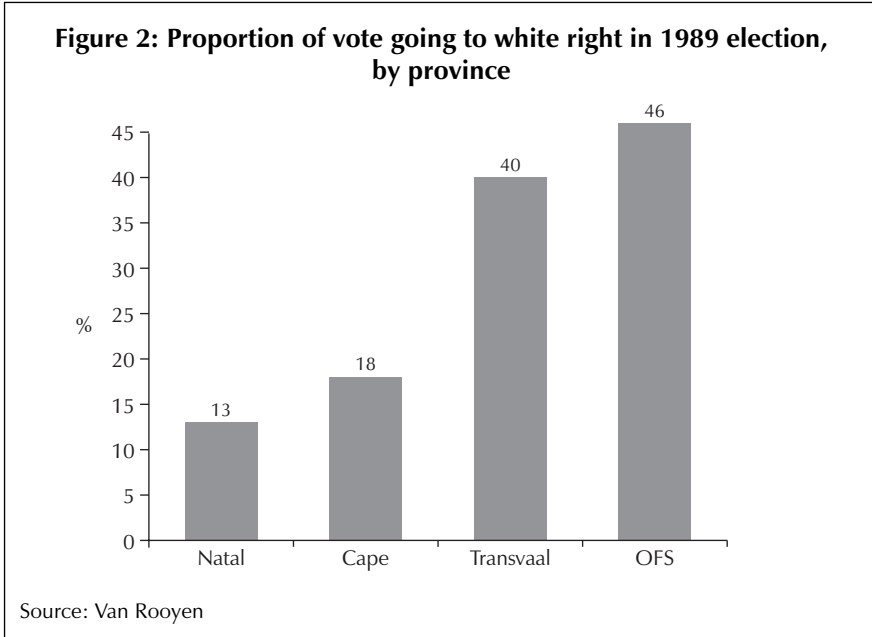
Sources: SA Institute of Race Relations, and Van Rooyen

692,000 people voted against the proposal, of which an estimated 555,000 (27% of the votes cast) were from the white right (the remainder being from the liberal Progressive Federal Party which also opposed the government proposal).<sup>42</sup>

In the 1987 election—the first one in which the CP participated—the white right obtained 609,000 or 30% of the vote cast, and the CP became the official opposition in the whites only house of parliament, the House of Assembly.

Analysts of the election result concluded that support for the right wing lay predominantly in the rural areas of the two northern provinces: Transvaal and Orange Free State. In addition, a significant urban support base for the right was the Pretoria–Witwatersrand–Vereeniging region, where the Afrikaans speaking middle and lower sections of the white public service voted for the right.<sup>43</sup>

In the 1989 general election the white right obtained 679,000 votes. While the white right obtained less than a third (31%) of the white votes cast, it did enjoy the support of about half of all Afrikaners, and arguably the majority support of



Afrikaners in the Transvaal and Orange Free State (OFS) provinces where the white right obtained, respectively, 40% and 46% of the votes cast (Figure 2).<sup>44</sup>

The AWB also experienced substantial growth in its support during this time. In the late 1980s the organisation successfully disrupted National Party meetings throughout the rural Transvaal and Orange Free State. In 1988, at the height of its strength, the AWB was estimated at having between 5,000 and 9,000 signed-up members, 150,000 supporters and about 500,000 tacit sympathisers.<sup>45</sup>

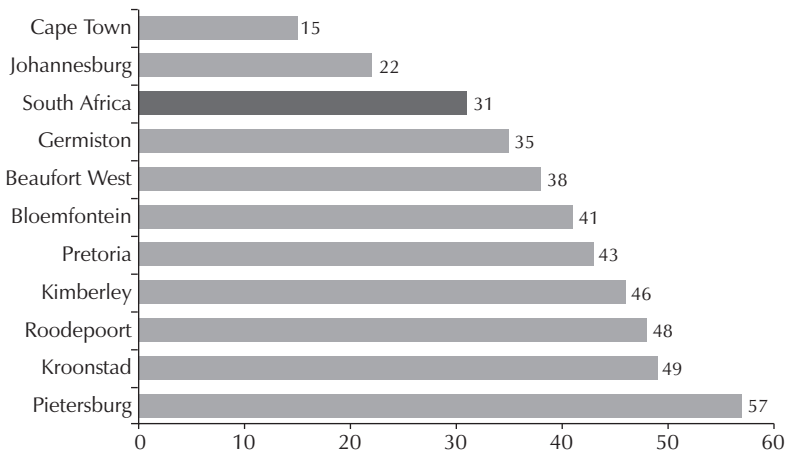
The office of the Minister of Law and Order issued a list in early 1992 of “right wing armies” which it said were a menace to state security. The list comprised the Afrikaner Monarchist Movement, Blanke Veiligheid (White Security), Blanke Weerstandsbeweging (White Resistance Movement), Boer Republican Army, Boere Kommando (Boer Commando), Foundation for Survival and Freedom, Ku Klux Klan, Orde Boerevolk (Order of the Boer People), Pretoria Boere Kommando (Pretoria Boer Commando), Volksleër (People’s Army), Wenkommando (Victory Commando—the paramilitary wing of the AWB) and White Wolves.<sup>46</sup>

In 1992 a referendum was held among whites about whether they supported the reform process of the National Party government, which was leading to a power-sharing arrangement between the different race groups at central government level. The pro-reform, or 'Yes' campaign, received the full backing of the liberal opposition Democratic Party, the media, the international community, and the vast majority of commercial institutions and organised business in South Africa.<sup>47</sup> A publication by a Washington DC think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, concluded that the governing party had 'all the advantages':

In the referendum campaign the National Party had all the advantages. Television and (in many parts of the country) radio are government controlled. The business community raised money, and most newspapers helped by giving discount rates to the "yes" advertisements... The Conservative Party, with no comparable funds and no access to discounts, was effectively locked out of the mass media, relying on posters to get its message across.<sup>48</sup>

Nevertheless, some 876,000 white South Africans voted against the reform process (31%). Again there were strong regional differences, with around half

**Figure 3: Proportion of 'no vote' in 1992 referendum, selected regions**



Source: Van Rooyen

of votes cast in large parts of the Transvaal and Orange Free State voting 'No'. For example, in the Transvaal regions of Roodepoort, Kroonstad and Pietersburg (now Polokwane) 46% or more of the voters registered their opposition to the reform process (Figure 3).

After the white right's referendum defeat, the CP shifted its focus from winning control of the ballot box to a less ambitious goal, the attainment of Afrikaner self-determination in a sovereign Afrikaner, white homeland.

It was only after the referendum defeat, and the knowledge that another whites-only election was unlikely, that the mainstream white right began to seriously consider the idea of using force and violence on a large and organised scale to place pressure on the government to concede to their key demand of Afrikaner self-determination. Up to that point the main thrust of the right was to establish the CP as the torch-bearer of Afrikaner nationalism, and to "rely on this powerful force to sweep it into political office and thus give it the capacity, by constitutional means, to re-institute Verwoerdian separate development".<sup>49</sup>

After the referendum the CP informally dropped its position that the whole of apartheid South Africa should be restored to white rule. The party began drawing up boundaries for a smaller Afrikaner, white state which would include the then Western Transvaal (North West province), including Pretoria, the Orange Free State, and the Northern Cape province.<sup>50</sup> The party was, however, split on whether such a partition plan should be negotiated with other parties through participation at the ongoing all-party talks taking place at the time. For many in the CP it was anathema to negotiate with the African National Congress (ANC), which most CP supporters regarded as a 'communist-inspired terrorist movement'.

In August 1992 the CP split over its reluctance to participate in the all-party talks and its insistence for a completely sovereign independent state. Five MPs broke away from the CP and formed the Afrikaner Volksunie or AVU (Afrikaner People's Union). The AVU sought to secure negotiated Afrikaner self-determination in a smaller, not necessarily sovereign, state in parts of the then Transvaal and Orange Free State.<sup>51</sup>

In late 1992 the CP founded the Concerned South African Group (Cosag) in conjunction with other smaller white right wing movements, and three conservative black 'homeland' leaders: Mangosuthu Buthelezi of KwaZulu, Lucas Mangope of Bophuthatswana and Oupa Gqozo of the Ciskei. As a multi-racial

right wing alliance, Cosag sought to counter bilateral negotiations between the ANC and the National Party, and promoted the idea of a South African confederacy along largely ethnic lines.<sup>52</sup>

In May 1993 the CP came together with 20 other white right wing groups and formed the Afrikaner Volksfront or AVF (Afrikaner People's Front), with the goal of promoting right wing unity and the realisation of an Afrikaner *volkstaat* (people's state). In July 1993, the AVF joined Cosag, and the latter was renamed the Freedom Alliance.

The leader of the AVF was General Constand Viljoen, retired head of the South African Defence Force (SADF). With his impressive military record Viljoen commanded the "respect and loyalty not only of the more threatening of the paramilitary forces of the Right (including over fifty retired security force generals) but also of sections of the South African Defence Force".<sup>53</sup> The fact that in addition to Viljoen, the AVF was led by a number of former security force generals, gave new impetus to the scope and prospect of violent resistance by the white right.<sup>54</sup>

The AVF rapidly mobilised widespread support among the white right. According to Viljoen, within six weeks of the AVF's founding the organisation had enrolled 150,000 members many of whom had "expressed their willingness to take up arms in support of the AVF".<sup>55</sup> Viljoen initially declined to get involved in organising the white right to resist, by violence if necessary, the impending end of white rule. By mid-1993 Viljoen's views had changed, however:

The Afrikaner people must prepare to defend themselves. A bloody conflict which will require sacrifices is inevitable, but we will gladly sacrifice because our cause is just.<sup>56</sup>

The AVF focused its mobilisation efforts on obtaining the support of the SADF's Commando units (officially called the Territorial Reserve Force System). Viljoen called on his supporters in mid-1993 to join the Commandos. The Commandos are civilian units within the SADF, provided with military rifles (including assault rifles), ammunition and communication equipment.

Until 1994 the backbone of the Commando system was formed by rural Afrikaner men—the traditional support base of the right wing. Towards the end of 1993 the AVF estimated that it enjoyed the support of about 100,000

(out of 140,000) Commando members. The white right was also believed to enjoy widespread support in the South African Police (SAP), especially within the lower ranks.<sup>57</sup>

The threat of armed collusion between the SADF's 70,000 strong full time force and the AVF was limited. The SADF was a disciplined force, with a long tradition of professional loyalty to the government of the day. Adam and Moodley concur that the risk of the security forces openly rebelling was slim, but that there was "the danger of a 'soft coup'—a threat by the security establishment not to take over Pretoria, but, on the contrary, to withdraw cooperation".<sup>58</sup>

The AVF used the structures of the Boere-Krisisaksie or BKA (Farmers' Crisis Action) to enhance its mobilising capacity in the country's northern provinces. Describing the military capacity he had built for the right wing, Viljoen felt that "the real force was the farmers. They could have fielded about 15,000 people."<sup>59</sup> The BKA was formed by right wing farmers to provide aid and drought relief to needy farmers who opposed the government's land reforms. With the rise and radicalisation of the white right the BKA became increasingly militant. It organised an 'invasion' and blockade of downtown Pretoria in 1991.<sup>60</sup> In late 1993 its members raided a SADF arms depot in the northern Transvaal (Limpopo province) town of Pietersburg (Polokwane). They stole more than three tons of military equipment, including 100,000 rounds of ammunition, 400 hand-grenades and 200 mortars, apparently to arm underground structures of the BKA.<sup>61</sup>

During the latter half of 1993 the AVF focused on preparing its members for armed resistance in the event of an ANC takeover of the whole South Africa. In such an event the AVF planned, with the help of sympathetic SADF and police units, to proclaim and defend an independent Afrikaner state in parts of the Transvaal and Orange Free State. Members of the AVF—and more specifically the Boere Krisisaksie—engaged in acts of sabotage in various parts of the country to place pressure on the country's constitutional negotiators to comply with the white right's demands for territorial autonomy in parts of South Africa. By early 1994 South Africa appeared to be at the precipice of a civil war, and serious analysts argued the white right potentially had the power to break up South Africa:

With some military back-up, technical know-how and the alleged loyalty of the well-trained and equipped forces of the 100,000 members of the commandos which the AVF claimed to enjoy, a secessionist

right wing might be able to successfully create and defend a secessionist region in one or more right-wing strongholds and enclaves in the northern or eastern Transvaal [Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces, respectively].<sup>62</sup>

In the run up to the 1994 election a state of emergency was declared in the Western Transvaal (North West province). This was done to counter an elaborate AVF-sponsored plan to establish an independent Boer state in a large part of the then Transvaal. The plan focused around some 50 towns and included the stockpiling of armoured vehicles and ammunition. Most of these towns were controlled by right wing councils, and many had awarded the AWB and other right wing organisations the 'freedom of the town'.<sup>63</sup> It was the first time that a state of emergency had been declared in South Africa in response to white political activity.

In what was to be a turning point for the white right, the AVF unsuccessfully attempted to support the ailing black 'homeland' government of Bophuthatswana in March 1994. ANC supporters in Bophuthatswana protested the 'homeland' government's decision not to take part in the forthcoming election. In places the protests escalated into strike action by civil servants, rioting and widespread looting. Fearing that he would lose control over his 'country', the president of Bophuthatswana, Lucas Mangope, asked a fellow Freedom Front ally, Constand Viljoen, for assistance. In response Viljoen mobilised some 1,500 AVF members who assembled outside of the Bophuthatswana capital of Mmabatho, where they were issued with Bophuthatswana Defence Force (BDF) rifles. At the same time about 500 members of the AWB also entered Bophuthatswana at the apparent request of Mangope (this has been disputed, however, and it is possible that the AWB acted unilaterally).

Some of the AWB members went on the rampage, firing at BDF troops and civilians in Mmabatho.<sup>64</sup> (This version of events is disputed by the AWB.)<sup>65</sup> In response the BDF fired on an AWB vehicle. With its driver critically injured the vehicle came to a standstill. In front of rolling television cameras the wounded AWB occupants of the vehicle were executed at point-blank range by a black member of the BDF. Moreover, as a result of the AWB's actions, even Mangope loyalists turned against the 'white invaders' and large sections of the BDF threatened to mutiny. Mangope ordered Viljoen to withdraw his supporters from Bophuthatswana, a request with which Viljoen complied.

The events in Bophuthatswana were to be the white right's undoing. The perception the extreme right had cultivated, that it was invincible, was shattered

as South African television viewers witnessed the execution of two AWB members by a black man. This one event arguably dealt a decisive blow to the morale of the rank and file of the white right throughout the country. The fact that the AWB entered Bophuthatswana separately from the AVF members mobilised by Viljoen, and refused to fall under Viljoen's command, also revealed fundamental weaknesses and divisions in the white right's military preparedness for armed resistance.

For Viljoen and his followers the events in Bophuthatswana were a turning point. Viljoen felt that sections of the white right were too undisciplined, and the white right too divided, to shape it into a credible and effective fighting force. As a result Viljoen abandoned his plan of violent resistance to establish an Afrikaner state by force of arms. With only a few weeks to spare before the election, Viljoen and his supporters formed a new political party, the Freedom Front. The Freedom Front took part in the April election hoping to achieve Afrikaner self-determination through the democratic process. Years later Viljoen would explain his position as follows:

My opinion was that a coup would not have been successful because of the division of the people within the country... For a coup you need some sort of great dissatisfaction. You have to have some support. That was my problem in 1994. I really did have a very lightly armed but a very big organisation ready and I could have stirred things up in 1994—but for what purpose? I don't think any action from my side would have resulted in a major part of the Defence Force siding with me.<sup>66</sup>

Viljoen argues that he had another option, 'Plan B', whereby selected individuals among the extreme right would engage in a protracted guerrilla war to place pressure on the government and ANC. According to Viljoen, Plan B was his preferred option (above the unilateral declaration of a *volkstaat* in a part of South Africa). Crucially, according to Viljoen this plan did not enjoy the support of the Conservative Party:

Military Plan B was the IRA [Irish Republican Army] tactic. That's the one I really had in mind. When the IRA was at its peak there were never more than about 300 trained terrorists in the organisation. But they could maintain a lot of pressure. I realised this and this was where I differed with the CP... The second option [Plan B] could have been exercised not only during but after the election. The idea was to apply pressure to get what we wanted. That is the purpose of war.<sup>67</sup>

Many among the extreme white right dispute Viljoen's statement. They argue that as an ex-general Viljoen was not enthusiastic about a non-conventional guerrilla war, especially as he had no practical experience of urban guerrilla warfare. Some further insinuate that Viljoen never had the intention of risking a war but actively sought to prevent one, thereby effectively betraying the Afrikaner's faith in him and the AVF.<sup>68</sup>

Viljoen's decision to take part in the election, and Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party's last minute participation were the primary reasons why war and large scale civil unrest were averted. Viljoen's decision was not welcomed by the extreme right which interpreted it as a betrayal of their cause. At the time AWB leader, Terre'Blanche, called Viljoen a "political Judas goat", a "Brutus" and "a government agent sent to split and lead the Afrikaners to slaughter".<sup>69</sup>

In the run up to the election AWB members set off a series of bomb blasts, targeted mainly at taxi ranks, bus stops and terminuses where black people usually congregated, and at polling stations, ANC and National Party offices, and the Johannesburg International Airport, killing about two-dozen people and injuring some 200. Some of the bombs used (in excess of 100kg explosives) were the largest that had ever exploded in South Africa's history.<sup>70</sup>

In 1998 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) published its main findings and conclusions.<sup>71</sup> Regarding the white right the Commission found that during 1993 and 1994 the AVF, and structures operating under its broad umbrella, had been responsible for gross violations against the ANC alliance, the National Party and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). In seeking Afrikaner self-determination and the creation of a *volkstaat*, the AVF had incited violence and attempted to mobilise for an insurrection. The TRC further found that members of the AVF had colluded with elements in the security forces and/or the Inkatha Freedom Party in various ways, and established paramilitary groupings to threaten revolution and derail the democratic process.<sup>72</sup>

In its reaction, the Freedom Front said the TRC report could not be taken seriously as "it had not been tested judicially and was based on sob stories". The ANC's strategy, it alleged, was to use the report to "transfer collective guilt to Afrikaners and then press for compensation, either in the form of Nuremberg tribunals or in the form of veiled discrimination such as affirmative action and excessive taxation".<sup>73</sup> As leader of the Freedom Front Viljoen did, however, admit to both the proposal to establish a *volkstaat* by force prior to the 1994 election and his own role within it. He said that the plan had been called off

because of the loss of life it would have entailed and the difficulty of sustaining a *volkstaat* in the face of opposition from a new ANC government.<sup>74</sup> The CP described the TRC as a “witch hunt against Afrikaners” and refused to make submissions to it.<sup>75</sup>

### Right wing violence

Most of the violence committed by the extreme right, which was organised and had a political purpose in mind, was perpetrated by members of the AWB, AVF and BKA. The violence was primarily in the form of bombings. Many other right wing groups threatened and planned acts of violence but in the end did not actually commit them. There were, however, some small radical right wing groups and individuals outside of the aforementioned three organisations which committed acts of violence to further their cause:

- In 1980 the *White Commando* claimed responsibility for acts of arson and bombings targeted at multi-racial drive-ins, the offices of two liberal academics and those of the SA Institute of Race Relations, and the home of a liberal Durban politician.<sup>76</sup>
- In 1990 Piet ‘Skiet’ Rudolph, founder of *Orde Boerevolk*, bombed an Anglo-Boer War museum, and the offices of a black trade union, *Beeld* newspaper and those of the National Party. *Orde Boerevolk*’s biggest exploit was the theft of firearms, ammunition and equipment from the Air Force headquarters in Pretoria.
- The *Orde van die Dood* (Order of Death) planned the assassination of cabinet members in the early 1990s. Two arrested members admitted to killing a black taxi driver to prove their commitment to the cause.
- The *White Liberation Army* claimed responsibility for a taxi-rank blast in 1990 and further threatened to assassinate the Minister of Law and Order.
- The activities of the *World Apartheid Movement* were curtailed after the arrest of some of its members following a spate of bombings in the latter half of 1990. The organisation was suspected of having links with international right wing organisations such as the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>77</sup>

- The *Blanke Bevrydingsbeweging*, BBB (White Liberation Movement) propagated the view that the whole of South Africa and Namibia belonged to whites, and embraced other extreme racist ideas. The organisation was banned in 1988 in reaction to the fatal shooting of eight black people in Pretoria by White Wolves leader Barend Strydom.<sup>78</sup>

## 1994–2002: Defeat and division

One of the preconditions the Freedom Front had to participate in the April 1994 general election was the official signing of an accord with the National Party government and ANC. The accord provided for the formation of a statutory council, the *Volkstaatraad* (Volkstaat Council), tasked with investigating the possibility of creating a *volkstaat*. The Volkstaat Council had to report back to the Constitutional Assembly (the constitution-making body comprising both houses of parliament), and in general prepare the ground for Afrikaner self-determination.<sup>79</sup> The CP rejected the accord as useless and the AWB described it as a “pathetic little sham masquerading as an historic agreement”.<sup>80</sup>

In retrospect Viljoen’s belief that he had persuaded the ANC to agree to some form of territorial autonomy for Afrikaners was naïve. According to Waldmeir, the ANC’s negotiating strategy was simply to keep Viljoen and his supporters talking:

That way, they [Viljoen and company] would be kept away from their war councils; and they would be exposed continually to a barrage of reasonable questions which might in the end make them doubt the viability of their own *volkstaat* demands... The ANC never had any intentions of giving Viljoen his homeland—but they managed to make him think they were seriously considering it. They hoped to keep him talking right through the elections and beyond, certain that the demand for a *volkstaat* would diminish once Afrikaners had seen that they would not be victimized in the new South Africa.<sup>81</sup>

Giliomee, Myburgh and Schlemmer argue that the ANC secured the co-operation of Viljoen and his followers through introducing two clauses in the constitution. Namely, article 185 which envisaged the establishment of a Commission for the Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and

Linguistic Communities, and article 235 which underwrites the right of self-determination of any community sharing a common cultural and language heritage. Giliomee and his co-authors comment cynically:

The ANC was probably never serious about either of these two clauses. It set up a Volkstaat Council, comprised of Viljoen's followers, to investigate the feasibility of an Afrikaner ethnic state. However, once the ANC felt confident that the security forces were sufficiently transformed to rule out any danger of armed rebellion, it first squeezed the Council financially before disbanding it in 1999. The ANC had managed to emasculate the white separatists at the cost of a mere R15 million!<sup>82</sup>

During the 1994 election campaign Viljoen suggested that at least a third to a half of Afrikaners would have to vote for the Freedom Front in order to prove that sufficient support for a *volkstaat* existed.<sup>83</sup> Throughout the Freedom Front's election campaign, the party emphasised that although it had agreed to participate within the system, it still regarded the interim constitution as fatally flawed, and was only participating to prove support for the *volkstaat*.

The final results gave the Freedom Front 425,000 votes nationally, or just over 2% of the votes cast, with many right wingers abstaining from voting. In fact, both the CP and HNP refused to participate in the election. The Freedom Front came in at fourth place after the ANC, National Party and Inkatha Freedom Party, and was allocated nine seats in the 400 seat National Assembly.

It is estimated that the Freedom Front received 14% of the white vote (less than half of the right wing vote in the 1992 referendum). If it is assumed that the vast majority of the Freedom Front's votes came from Afrikaners, then the party received 27% of Afrikaner votes nationally.<sup>84</sup> The Freedom Front fared considerably better at regional level, where it received some 640,000 votes in the nine provinces, becoming the third strongest party in six of these. It is estimated that the Freedom Front received just over 20% of the white regional vote, and 41% of the Afrikaner vote at the regional level.<sup>85</sup> Viljoen's pre-election declaration that a third to a half of Afrikaners had to vote for the Freedom Front to prove sufficient support for a *volkstaat*, was thus realised—especially at regional level.

In November 1995 local government elections were held in most parts of the country. In its election campaign the CP said that a vote for it would be an indication of voters' support for freedom of the Afrikaner in an independent state.<sup>86</sup> The Freedom Front said it would campaign for Afrikaner interests at

local level and use the local government results to bolster its case for an envisaged Afrikaner *volkstaat*.<sup>87</sup> Of the 7,381 contested local government seats (proportional representation and ward-based), the Freedom Front won 141 (1.9% of the total) and the CP 46 (0.6%).<sup>88</sup> This was a disappointing result for the white right, and revealed that there were few wards in the country where its supporters were in a majority.

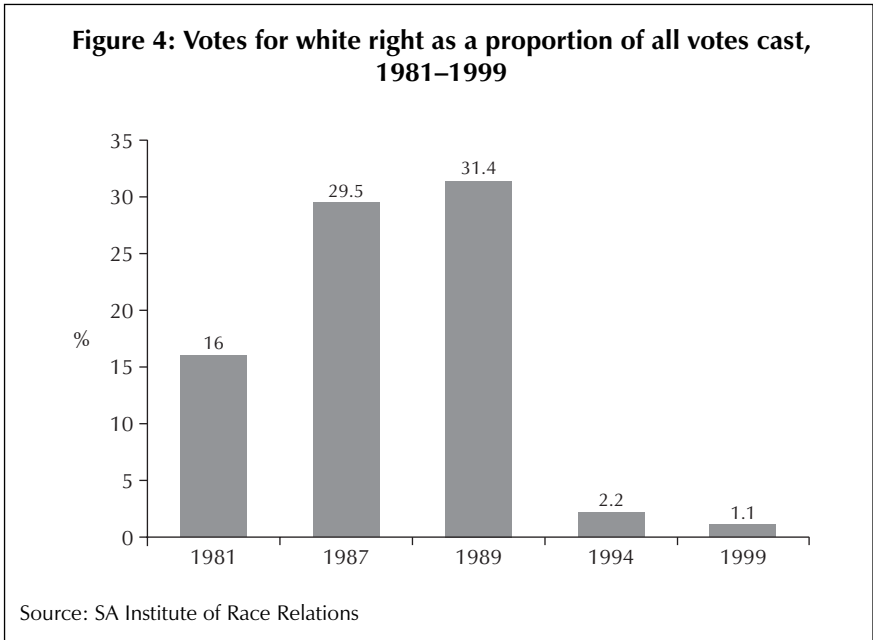
In February 1996 the Volkstaat Council presented its report on the feasibility of Afrikaner self-determination to the Constitutional Assembly. The Council proposed that a tenth province with exclusive judicial and legislative powers be created for Afrikaners. The proposed Afrikaner province would have concurrent powers with parliament, but have exclusive powers in respect of agriculture, education, health, local government, a provincial police force, provincial courts, taxation and welfare. The ANC rejected the proposals saying it would never agree to a separate Afrikaner constitutional entity.<sup>89</sup>

The Volkstaat Council's recommendations were also not accepted by the Constitutional Assembly and were omitted from the final 1996 constitution. The 1996 constitution does, however, include a general provision guaranteeing the rights of cultural, language and religious communities.<sup>90</sup> The Freedom Front has expressed cautious satisfaction with the provision saying that it reflected "an extremely important first step in the process of implementing Afrikaner self-determination".<sup>91</sup>

The Volkstaat Council was officially disbanded in March 1999 without having had an impact on government policy. The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities is intended to take over some of the functions of the Volkstaat Council. Legislation governing the status, objectives and powers of the Commission was promulgated at the end of 2002.<sup>92</sup>

In the June 1999 national election the combined vote of the white right crumbled to 174,000, or only 1% of the votes cast (Figure 4). The vote was divided between the Freedom Front and the CP-backed 'Afrikaner Eenheidsbeweging' or AEB (Afrikaner Unity Movement). Out of the 400 National Assembly seats, three were allocated to the Freedom Front and one to the AEB.

In the wake of the 1999 election, divisions were reported in the Freedom Front. Some members felt that Viljoen, as the leader of the party, had neglected the party's demand for a *volkstaat* in favour of marginal issues such as



the reintroduction of capital punishment.<sup>93</sup> Viljoen vacated his position as leader of the Freedom Front in March 2001, and retired to his farm in Mpumalanga. Viljoen was succeeded by Dr Pieter Mulder as leader of the Freedom Front.

The CP had initially announced its intention to participate in the 1999 election, but subsequently withdrew from the process in favour of the AEB. In April 2000 the leader of the CP, Dr Ferdi Hartzenberg, said his party would disband in the interests of Afrikaner unity.<sup>94</sup> By early 2002 Hartzenberg had reversed his position and announced the CP's participation in the 2004 general election in opposition to the AEB. The CP is divided on the issue of electoral participation however. A group under the leadership of past MP, Jurg Prinsloo, is opposed to participating in an 'ANC election' and intends to abstain from voting.<sup>95</sup>

Hartzenberg's decision to oppose the AEB is motivated by a statement made by the leader (and the party's only MP) of the AEB, Cassie Aucamp, that coloureds are welcome within the party. As a result of this Aucamp suffered a vote of no confidence from the AEB's members in North West province.

In August 2001 a dialogue forum, the Christelike Nasionale Forum or CNF (Christian National Forum) was established.<sup>96</sup> The organisation was comprised of right wingers and some New National Party (NNP) supporters, and was initially backed by the CP. In mid-2002 the CNF formed a new political party, Nasionale Aksie or NA (National Action), aimed at traditional Christian conservatives and disillusioned New National Party members.<sup>97</sup>

A former Minister of Home Affairs in the De Klerk cabinet, Danie Schutte, and AEB leader, Cassie Aucamp, are co-leaders of National Action. At the time of writing there was some confusion about Aucamp's position as he could not formally join the NA until floor-crossing legislation had been promulgated, permitting MPs to change party membership without losing their parliamentary seats.<sup>98</sup> CP leader, Ferdi Hartzenberg, has rejected National Action as the "poor man's NNP," asking CP members not to get involved with the NA.<sup>99</sup>

The tribulations within the white right have been exacerbated by the death of HNP leader, Jaap Marais, in August 2000, and the death of the founder and leader of the Boerestaat Party, Robert van Tonder, a year later. AWB leader, Eugene Terre'Blanche, is serving a prison sentence for attempted murder.

At the time of writing, morale within the white right is arguably low. An editorial published in the AWB's newsletter, *Storm*, in mid-2002 sums it up well:

Since the 1994 election, patriotic (*volkseie*) Afrikaner organisations have been debilitated by the uncertainty existing among their supporters about whether they should vote or not. The unity which existed prior to the 1994 election was destroyed within weeks. Our people ('*die volk*') are disappointed that the ANC has taken over power, and a feeling of powerlessness has overtaken us. Since then the attitude is one of 'every man for himself' and all interest in politics has disappeared. What a big mistake!<sup>100</sup>