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Demobilisation in the Context of the Formation of the South African National Defence Force

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explain why and describe how the demobilisation process was conducted in South Africa. As discussed earlier in this thesis, demobilisation is a shorthand term for the multi-staged process of converting a soldier to a civilian. This encompasses the release of soldiers from a statutory force or guerrilla group and their reintegration into civilian society. In South Africa, the process was inextricably linked to the broader process of the restructuring of the armed forces. For the first time, this involved the provision of the role and functions of a national defence force in the Constitution. Previously this had been spelled out only in the *Defence Act* (No. 44 of 1957) and supplemented by other laws. Second, the *White Paper on Defence* (1996) elaborated the principles of democratic control of the armed forces, specifying the roles and functions of the various actors. “It also established a set of principles governing the overall approach of the state to security, which could be summed up as human security approach domestically and a collaborative security approach externally” (Cawthra, 2005a: 5). The publication of the *White Paper on Defence* (1996), which provided a policy framework, was followed by the Defence Review. This aimed to create concrete policies regarding defence posture and doctrine, force design, force structure, human resources policies,

the armament acquisition management process, and land-use and environmental policies.

The *Interim Constitution* (Act 200 of 1993) made provision for three phases in the formation of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). First was integration, which involved merging seven armed forces – the Azanian People’s Liberation Army (APLA), uMKhonto we Sizwe (MK), the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the armed forces of Transkei, Venda, Bophuthatswana and Ciskei. (TVBC forces). The second phase was consolidation, which involved the completion of bridging training by former members of APLA and MK who had been integrated into the SANDF. (Former SADF and TVBC forces were deemed qualified.) Bridging training was meant to prepare former members of APLA and MK occupy their ranks in the SANDF. It was anticipated that the integration of the different armies would lead to a bloated defence force. Thus, rationalisation was to follow consolidation as the last phase in the formation of the SANDF. The process of rationalisation would involve down-sizing and right-sizing. The former concept refers to the reduction of members of the SANDF, and the latter to realigning personnel numbers in terms of force structure and design as well as the newly defined roles and functions of the SANDF. The fact that rationalisation was anticipated as the final phase after integration and consolidation characterised the process as postponed demobilisation. This refers to a demobilisation-reintegration process that has been clearly announced, although the actual implementation is not quite clear (Kingma, 2001).

The process of military transformation took a new turn when it became evident that some members of the SANDF who had been nominally integrated could not be physically integrated into the national defence force. This was due to various reasons, including age, ill health and lack of educational qualifications. A decision was taken to release these members from the SANDF, and that process became known as demobilisation. The main argument is that while the reduction of the size of the SANDF (rationalisation) was postponed and anticipated as the final phase in the process of restructuring the armed forces, the presence of military “misfits” (the aged, the sick and those who lacked the necessary educational qualifications) led to the introduction of a process of exclusion which became known as demobilisation. Furthermore, as a result of a combination of the demobilisation of former APLA and

MK and other factors, the anticipated demobilisation (rationalisation) was postponed indefinitely.

This chapter is divided into six sections, beginning with the definition of key concepts used in the South African discourse around armed forces restructuring (section 5.2). The next section (5.3) deals with the constitutional and institutional framework on which the formation of the SANDF was based. The first sub-section (5.3.1) focuses on the Integration Committee (IC), which consisted of representatives of all armed forces which were to be integrated, as well as the British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT). The Integration Committee was established to oversee the physical integration of the armed forces. In the second sub-section (5.3.2) the focus is on the Certified Personnel Register (CPR), which was a list of members of APLA and MK. Constitutionally any person whose name appeared on the CPR became a member of the SANDF on the midnight of April 26/27, 1994. The sub-section outlines the process of compiling the CPR and the problems that were encountered. The third section (5.4) is a discussion of the process of integration. It describes and explains the process of integration and demobilisation, and examines the problems encountered during the integration process, such as overcrowding and lack of adequate resources for assembled soldiers. This is followed by the fourth section (5.5) which discusses racial tensions in the integrated SANDF, illustrated by the murder of seven white officers and a white civilian woman by a black officer, and the subsequent commission of inquiry. The termination of integration and demobilisation is discussed in the fifth section (5.6). The last section is an analysis of the information presented in sections 5.2 through 5.6, and answers the two central questions – why and how was demobilisation conducted.

5.2 Definition of Concepts used in the South African Discourse

Integration refers to the merging of the personnel, equipment and, sometimes, military traditions of disparate armed forces which were previously fighting each other into a single armed formation within a country. In the Southern African context this has come to mean the integration of former guerrilla armies with the conventional armed forces of the previous regime (Williams, 1993). As discussed in Chapter 3, the integration process in Zimbabwe involved three armies (ZANLA, ZIPRA and Rhodesian Forces), two in Namibia (PLAN and SWATF) and two in Mozambique (FRELIMO and RENAMO). In South Africa the process involved the merging of seven armed forces. Each of the seven armed formations had its own doctrinal, political, institutional and regional peculiarities. “The Apartheid-era South African Defence Force (SADF) was numerically, technologically, organizationally, and doctrinally superior to the other participating militaries” (Williams, 1995: 1). The South African *White Paper on Defence* (1996) defines integration as the process of:

“...integrating into the SANDF all personnel whose names appear on the Certified Personnel Registers of the statutory and non-statutory forces identified in the Constitution (with the subsequent inclusion of APLA); and the education and training of all members of the SANDF to meet international standards of competence and professionalism. The second leg includes the civic education on democracy...”
(*White Paper on Defence*, 1996: 21).

Another definition of integration is “the physical aspect of bringing together the forces and that of welding them together by developing attitudes of belonging, oneness, loyalty and a common sense of purpose” (Masondo, 1997: 57). However, the integration of personnel from different armies can be a largely mechanical process in which the organisational culture, the racial imbalance, and the doctrinal basis of the old armed forces remain largely unchallenged (Williams, 1993). In South Africa, the numerical, technological and organisational superiority of the SADF had the effect of ensuring that “SADF training, doctrine, personnel procedures, structures and equipment formed the basis of the new SANDF and that integration largely occurred on the SADF’s terms” (Cawthra, 1997a: 149; 2003: 41). This point is explored in detail in sub-section 5.3.3.

The nominal integration of the seven different armed forces indicated that the SANDF would become a bloated defence force with a size that was too large for the decreasing defence budget. The size of the integrated SANDF was to be reduced through a process of rationalisation, which would follow the completion of the physical process of integration. **Rationalisation** in its basic sense refers to “the organization of a business according to scientific principles of management in order to increase efficiency (WordReference.com, *English Dictionary*). The concept is often used in reference to the bureaucratic-technical reorganisation of state apparatuses in accordance with economic, political and efficiency prerogatives. “Almost invariably rationalisation refers to the reduction in the personnel levels, expenditures and budgets of state apparatuses” (Williams, 1993: 2). According to the Department of Defence Rationalisation Strategy, this includes “the process of re-aligning the personnel numbers required for filling posts in accordance with the approved force design and structures, with the new mandate, role and tasks” (cited in Motumi, 2000: 22). In this sense rationalisation involved right-sizing, which meant the re-examination of the unit and personnel composition of the different arms of the service as well as the re-examination of the relationships between them.

Once all the staffing process had been completed – that is, when all components of the new Department of Defence design and structure had been officially approved – the down-sizing of the SANDF through an Employer Initiated Retrenchment package would follow (Reich, 2000). The *White Paper on Defence* (1996) defines rationalisation as the “reduction of the Regular Force to approved force levels through, inter alia, the retrenchment of military personnel following integration” (*White Paper on Defence*, 1996: 23). However, while this meant the demobilisation of soldiers and their reintegration into civilian society, the concept “demobilisation” was never used; instead “rationalisation” was adopted. The concept of demobilisation was used for the first time in reference to the release of former members of APLA and MK who could not be integrated due to age, ill-health and the lack of the minimum educational requirements. This was extended to include those who were not interested in joining the SANDF. Thus, in the context of this study, “demobilised soldiers” refers exclusively to former members of APLA and MK who were officially released from the integration process through demobilisation.

5.3 Constitutional and Institutional Frameworks

5.3.1 The 1994 Elections

The struggle for freedom and equality in South Africa, which began in 1912 with the formation of the South African Native National Congress, came to an end in 1994 when the country held its first-ever racially-inclusive democratic elections. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) set aside three days (April 26, 27 and 28) for voting at 9,000 voting stations around the country (Rantete, 1998: 244). A total of 19,726,579 voters took part in the elections. From this, a total of 19,533,498 votes were accepted as valid while 193,081 (0.99 per cent) were classified as spoilt (Independent Electoral Commission, 1994). The ANC won 62.65 per cent of the votes (252 parliamentary seats), followed by the National Party (NP) with 20.9 per cent (82 seats) and the IFP at 10.5 per cent (43 seats). The PAC managed only 1.25 per cent of the votes (five seats). This was below the performance of the conservative Vryheidsfront/Freedom Front which obtained 2.17 per cent of the votes (nine seats) (Independent Electoral Commission, 1994).

The conclusion of the elections and the establishment of a new government under the leadership of Nelson Mandela meant that the country could then focus on building and consolidating democracy. The consolidation of this democracy depended on how the government dealt with the legacy of the 30 years of armed conflict in South Africa and the region – that is, the multiplicity of armed forces. There were five Statutory Forces (the SADF and the TVBC forces) and two Non-Statutory Forces (APLA and MK).

5.3.2 The Integration Committee

The process of integrating different armed forces requires the establishment of an institution that is acceptable to all parties to oversee the process. In Angola the Joint Political-Military Commission (CCPM) and the Inter-Ministerial Office to Support the Demobilised Military of Angola (GIAMDA) were established (Porto and Parsons, 2003), in Mozambique it was the Reintegration Commission (Lundin, et. al., 2000), and in Zimbabwe the Demobilisation Directorate (Rupiah, 1995). The role of the United Nations was also notable in Angola (UNAVEM and MONUA), Mozambique

(UNOMOZ) and Namibia (UNTAG). In South Africa, it was expected that a civilian body would be established to oversee the process (Interview with Dr. Rocky Williams, Pretoria, 27.08.2000). However, the Integration Committee (IC) was established instead to oversee the physical integration of the armed forces. The IC was made up of representatives of all five statutory forces, both non-statutory forces, all four Arms of the Service (AOS) (air force, army, navy and South African Military Health Services). The Inspector General of the SANDF, the Chaplain General, the Chief Director of Corporate Communications, the Service Corps, the Secretary for Defence, the British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT), the Chief Director Equal Opportunities, and training staff (defence and army) were also IC members (Interview with General Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

The IC had two sub-committees, namely the Integration Work Group (IWG) that was responsible for the day-to-day work of the IC, and the Personnel Work Group (PWG) that dealt with personnel matters on behalf of the IWG and the IC. All the different Arms of the Service had integration committees which dealt with specific matters affecting integration and served as links between the IC and the AOS on integration matters. At a political level the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Defence (JPCD) and the Integration Oversight Committee (IOC) played an important role to ensure that those aspects that needed to be referred to Parliament were dealt with and that there were no deviations from the main thrust of the integration principles as agreed at JMCC negotiations (Interview with General Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000). The British Military Advisory and Training Team was

assigned to assess (and then to validate) syllabi and standards, to monitor training and selection and to advise and adjudicate in the case of disputes between the integrating forces. The British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) [was] evaluating SANDF training and selection standards in terms of their experience of international military standards. As members of placement and training boards, they also [assessed] and [validated] the criteria against which individuals [were] placed to undergo bridging training and evaluate the competencies and qualifications of individuals. The Commander of BMATT periodically [reported] to the Minister and the Deputy Minister [of Defence] (Department of Defence, 1998b: 72).

BMATT was chosen by JMCC participants after some disagreement over the choice of international military observers and adjudicators (Frankel, 1998). The choice was based on BMATT's previous experiences in other parts of Africa, including Zimbabwe. In South Africa BMATT was previously involved in the training of the NPKF as part of a Commonwealth team. BMATT "played an important role in ensuring fairness and objectivity, and its contribution was largely responsible for the ultimate credibility of the integration process" (Le Roux, 2005: 254). This view was challenged by some of the participants in the process of integration. Colonel Sigela, for instance, felt that BMATT was not a neutral adjudicator but served to protect the interests of the SADF at the expense of members of APLA and MK (Interview with Colonel Lucas Sigela, Thaba-Tshwane, 12.08.2000). Another former NSF member, Major Mbatha, argued that BMATT had nothing to adjudicate because MK people lacked knowledge about requirements for a conventional military force (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000).

The Integration Committee was guided by the *Interim Constitution* (1993) in three areas. First, membership was determined through the *Interim Constitution* (1993), Section 224(2) as amended. This section stipulated that members of armed forces who stood under the authority and control or were associated with political organisations which participated in the Transitional Executive Council, who had taken part in the election of April 27, 1994, and whose names were on Certified Personnel Register before 11 October 1996, were members of the SANDF. The PAC did not take part in the political negotiations and thus its military wing, APLA did not qualify for integration. APLA was later included on the basis of a Cabinet decision and an amendment of Section 224(2) of the *Interim Constitution* (1993). During February 1996, a decision was taken to include members of the KwaZulu Special Police Force (KZSPF – Inkatha's equivalent of the ANC's Self-Defence Units), for the purposes of political balance (Frankel, 1998). However, unlike members of all the other armed forces, KZSPF were incorporated as new recruits and all were appointed on the lowest salary and rank notching. "This 'has been explained repeatedly' but as late as mid-1997 there were still fairly consistent complaints at 8 Infantry Battalion at Upington (the site of incorporation) about differentials paid to the new Zulu recruits and ex-NSF personnel" (Frankel, 1998: 81). Approximately 2,000 members of the KwaZulu Special Protection Force entered the SANDF (Batchelor, Cock and Mckenzie, 2000).

Second, standards discussed in earlier meetings between representatives of MK and the SADF (as discussed in Chapter 4) were also determined by the *Interim Constitution*, Section 226(4), which stated that the SANDF would be established in such a manner that would provide a balanced, modern and technologically advanced military force. Meanwhile, Section 226(5) provided that all members of the SANDF would be properly trained in order to comply with international standards of competency.

Third, Section 236(2) of the *Interim Constitution* determined that all members of the statutory forces would continue in employment as had been the case prior to the elections.

In theory, integration involved the merging of seven armed forces. However, as will be argued in section 5.3 below, integration became a process through which the SADF absorbed other armed forces.

At the time the former SADF and TVBC forces were “forces-in-being” and their qualifications and experience were recognised by the Joint Military Co-ordinating Committee (Williams, 1996). APLA and MK members, on the other hand, “were either assembled in camps outside the country, dispersed in the underground structures within the country, informally demobilised after their return from exile in the post-1990 period, or in active employment in a range of non-military positions. Furthermore, the qualifications and experience of the NSF members [were] varied and required accreditation and standardisation” (Williams, 1996: 12). Thus, statutory and non-statutory forces experienced the integration process differently, starting with the Certified Personnel Register (CPR) process.

5.3.3 The Certified Personnel Register

The main problem at the time was that the actual number of soldiers from APLA and MK to be integrated into the SANDF was unknown. SADF personnel files existed on personnel mainframe systems, and TBVC personnel were translated into the Republic of South Africa public service systems. However, APLA and MK, as was the case with guerrilla armies in other post-conflict societies, did not have complete personnel

records of their members. Thus, APLA and MK had to submit names of their members for purposes of integration. The submission of Certified Personnel Registers (CPR) for all the constituent forces of the SANDF was provided for in terms of Section 16(3)(b) of the *Transitional Executive Council Act*, 1993, Section 224(2) of the 1993 *Interim Constitution*, and Section 3 of Annexure D of Schedule 6 of the 1996 *Constitution*. APLA and MK structures faced a number of problems in the process of compiling their CPRs.

The first problem was the fact that, as guerrilla forces, both APLA and MK did not have complete and detailed personnel records. Added to this, their members used pseudonyms or “combat names” (Motumi and Mckenzie, 1998). It was agreed in JMCC meetings that pseudonyms would not be accepted for the purposes of integration. This was because pseudonyms could not be used for accounting purposes: *“If you want an audit trail and you are working with government money, even if the person is not integrating you have to know what their real name is”* (Interview with General R.G Reich, Director Personnel Separation, Pretoria, 08.08.2000). The rejection of pseudonyms was a good decision because, as noted in Chapter 3, ex-combatants in Zimbabwe used three different names to claim living allowances during the assembly phase (Kriger, 2003). The second problem was that both APLA and MK kept on changing their CPRs, despite being certified by their respective signatories:

When the CPRs were compiled there was an agreement to appoint signatories from the former Non-Statutory Forces to verify that the names on the CPRs deserved to be there. General Nyanda signed on behalf of MK and General Matanzima on behalf of APLA. They kept on coming back saying the names were wrong and they kept on adding names and thus the list got bigger and bigger and bigger. They also came with a list of veterans - people who were old, and a list of people who were still overseas until such a point we read a Riot Act that said: “Okay now, this is the final list” (Interview with General R.G Reich, Director Personnel Separation, Pretoria, 08.08.2000).

One of the reasons for the continuous amendments of the CPR was the initial reluctance of some APLA and MK soldiers to submit their names for the purposes of integration. A former MK soldier notes that since the process of compiling the CPR

began in 1992 in a context of ongoing political violence, some MK soldiers feared for their lives. This view was also held by a former APLA commander: *“They were not sure whether APLA was still APLA or APLA was selling out. People were worried about their security. However, we had no choice but to integrate, we could not go against the will of the majority”* (Interview with Colonel Lucas Sigela, Thaba-Tshwane, 12.08.2000).¹⁴ According to Colonel Lucas Sigela, another problem facing APLA was that in 1993,¹⁵ the APLA office in Johannesburg, which housed the APLA High Command, was raided by the state security forces. In the process a list of names of APLA members, computers and other documents were confiscated. As late as 2000, the confiscated goods had not been returned to APLA and, as a result, the original copies of names were lost.

The main problem facing those compiling the MK CPR was the difficulty in determining the criteria for inclusion. This is because, as argued in Chapter 2, MK consisted of people with varied training who did different jobs, which included providing safe houses for MK soldiers. The failure to define “combatant” left most people within APLA and MK frustrated, as evident in the words of some former APLA and MK members:

Who is MK? Where do you classify someone who has never been prepared for conflict, someone who has been under a certain ANC structure, but was never military hardcore? . . . How do you define a guerrilla, at least in theory? These things were never done. We never did our homework; we never defined a guerrilla (Interview with General Sipho Binda, former MK commander, Pretoria, 26.09.2000).

Another former MK soldier observed that a combatant was loosely defined, to the extent that it included anyone who could strip and assemble a weapon, for example, an AK 47 assault rifle (Interview with Tsepe Motumi, Pretoria, 18.04.2000). Since the definition of a guerrilla was left open, this allowed for the inclusion of members of the

¹⁴ At the time of the interview, Colonel Lucas Sigela was deployed in the APLA Integration Office within the Department of Defence.

¹⁵ At that time, APLA was still engaged in an armed liberation struggle and, as stated in Chapter 4, Sabelo Phama, APLA Army Commander, had declared that 1993 would be “The Year of the Storm”.

Self-Defence Units on the MK CPR. According to Major Mbatha, when they trained SDUs they were not planning for integration into the new SANDF; they were training members of community defence structures. When the order was issued to regional commanders to compile lists of MK soldiers for the purposes of inclusion in the CPR, a decision was taken to include SDU members. As Major Mbatha puts it, “*Because we trained them, that made them MK*” (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000). Some MK respondents were against the inclusion of members of the SDUs in the CPR. The main argument was that SDUs were community defence structures and consisted of people who had not received political education like hardcore MK soldiers and therefore lacked military discipline (Interview with Bob Mabaso, Johannesburg, 09.07.1999). Colonel Lucas Sigela also complained about the lack of a definition of combatant and argued for an indigenous definition:

Who is a combatant? Do you mean a person who dug up trenches in Lusaka, Dar es Salaam, Cambodia, India, Lebanon, China or Russia, or do we mean somebody who was defending the country against colonialism, inside the country, throwing stones? Those are the people who really felt the heat. They are also combatants, they also qualified from that particular position. The CODESA agreements were a disaster themselves because they did not decide exactly about the Self-Protection Units, the individuals who were harbouring the terrorists [the Interviewee’s usage], the individuals who were harbouring the SDUs and SPUs. Now that concept [combatant] has got to be redefined. There has to be a reconceptualised position, an African position in South Africa, not in terms of Zimbabwe or whatever. We have no doubt that a number of people were excluded because the concepts were not clearly defined (Interview with Colonel Lucas Sigela, Pretoria, 12.08.2000).

To cater for other MK categories, a non-formal CPR was created to accommodate approximately a thousand people, and in August 1995 these names were incorporated into the formal CPR (Motumi and Mckenzie, 1998). However, some of those previously opposed to MK were not happy with the revised CPR. “Given its use as the basis for integration, it was argued that the liberation armies deliberately boosted their numbers to strengthen their hands in the negotiation process... There were allegations that people with peripheral connection to MK, such as those who participated in Self-

Defence Units, were added to the CPR” (Motumi and Mckenzie, 1998: 190). One of the proponents of this position was General Reich, who argued that there were many *klip-gooiers* (stone throwers) on APLA and MK CPRs. Tsepe Motumi argues that some people in MK had a strategy of adding names to the CPR to inflate numbers in order to increase the numbers of MK members for the processes of integration. According to Motumi, the MK CPR was basically a list of people who were in MK camps outside of South Africa. This was problematic because people who compiled the lists did not possibly know everyone who had been in MK camps, and thus there was a potential to exclude others who had never been outside the country but who contributed to the building of MK.

The CPR was compiled on the basis of people on strength in camps, and because most of these camps were transitory structures, and due to the number of people who went through the camps, it would be impossible to know all the people and the periods in which they were in camps. There were also people who were in South Africa who had never been in the camps, and people who performed short-term missions, people who were underground and people who may necessarily not have been known by the mass of people (Interview with Tsepe Motumi, Deputy Director Policy and Planning, Department of Defence, Pretoria, 18.04.2000).

When lists were transferred into a computer at the integration centre, some names on the MK CPR were left out (Masondo, 1997). In some cases APLA and MK offices omitted the names of genuine members who had submitted their names for integration. *“Some people integrated against other people’s names. There were lots of mistakes: sometimes they had a surname registered as a first name and a first name as a surname... So many people said they had a same name* (Interview with General Reich, Pretoria, 08.08.2000). However, Masondo (1997) argues that in some cases people with the same names were regarded as duplication when it was not. Other problems arose as a result of spelling: the name on an identity document was spelled differently from the name on the CPR (Masondo, 1997). To resolve these problems, NSF officers were called in to verify that name and person belonged to each other. *“You had a special form that you had to sign and that took the noise out of the system because we had an audit trail. People were issued with service certificates; years in*

service, camp and type of training as documentary evidence. They kept on coming with amendments and this happened over months” (Interview with General Reich, Pretoria, 08.08.2000). In total 127,545 names were submitted for integration, 6,000 from APLA, 27,801 from MK, 82,705 from the SADF,¹⁶ and 11,039 from TVBC forces.¹⁷ CPRs were to be submitted to the Transitional Executive Council before April 27, 1994. Authority was subsequently granted to APLA and MK that they could add names to the original lists until October 11, 1996. A total of 8,219 names (4,355 from MK and 3,864 from APLA) was added (Department of Defence, 2004). No names could, however, be added to the CPRs after that date. Thus, in total 135,764 names were submitted for integration into the SANDF between 1994 and November 2002 (Department of Defence, 2004).

5.4 The Process: Integration and Demobilisation

5.4.1 Integration and Verification

In 1994, when integration began, the SANDF continued to recruit new members into the service. These were people without any military history and thus were not part of the process of integration. According to General Reich, soldiers belonging to this group were the pure-bred SANDF soldiers because they did not join the SANDF with a baggage of previous military history like their APLA-MK and SADF-TVBC counterparts. By April 1, 1998, there were 9,580 new SANDF recruits (Department of Defence, 1998b). However, there were no new SANDF structures or culture, as the old military doctrine and curriculum of the SADF were retained. In fact, some of the soldiers who joined the SANDF around the time of integration saw themselves as part of the SADF instead of the SANDF. Former SADF members continued occupying the ranks and positions they had occupied before the April 27, 1994, elections. Furthermore, they were responsible for administering the process of integration. Since

¹⁶ Other sources state that 90,000 names of former SADF members were submitted (see for example, Masondo, 1997; Motumi, 2000; Motumi and Mckenzie, 1998; Williams, 1996). The total of 90,000 former SADF members included civilians (Motumi and Mckenzie, 1998); this is confirmed by the Final Integration Report issued by the Department of Defence, which gives the total number of uniformed SADF members in 1994 as 82,705.

¹⁷ *The Final Integration Report* (Department of Defence, 2004) only provided the 1996 figures for TVBC members. The 1994 number was consistently given as 11,039 (see for example, Masondo, 1997; Motumi, 2000; Motumi and Mckenzie, 1998).

the TVBC forces were established and trained by the SADF, they were also regarded as qualified and thus were not subjected to the process of integration in the same way as former members of APLA and MK. The process of integrating former members of SADF and TVBC forces was known as verification. This involved going through personnel files of former members of SADF and TVBC forces. *“We checked their files to see whether they had done the courses they say they had done. Then we wrote them letters to say, ‘Now you are a member of SANDF’ ”* (Interview with General Andrew Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000). However, while former members of the TBVC forces were regarded as being equally qualified as former members of the SADF, they became members of the SANDF in subordinate positions. As late as 2000, General Masondo made the following observation:

Among the TBVC forces, former members of the Transkei Defence Force are the better off because all the Major Generals come from the Transkei Defence Force. The Transkei Defence Force trained and ranked all its people; the others were under the SADF. The only Brigadier General – Ramushwana – is from the Venda Defence Force. Bophuthatswana Defence Force and Venda Defence Force have no single full General up to now; they only have Colonels. Ciskei Defence Force now has some Brigadier Generals. The rest of them not even Colonels; they were either majors or others. Actually some of them were promoted when they joined the SANDF. The situation was worse for former black SADF members. There were people who for fifteen years had been privates. This was not because of failure to study; it was the problem with the system (Interview with General Andrew Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

The process of verification was introduced as an afterthought, when former members of the SADF started behaving as if they were “swallowing” other armed forces (Interview with General Andrew Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

The process of integration was more tedious and frustrating for former members of APLA and MK. The regional commanders of APLA and MK were given the responsibility of co-ordinating the assembly of the respective armies. The planning process involved going to various townships to inform people about integration. Since

radio was the most accessible communication medium in South Africa, there were radio announcements regarding the process of integration. Regional commanders advised aspirant soldiers about pick-up points from which the military bus would collect them. Due to the volatile political climate of the time, these pick-up points were outside black townships. This was because the SADF people feared that the buses would be stoned if they entered the townships. Former APLA and MK members were transported to Wallmannstahl (mainly MK), De Brug (mainly APLA) and Hoedspruit (mixed group).

According to Major Mbatha, by the time MK soldiers reached Wallmannstahl, *“there were already allegations that a meeting was convened in which SADF members were told that they should be careful of former MK soldiers because we are communists”* (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000). The allegations were confirmed by Jacob Mokgomase, who joined the SANDF in 1994 as a new recruit directly from high school. According to Mokgomase, SANDF recruits were not allowed to mix with APLA and MK members. *“We were not allowed to mix with them, and any SADF member seen in the company of APLA and MK soldiers was reported and reprimanded. One of my seniors used to tell me that APLA and MK people’s minds were retarded and that they were undisciplined. He also used to tell me that they were not used to conventional warfare and further that they were too weak for a conventional army”* (Interview with Jacob Mokgomase, former SANDF soldier, Johannesburg, 29.08.2000).¹⁸

When APLA and MK soldiers arrived at assembly areas, they went through the Personnel Management Office Reception Depot (PMORD), which was established to receive and register personnel arriving at the sites (Frankel, 1998). The first stage involved placing the personal details of former members of APLA and MK on both the personnel and financial systems. These soldiers were billeted before ranking and placement (Williams, 1996). Expanding on the first stage, General Reich said, *“Members of APLA and MK had to produce their identity documents. After this, they went through a process of determining their level of education. They also went through a process of medical classification to determine whether they were fit to join*

¹⁸ At the time of the interview Mokgomase had left the SANDF and was registered as a full-time student for the degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

the military. Many came in to say they were generals (Interview with General R.G Reich, Pretoria, 08.08.2000). The initial plan was that after PMORD soldiers would appear before a Placement Board for integration. This depended on APLA and MK ranking soldiers before sending them to assembly areas.

Problems arose because, when MK attempted to rank its people, the rankings did not conform to SADF criteria. To defuse the potential conflict, a provision was made (after a suggestion from BMATT) to establish a Pre-Selection Committee for the assessment of those who were integrating (Frankel, 1998). Former APLA and MK members were subjected to functional tests after which they “*were temporarily ranked*” (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000). The final decision on placements remained with the Placement Board, consisting of representatives from APLA, MK, SADF, TBVC forces and BMATT (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000). To make a determination on the placement of an individual, the Placement Board used criteria such as educational qualifications, previous experience, length of service and leadership qualities, evaluation reports from the NSF, the results of pre-selection tests, age, seniority in the NSF, personnel preferences and military qualifications (Frankel, 1998; Masondo, 1997; Williams, 1996). A number of APLA and MK respondents argued that the use of educational qualification as one of the criteria for integration was unfair. Some argued that they had not been able to complete their studies because they were involved in the liberation struggle all the time. Others argued that when they joined the liberation armies no one ever asked them about their educational qualifications and thus the SANDF also had to accept them as they were – without educational qualifications. All these were dismissed by General Andrew Masondo:

How do you take a person who will not pass anything, because there is a difference. If for instance you are a guerrilla, I can teach you how to shoot; then once I have taught you how to shoot, you do not plan, you do not do anything, you shoot. But you see, in a conventional army, you need to get educated or else you become a private for life, because you see, in the defence force, there are no people who study as constantly as defence force people. This is because to move from one rank to the next you have to go for training, you have to write exams and to pass and even to understand the work that you

are doing, you have to do that (Interview with General Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

The Placement Board allocated candidates to an Arm of the Service, Corps (branch) and mustering, and confirmed their ranks (and notch within a rank), as well as bridging required (Masondo, 1997). According to Major Mbatha, the JMCC had agreed that the SADF would assess APLA and MK soldiers.

Thus, practically SADF was placed in a powerful position since they knew about the criteria and MK knew nothing¹⁹... MK representatives seemed to be unable to challenge the decisions of the Placement Board. This is because of three possible reasons: they did not understand the system and the doctrine applied, some of them were not powerful enough to challenge decisions, and lastly, others were disgruntled since they had already received lower ranks, so they became apathetic. Thus, in the process it was you against the SADF officers. They had to expel me from the interview three times since I was arguing against their decisions. During interviews, it was the survival of the fittest (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000).

During the assessment process “MK’s ranks were usually knocked down a notch or two...” (Cawthra, 1997a: 150). One of those soldiers whose rank was lowered was Major Mbatha: “*The ANC ranked me as a Lieutenant Colonel... I was ranked Major [by the Placement Board] because I was aged 26 then. I was told that all SADF Majors are 35 years and older*” (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000). According to Major Mbatha, some people began to learn the system, and after some time knew how to get a better deal out of the interview. The strategy was to rank themselves two ranks higher than the desired rank. For example, to end up as Major, soldiers would rank themselves as full Colonels. “Once a member’s rank was confirmed, he/she was then allotted to a particular unit and provided with a synopsis of the type of training required to qualify them in their particular rank” (Williams, 1996: 13). This was followed by bridging training, and former APLA and MK members were required to complete a specified number of courses before they were

¹⁹ In fact, General Reich argues that it was officers from the different Arms of Service who determined whether people qualified to join the respective Arms of Service because they knew the required criteria.

qualified for the rank which the Placement Board had allotted them. “Such training [consisted] of orientation training (training designed to familiarize former guerrilla soldiers with a conventional military environment) and functional training” (Williams, 1996:13).

During JMCC deliberations, it became clear to participants that not everyone in APLA and MK would be suitable or opt for a military career (Frankel, 1998). This was also noted by Masondo (1994) who argued that “...there are a number of former members of MK and APLA Forces that may not for various reasons be eligible to continue with the military and therefore need to be demobilised ... it is important and imperative that they be prepared for their integration into society without just increasing the unemployment statistic” (Masondo, 1994: 14). However, the JMCC was not mandated to take decisions on pensions or financial compensation for such people. The matter was referred to Parliament for a decision. The lack of a demobilisation policy caused problems during the process of integration when those managing integration came across a group of “veterans and vulnerables” (Frankel, 1998). This referred to 144 older cadres (veterans) and 700 aspirant soldiers whose lack of formal education, illiteracy and/or medical condition (vulnerables) disqualified them for any mustering. Commenting on the elderly cadres, Masondo (1997) states that “[t]hese people could not remain members of the SANDF because 65 is the compulsory retirement age” (Masondo, 1997: 63). The 144 aged cadres were sent on paid leave for lack of any other procedure to manage their future (Frankel, 1998).

At the time there was no plan to release soldiers into civilian life, and thus no reintegration programmes existed. The reduction of the size of the SANDF through an Employer Initiated Retrenchment (EIR) had not yet been approved. As stated in the Introduction, the concept of demobilisation was not yet part of the vocabulary of the Department of Defence. Expanding on the problem of the veterans and vulnerables, General Masondo said:

The integration process determined that everybody whose name appeared on the certified personnel register of a non-statutory force became a member of the SANDF by law. Among these people we had people who were 65 years old in 1994, which is the compulsory retirement age in the military. Others

because of ill-health did not qualify to be members of the SANDF. The category includes people who were physically disabled and mentally disabled. We had people who on their return to their homes found that their certificates were missing. Others had no time to improve their education. To deal with this problem we introduced a potential test. If you obtain 6 in a scale of 9 in that potential test then you were regarded as officer material. You could go in [join the SANDF] as an officer. If you obtained 3 and above you were allowed to integrate, but if you obtained 2 or 1, you were not allowed to integrate (Interview with General Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

However, there was no decision on the future of those individuals who did not qualify to integrate. According to Motumi and Hudson (1995), the SANDF was awaiting a Cabinet decision on demobilisation, while a Cabinet memorandum detailing demobilisation guidelines had been awaiting political approval since the end of 1994.

For many months the military, and the Ministry of Defence, toyed with the idea of making a financial demobilisation offer to all members of the former non-statutory forces, i.e. both MK and APLA, irrespective of whether the individual had integrated into the SANDF yet or not. This, idea, enticing as it was as a shortcut to reduce the size of the SANDF, would clearly have been illegal and caused a great degree of resentment among serving former statutory force members. As a result the idea was dropped (Motumi and Hudson, 1995: 119-120).

Given the increasing number of veterans and vulnerables “sixteen months into integration, the ‘demobilisation’ process was announced by the Minister of Defence, Joe Modise” (Motumi and Mckenzie, 1998: 194). When making the announcement, the late Joe Modise, then Minister of Defence, defined demobilisation as the voluntary release of former Non-Statutory Force members, who were constitutionally part of the SANDF but who did not wish to serve in the full-time force or who were unable to do so due to age, education or ill-health (Media Briefing, 21 August 1995). Demobilisation became a strategy to eliminate some former APLA and MK soldiers from the process of integration to form the SANDF. It was not an attempt to reduce the size of the SANDF, which was the aim of the anticipated rationalisation. Rather, it was “a way to deal with ex-combatants from the liberation forces who did not qualify

for integration, or who chose not to be integrated” (Batchelor, Cock and Mckenzie, 2000:44). Thus, while the process indirectly reduced the number of potential SANDF members, that was not the intention. It will be argued the process was implemented without proper planning.

5.4.2 Problems Encountered During Integration

In Chapter 3, it was argued that the successful encampment and discharge of soldiers depends on the availability of adequate and quality resources such as accommodation, sanitation, medical care and food. The discussion of the demobilisation-reintegration processes in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe provided evidence that failure to supply these resources timeously has the potential to lead to discontent among encamped soldiers up to and including self-demobilisation. As was the case in Angola and Mozambique, the encampment of soldiers in South Africa was characterised by the lack of adequate facilities and resources. In planning for assembly, the Chief of the SADF contacted the military attaché at the United States Embassy for assistance regarding tents and other bedding facilities. This request was never followed through because it would be a long bureaucratic process that would include approval by the US President (Frankel, 1998). As a consequence adequate tents, bedding, and clothing were in short supply for much of 1994 (Frankel, 2000).

At best, the SADF could provide 2,000 of an estimated 16,000 beds required, and only 1,430 of 2,262 large tents for designated assembly camps (Frankel, 1998). The irony is that “only a few years earlier the SADF was accustomed to inducting up to 20,000 white conscripts at a time” (Cawthra, 1997a: 152). Another problem was related to food, which was initially poor and unvaried, except for that provided to SADF personnel. The poor quality of food provided for those in the process of integrating into the SANDF was confirmed by a number of former APLA and MK soldiers. They complained that while at Wallmannstahl they frequently suffered from diarrhoea, especially after meals. Some of the respondents interviewed in Gauteng and Mpumalanga stated that they suspected that they were deliberately poisoned by former SADF officers. According to Frankel (2000), the food problem was solved through the engagement of a common catering system contracted to a civilian company. Other problems included poor and overcrowded ablution facilities.

The failure to adequately provide for the needs of soldiers in assembly camps were attributed to different factors. Former SADF officers claimed that it was due to a lack of logistical facilities (Cawthra, 1997a). However, the leadership of ANC-MK also shared the blame. “The leadership, preoccupied with the political process, paid insufficient attention to logistics; at least some of the blame for poor food and conditions can be placed at the feet of MK” (Cawthra, 1997a: 152). The huge infusion of soldiers repatriated from different countries during the first intakes of 1994 also contributed to overcrowding (Frankel, 2000). The arrival of soldiers repatriated from camps in different countries, while valid, is not an adequate reason to explain overcrowding and the lack of adequate resources.

Another cause of overcrowding was the lack of proper access control at Wallmannstahl. The JMCC planned for successive call-ups, and the detailed processing of each call-up before the next. As stated above, call-ups were conducted on a regional basis. The SADF army and the regional MK and APLA “commanders worked together to assemble persons for that specific intake and who were on the CPR as planned... Three intakes at De Brug, and four at Wallmannstahl of about 1,500 each were completed in 1994” (Motumi and Hudson, 1995: 116). However, the first intake in Wallmannstahl exposed the poor access control at the base. It was easy for aspirant soldiers to enter into Wallmannstahl without proper authorisation.

There was no infrastructure to accommodate the influx of people at Wallmannstahl. People who were assembled at Wallmannstahl studied and mastered the place and its loopholes. When integration began taking momentum, people would go home at the end of the month after receiving their monthly allowances of about R700. When they returned they would be accompanied by their friends who were not on any CPR. The people they brought were not properly registered when they entered the assembly camp. After some time the SADF officers realised that some of the people at Wallmannstahl had no proper records and nobody knew how and when they arrived at Wallmannstahl. Due to the overcrowding that resulted from this, there was no adequate accommodation, water and food were not up to

standard and after eating you had to prepare yourself for going to the toilet
(Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000).

According to Major Mbatha, to deal with the problem, a decision was taken to “sweep” the base. All soldiers waiting to be integrated were assembled in one area and the names of people who were earmarked for the first intake were called. All soldiers who were not on the list were sent back home. Another consequence of lack of proper planning was that NSF members, whether repatriated directly from APLA and MK camps outside the borders of South Africa or coming from their respective homes within the country, spent many months in assembly camps without anything to do.

The time at Wallmannstahl was the most frustrating time in the integration process. Most personnel files of MK people disappeared and sometimes people were kept in the assembly camp for a long time for no clear reason. In some cases delays were due to the argument that the officers were waiting for your rank from the ANC or that your documents had not arrived (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000).

The main cause of delays was that while the JMCC working groups did a good job by giving broad principles and guidelines directing the integration process, the day-to-day implementation of the process was not planned. Evidence of this is that by October 1994, APLA and MK regional commanders, those (commanders) in the assembly points and people who were in JMCC work groups were not yet part of the SANDF (Masondo, 1994). Furthermore, a delegation made up of SADF and MK senior officers went to camps in Uganda and Tanzania to repatriate soldiers whom, when reaching South Africa, were told that their names were not on the CPR:

Is it conceivable that people who [had] been working in the JMCC work groups [were] told they [were] not in the certified personnel register and it [became] a hassle to include them? The same story for people who [had] been working at the headquarters of MK. This [gave] the impression to cadres that the leadership of MK [was] either not interested in their welfare or [were] being told by the SADF

leadership what to do. Thus the accusation that the other forces [were] being accommodated by the SADF (Masondo, 1994: 10).

Due to some inefficiencies and lack of capacity in APLA and MK Integration Offices, problems continued unabated. This was attributable to the temporary nature of those offices and the personal ambition of former APLA and MK soldiers working in the respective offices. As Major Mbatha observed, some former APLA and MK soldiers working on demobilisation were driven by personal ambition to neglect their jobs. *“Instead of working on the process some of them would attend courses for their own advancement and neglect their duties. Hence, there was a lot of discontinuity in the APLA and MK integration offices”* (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000). The point was also recognised by General Modise, who argued that since APLA and MK structures were not recognised in the defence force people working in the MK office did not want to stay there as their careers in the defence force were at stake. *“They man those offices in their spare time because there are no career prospects in working at those offices”* (General Modise cited in the Minutes of the Portfolio Committee on Defence meeting, 02.10.2001).

Another problem was that, partly as a result of indiscipline among APLA and MK soldiers and partly as a result of grievances with the slow process of integration, a number of former APLA and MK soldiers went absent without official leave (AWOL). In 1994 a majority of the approximately 6,800 MK personnel at the assembly areas went AWOL in protest over grievances relating to living conditions, racism encountered in relations with white officers, non-payment of salaries and delays in being processed (Williams, 1995). Nelson Mandela, then State President, and the late Joe Modise, then Minister of Defence, initially took a relatively lenient approach toward the absentees, most of who returned within two weeks. Barely a week later over 2,200 soldiers went AWOL in a new walkout (Williams, 1995). There were four reasons behind the desertions at assembly areas. First, the staff and administrative functions of the integration process were managed by former South African Army personnel within what were largely unchanged South African Army finance, personnel and logistic structures. In Williams’ (1995) observation, these structures and personnel were unprepared for the abnormality and the urgency of the

integration process. Second, there was suspicion and mistrust between lower-ranking (including Non-Commissioned Officer level) SADF and MK personnel who, unlike the senior members involved in the Strategic Planning Process negotiations of the JMCC, had not had the opportunity to meet one another, dispel fears and establish a consensual framework. These tensions were exacerbated by salary problems, inadequate living conditions for many MK members, sluggishness in the processing system, and lack of effective communication within and among the different armed forces (Williams, 1995).

The third reason was that divisions existed within MK itself. There were two primary groupings – those who had received their military training outside the country, and those who had been trained inside South Africa. According to Williams (1995), the former category tended to respond well to the rigors of a conventional military environment and, based on their experience and qualifications, assumed most of the leadership positions within MK and in its delegation to the JMCC. The latter, drawn mostly from the SDUs, tended to be somewhat more anarchic; the bulk of the absentees came from this group (Williams, 1995). Major Mbatha concurred with Williams (1995) on some of the reasons for the walk-out of APLA and MK soldiers out of the Wallmannstahl assembly camp.

First, people stayed too long in the camps, second conditions in the camp were bad, third some of the people in the camps were militants from the townships with no history of being freedom fighters and hence were not used to hardships. Wallmannstahl was referred to as a 'concentration camp' aimed at deliberately demoralising MK people. Some of the would-be soldiers fell victim to this (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000).

While Masondo (1994) attributed the walk-out to the long time people spent in the assembly areas without any activity, he condemned the indiscipline shown by those involved. "To keep people in an assembly point without a programme is to invite trouble. It is unacceptable for trained cadres to leave the assembly points without discussing with the relevant structures even if they had genuine grievances. To give the Defence Force leaders an ultimatum cannot be condoned" (Masondo, 1994: 11). The decision to walk out of a military base without authorisation was an indicator of

indiscipline and at times criminality evident among elements of the SDU (Cawthra, 1997a). In response to the incident, the ANC criticised the recruiting of members of the Self-Defence Units:

The spokesperson of the said group has never been a member of MK or received any military training outside the country. Salvador Mkhari only joined the self-defence unit long after the ANC had suspended armed activities... The ANC is convinced that in the process of recruiting for self-defence units its military wing MK was heavily infiltrated, with a sole aim of dirtying the name of the organisation and MK. The utterances of Salvador Mkhari attest to this. It is also very unfortunate that there were no mechanisms set in place to screen all recruits to the SDUs who ended up in the MK fold, some of whom are being manipulated by certain political organisations and intelligence structures against the principles and policies that the ANC stands for (*ANC Media Statement*, 16.11.1994).

According to one former MK soldier who was part of the group that walked out of Wallmannstahl and marched to the Union Buildings, the former State President, Nelson Mandela, was not sympathetic and actually told the group that some of them were not soldiers but “criminals and rapists”, hence their ill-discipline (Interview with JK, a former MK soldier, Soweto, 11.10.2001). “The president’s response was decisive. No army, he stated emphatically, could tolerate indiscipline in its ranks. He gave the absentees two options – either leave the army forthwith or return within two weeks and face a court-martial. Most personnel chose to return to base and a lengthy series of court martials began” (Williams, 1995: 4). The President’s intervention was important for two reasons. First, it demonstrated his determination to ensure the orderly nature of the defence transition. Second, it earned him the respect of the General Staff, a fact that is critical during transition (Williams, 1995). However, it is incorrect to blame all forms of indiscipline on members of the Self-Defence Units. As early as 1984, the Stuart Commission reported incidents among MK cadres who rationalised indiscipline, dagga smoking, drinking and rape by the long stay in camps under abnormal conditions (Stuart Commission Report, 1984).

The last reason behind the disgruntlement of soldiers was that during the first six months, the integration process suffered due to an absence of clear and unified

leadership over the armed forces. “Insecurities were amplified by the fact that the leadership echelons were themselves being reshuffled, while newly appointed generals had to deal with the twin imperatives of overseeing the integration process and adapting to new roles, new colleagues and commanders, and new environments” (Williams, 1995: 4). Interviews with former MK soldiers revealed that they were not adequately briefed by their leaders about the nature of the integration agreements. As Cawthra (1997a) observes, MK members expected to be integrated as equals but found themselves being the objects of an assimilation exercise administered and staffed almost entirely by ex-SADF personnel. The fact that former SADF members continued to occupy their ranks and positions in the military indicated that the SADF was absorbing other armed forces. However, Masondo (1997) argues that this was only a perception, which he refers to as the “absorption theory”. Some observes warned long before integration began that instead of integration other forces would be absorbed by the SADF. Among proponents of this view were Major A.W. Dennis (Rtd.), formerly the Director of the British Military Assistance Overseas, and Nathan (1991).

5.4.3 Integration as the Absorption of other Armed Forces into the SADF

In 1992, Major A.W. Dennis (Rtd.) argued that the old established security force (SADF) would have the framework of administration, command and control upon which a single army could be constructed. This was based on BMATT’s experience of integrating different armed forces in Zimbabwe. However, an in-depth prediction of the outcome of integration was provided by Nathan (1991) a year earlier. He argued that other armed forces were too insignificant to have a major impact on the integration process. This was based on the fact that the SADF was a formidable force comprising a modern navy, army and air force. Furthermore, it was experienced in conventional warfare and had a highly developed infrastructure and technically advanced weaponry and equipment.²⁰ It was estimated to have an active force of 77,400 and reserves of 45,000 in 1990-91. In contrast to this, Nathan (1991) noted that MK was a guerrilla army with a total size estimated to be 10,000; in August 1991

²⁰ However, the SADF’s experience of conventional warfare was questionable because for many decades it had not been involved in this type of warfare, but took part in the low-intensity conflict in Southern Africa. It was operating at the level of counterinsurgency. It is thus important to distinguish the SADF’s conventional military training from its experience of war.

MK sources reported that there were 3,000 soldiers in camps outside South Africa and 800 cadres inside the country, excluding several thousand “passive deserters”, most of whom did not anticipate joining the post-apartheid defence force. The SADF was thus in a relatively strong position to influence both the new political dispensation and the new defence force. Nathan (1991) concluded that instead of a process of transformation of the SADF, MK would be absorbed.

An analysis of integration indicates that the size, power and managerial capacity, all of which were incomparable to that of its counterparts, ensured the dominance of former SADF officers during the integration process. This was evident in two areas. First, according to a decision of the JMCC early in 1994, facilities and infrastructure previously used by the SADF were used for the purposes of integration (Cawthra, 1997a). Second, former SADF training instructors were given the responsibility of conducting bridging training. This was because, in April 1994, the JMCC took a decision to deploy SADF instructors to the assembly areas to train APLA and MK soldiers. Initially MK wanted to run the demobilisation camps, but the demand fell away because of lack of capacity (Frankel, 1998). This was confirmed by General Reich: *“MK officers initially said that they wanted to run the assembly camp in Wallmannstahl but that fell off because they lacked the capacity to do so. Hence, we [SADF officers] came in set up a kitchen and an administrative structure to get the payment of daily allowances going”* (Interview with General Reich, Pretoria, 08.08.2000).

However, SADF dominance went beyond logistics. According to former APLA and MK soldiers, former SADF officers had the power to remove from the CPRs names of some APLA and MK soldiers based on their personal judgement. General Reich conceded that he was one of the former SADF officers who removed some of the aspirant soldiers from the APLA and MK CPRs.

Obviously if you were a member of the disadvantaged youth and you grew up in Soweto, you were without a job, and/or without proper education and you had friends who may have been members of APLA or MK, you are obviously going to throw your toys around and start thinking about reasons why you should have been there. I eventually started a committee to determine whether

people who were applying for integration or demobilisation gratuities were actually ex-combatants. What I did was that I went through the country, I started interviewing applicants. They said I was in such and such a camp in Angola and I said draw me the camp. Some of the people were able to draw me a camp and I said okay you qualify. Other people were telling lies. On my committee I had members of APLA, MK and BMATT. I had people from APLA and MK who were serving in those camps who really knew exactly what the camps looked like (Interview with General Reich, Pretoria, 08.08.2000).

During the interviews conducted by General Reich and his team, applicants were asked basic questions. Those who were intelligent enough to learn from their friends and relatives who had some military background (from APLA and MK), had a chance of joining the SANDF even if they did not possess any military training. General Reich pointed out that some of the applicants failed to answer some basic technical questions on weapons:

One day I met a group of guys from one township South East of Johannesburg. They all came together; there were about 30 to 40 of them. They all said they were members of MK and they were all trained in the Transkei. Then I called them in for one-on-one interviews. I asked them, what sort of training did you receive? They would say we shot with pistols, others would say we shot with rifles and trained with hand grenades. I said okay, what sort of pistol? Some of them could say Tokarev and I would say what millimetre? No they don't know. Some of them would say we shot pistols at night. I asked, over what distance? Some would say over 300 metres. You do not shoot with a pistol over 300 metres and you do not shoot with a pistol at night. I asked them, how do you use a hand grenade, and you know what they said to me? You take a hand-grenade and pull off the pin using your teeth and throw it away. This is because they saw a film in which a person pulled a hand-grenade like that. I asked them, have you ever pulled a hand-grenade pin with your teeth as yet? Because if you do that your teeth break. You know there were many people who were taking chances. Obviously I did not put their names down for integration. I did identify a number of people who really to my mind were ex-

combatants and I did add their names [onto the CPR] (Interview with General Reich, Pretoria, 08.08.2000).

The last sentence in General Reich's statement indicates the extent to which "ex-combatant" was a contested identity during the process of integration into the SANDF. Furthermore, it provides evidence of the extent to which former SADF soldiers were able to impose definitions on former members of APLA and MK.

However, Masondo (1994, 1997) defends the dominance of the SADF by arguing that in forming the new national defence force there were two options to consider. The first was to dissolve all the military formations at the time and to start from scratch, bringing in all the members of the different armed forces and making sure that they passed through the same processes in order to become members of the new defence force. The second option was to take the existing defence force, which was the SADF, and to use it as a base on which to build the new national defence force. Masondo (1997) argues that the second option was adopted for four reasons. First, historical necessity demanded that they use one of the armed forces as the base for creating a new national defence force. He further argues, confirming Dennis' (1992) argument, that pragmatism and the need for continuity compelled them to use SADF structures, rules and regulations. The second reason is that the period between February 11, 1990, and April 27, 1994, was wrought with political violence and divisions that had the potential to derail the delicate process of negotiations, and the police were not able to keep the situation under control:

In 1994 this country was on the verge of a perennial war [among] black people. In addition, the right-wingers were there; you needed a defence force and we used the defence force that was in existence.²¹ One of the advantages of the way we did things is that we continued; this country was never in difficulties because this defence force [SADF] continued to be there. Even as we were integrating, we continued to take people in. So it is the conditions that forced us (Interview with General Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

²¹ However, there is no evidence to suggest that if the National Peace-Keeping Force (NPKF, discussed in Chapter 4) had succeeded in maintaining peace during the elections, the SADF would have been disbanded. In fact, Masondo's (1997) discussion completely ignores the NPKF.

The third reason was to ensure that the SADF kept its members under control so that they were not used by elements that could be disruptive to the process of transition. This meant that SADF soldiers remained in their respective jobs and respective ranks as if the institution that employed them was not undergoing some transformation. The fourth reason for using the SADF as a base was that the SADF was the defence force of the government, one of the main players in the negotiations. “The fact that we could not integrate all the forces at the same time and under the same conditions created a serious problem. It strengthened the absorption theory and created some arrogance amongst some of the members of the former SADF” (Masondo, 1997: 59). The verification process was introduced in order to create a sense that former members of the SADF were also integrating:

The former SADF people, some of them thought they were swallowing other people; they behaved as if they were the organisation [that was being created]. I wrote about that and when I went out to talk to people I told them that I am not capable of being swallowed, I am too big, because you see, that is a dangerous thought. The perception might come from the fact that normally if we were doing things in a mechanical way, we should have removed everybody and started bringing them in one by one. But those types of things happen in the land of lotus-eaters, where it is always afternoon. We must have a base on which to work. The situation in this country was such that we needed to have a military. To deal with the perception we had, to bring in the integration of these people [former SADF]. This is what we call the Verification Process (Interview with General Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

General Masondo’s statement indicates that the verification of former members of the SADF (as discussed at the beginning of this section) was introduced as an afterthought in response to the arrogance displayed by former members of the SADF. The option of disbanding all military formations and creating a new defence force was preferred by former members of APLA and MK. Colonel Lucas Sigela, a former APLA commander, was one of the proponents of this position. “*Are we absorbed? ... If we were to integrate, SADF also had to report to Wallmannstahl. Don’t tell us about verification; what are you verifying because we are equal forces? Whites*

verifying themselves against APLA and MK?” (Interview with Colonel Sigela, Thaba-Tshwane, 12.08.2000). This position was also supported by Parks Mamabolo, a former MK soldier, now a successful businessman. Mamabolo was not happy with the compromises made by the ANC during negotiations. *“The Harare Declaration was betrayed. We were expecting that all armed forces would be disbanded in order to form a new defence force. In Namibia this was done; whoever came up with the Harare Declaration knew what he was doing”* (Interview with Parks Mamabolo, Johannesburg, 19.06.2001). The Harare Declaration provided that “[d]iscussions should take place between the liberation movement and the South African regime to achieve the suspension of hostilities on both sides by agreeing to a mutually binding cease fire” (*Declaration of the OAU Ad-hoc Committee on Southern Africa on the Question of South Africa*, 21.08.1989).

Kynoch (1996) argues that all the other armed forces have been welded onto the existing structures of the old SADF. His analysis is based on the fact that while former guerrillas were evaluated and trained before integration, SADF members did not have to undergo such a process. The SANDF remained a formal conventional military dominated by an experienced corps of Afrikaners (Kynoch, 1996). However, despite this and the complaints from former APLA and MK soldiers, General Masondo maintained that integration and the general transformation of the military was a relative success:

One of the things is that people do not know what happened in 1994. Even the government did not have the experience of governing. So it meant that it was a learning curve and when you are faced with a situation we were faced with, changing 300 years of history, what do you expect? I mean they [SADF people] did very well, they created structures, but those structures still had to learn. In fact it is only us in South Africa who believe that we did not do well with integration. This is because sometimes people are not objective about it. I mean, if you go to a chap who has been kicked out the defence force, some have been kicked out because they did wrong things. Some of the people you are referring to are those who thought that once they get their money, they would do big business, and they failed. So they must blame somebody for their failure (Interview with General Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

One of the outsiders who believe that South Africa has done well in terms of military transformation is James Winkates, a research professor of international affairs at the Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, in the United States. According to Winkates (2000), while accomplishments were slower than anticipated, the process of military transformation moved forward reasonably well despite some bumpy interludes. Hence he describes the progress as a “good beginning” (Winkates, 2000). However, an in-depth analysis of the process of forming the SANDF indicates that it was more incorporation than integration.

There are four reasons to support the argument that absorption instead of integration took place. First, members of other armed forces were allocated force numbers starting with “94” and “96” indicating the year in which they joined the SANDF, while former members of the SADF retained their old force numbers. This meant that there was a physical feature that distinguished the old members of the SADF from the new recruits. As Minister of Defence Mosiuoa Lekota correctly observed, “At a glance a commander can tell which troops come from the old SADF and which come from MK, APLA or former homelands. He can discriminate just by looking at the numbers” (cited in *Sunday Times*, 08.10.2000). Although the Minister of Defence did not use the word incorporation, he somehow acknowledged that absorption as opposed to integration took place. He stated that a new structure should have been established and the SADF dismantled, but that that process had not happened. “The old SADF remained in place exactly as it was, with the same [force] numbers and the same symbols. I don’t think it was done in bad faith. But something unequal has been done...” (cited in *Sunday Times*, 08.10.2000). The second reason to support the argument that APLA and MK were absorbed is the fact that former SADF members remained in place exactly as it was before the elections. Linked to this was the fact that the old SADF curriculum was retained and, according to Major Mbatha, concepts such as “terrorist” carried the same meaning as they did during the apartheid era. The third reason is that the bridging training and the overall process of “integration” was co-ordinated by former members of the SADF. Lastly, the relationship between former members of the SADF and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a further indicator that the SADF was absorbing other forces.

5.4.4 The Military and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The negotiations which established the sunset clauses took place in the context of increasing political violence, and this created fear of a civil war or a coup by the security forces. As a consequence, the ANC agreed to an amnesty which allowed human rights violators to evade criminal and civil action court cases on condition that they fully disclosed their crimes. Furthermore, they had to demonstrate that they had acted on the orders of a recognised political authority. Following the April 1994 elections, *The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act* (No. 34 of 1995) was enacted. It provided for the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), instead of the Nuremberg-type trials, to pursue human rights abuses. “It emerged as a compromise between the demand for justice (expressed by the democratic movement) and the demand for a blanket amnesty (made by the NP and its allies and functionaries)” (Marais, 2001: 300).

Those who applied for amnesty through the TRC included General Sipiwe Nyanda, then chief of staff of the SANDF, General Solly Shoke and Mr. Malekole Rasegatla of the North West Department of Safety and Security, all former MK members. They jointly applied “for amnesty for seven military operations which were carried out by MK’s Transvaal Urban Machinery Unit in the ’70s and ’80s” (*Sowetan*, 17.05.2000). In the same year that these former senior MK soldiers applied for amnesty, the PAC was fighting for the release of 408 former APLA cadres. The majority of these “political prisoners” had their applications for amnesty rejected by the TRC Amnesty Committee, which claimed that they had failed to make full disclosure for their activities (*Sowetan*, 27.11.2000). The criminal case against former APLA Director of Operations, Letlapa Mphahlele, was postponed on numerous occasions because prosecutors were waiting for the TRC to decide on his application for amnesty. However, by the time the TRC finally closed down, it was still demanding that Mphahlele make a full disclosure of his crimes, while he insisted that he had waged a just war that should not be treated as a crime (Mphahlele, 2002).

Contrary to APLA and MK’s relationship with the TRC, “former SADF members of all ranks adopted a pejorative attitude towards the Truth [and Reconciliation] Commission, and perceived every investigation into alleged military misconduct as

part of a campaign to dishonour either the institution or individuals” (Burger and Gould, 2002: 190). Despite the TRC’s findings about the SADF’s human rights violations on a “massive scale”, no individual SADF members applied for amnesty. Former members of the SADF insisted on making a group submission. To facilitate the process, the SANDF decided to establish a Nodal Point. In its report the Nodal Point stated:

The role of the South African National Defence (SANDF) in today’s submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is, and has been purely that of a facilitator. We are in the unique position that the SANDF as a Government Department and newly integrated forces, obviously cannot give any testimony on what took place during the previous era. The former South African Defence Force (SADF) no longer exists and therefore no person can officially speak on its behalf (SANDF Nodal Point, nd: 1).

The only exception was Jan Lourens, a former confidante of Dr. Wouter Basson (Burger and Gould, 2002). Basson was a former brigadier and head of the apartheid government’s ultra-secret chemical and biological warfare programme known as Project Coast. He was one of the 23 military officers forced to leave the SADF by De Klerk in late 1992 (as discussed in Chapter 4). The programme manufactured lethal poisons and biological agents for use against the apartheid state’s enemies, as well as lethal bacteria capable of killing entire populations. Basson never applied for amnesty and was reluctant to testify before the TRC until July 31, 1998, the very last day the TRC’s Human Rights Violations Committee could legally convene (Burger and Gould, 2002). A criminal trial of Wouter Basson “stretched over 30 months and was recorded in some 30,000 pages” (Burger and Gould, 2002: xi). Among other things he was accused of:

the murder of an estimated 200 Swapo detainees injected with Scoline and Tubarine before their bodies were thrown into the sea; a plot to murder Owamboland administrative official Peter Kalangula by smearing a toxic substance on the handle of his car door; a CCB plan to poison the water supply of Swapo refugee camps outside Windhoek with vibro cholera... the proposed murder of Ronnie Kasrils and Pallo Jordan while in exile in London, the death of Gibson Mondlane in Mozambique in

1987 and the death of Enoch ‘Knox’ Dlamini in Swaziland (Burger and Gould, 2002: 191).

However, after having been the subject of investigation for ten years, going through a trial that took 30 months and involved 153 witnesses and thousand of pages of supporting documents, Basson was acquitted on all 61 charges he faced (Burger and Gould, 2002). While incidents like these cannot be directly blamed for the tensions within the military, they indirectly led to some alienation among former APLA and MK soldiers. The alienation manifested itself in many ways, up to and including the killing of some white members of the SANDF.

5.5 Problems in the SANDF

5.5.1 Precursors to Problems in the SANDF

After going through the process of integration at various assembly camps, former APLA and MK soldiers were sent to various units identified through the “integration” process. *“When you enter the unit that is where the fight began. When you reach the unit one of the things you had to do was go for HIV/AIDS test without consent and no pre-test counselling. At a unit you were exposed to the reality that the enemy was in a strategic position. You were exposed to a culture called military even though it was Afrikaner culture”* (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000). A letter of appointment was issued once a soldier had left the assembly camp. *“Since conditions at Wallmannstahl were worse than in exile, people did not appeal their ranking because they did not want to return to Wallmannstahl* (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000). In order to be finally incorporated into the SANDF, former APLA and MK soldiers had to complete bridging training. Once soldiers signed the letter of acceptance, which meant acceptance of a rank, bridging training began.

When you received your rank, you were also given a list of bridging courses to register. If you fail these courses, it means you are not fit for the position you are in. There was a rule that said if you failed a course twice you had to leave the defence force. But it hasn’t really worked; in most cases we simply lower

your rank, if you decided not to leave; when we rationalise, we rationalise you
(Interview with General Andrew Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

A number of APLA and MK soldiers reported that during bridging training their instructors (all of them white former SADF soldiers) did not show any respect. Those attending training were told that “to be part of us you must first complete your training”; others were told “maybe you are not used to this, expect to fail”. Some former APLA and MK soldiers complained that the bridging courses were not transparent. They stated that the majority of former APLA and MK soldiers failed written tests and never got to see their scripts, but received verbal feedback only. In some cases they received grades without any sign that the scripts had been marked. Others also reported that in some courses everybody failed. General Masondo conceded that there were problems during integration but maintained that these were “normal problems”:

It is difficult when you have a problem and you want to look for an excuse. Some of the people did not do their work. It is true, time and again I went to the Assessment Board and argued that it is necessary to make sure that students see their scripts and reports and that they discuss their results with them. There were times when language was a problem, particularly in the army where the instructors tended to teach in Afrikaans, and we intervened and said that was not okay. Those were normal problems. When you do a mistake, it is true that it may be malicious but some people cannot accept that lekgowa²² can be ignorant. One of the problems is that neither we nor the SADF people had experience in integration. So all the mistakes that were committed should not be laid at the SADF's door. The mistakes that have happened are as a result of our mistakes as a collective (Interview with General Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

General Masondo maintained that all that happened during the integration process were teething problems which were later corrected. He emphasised that some of the problems were not unique to the military but could also exist in any other institution:

²² *Lekgowa* is a Setswana word meaning white person

If you go to a school or somewhere, you will find that an individual may not like another individual, or you may have those individuals who think about the past. So those are the things that will be there. This is not Genesis; you do not say 'let there be light' and light appears. These are functions of time, these are functions of conditions. We have had problems because sometimes you may find that the poor instructor was only taught in his mother tongue, so if he has to teach in English, he finds it difficult. So we had to change that. At the time, because chaps were still integrating, we didn't have black instructors. So as time went on we began to have them. The principal of the Army College is a black person from MK (Interview with General Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

General Masondo further argued that some of the problems arose because of the attitudes of former APLA and MK soldiers who thought that they brought freedom to the country and thus were entitled to lead. Other problems came from SADF people who assumed attitudes of superiority. Thus, both sides to the process of integration were blameworthy. However, the main threat to the integration process were racial tensions, reports of which appeared frequently in the press.

5.5.2 Racial Tensions in the SANDF

Earlier, during military negotiations, both MK and the SADF representatives agreed that “the *Defence Act* of 1957 and the Military Discipline Code (MDC) would remain in place for transitional purposes, but that both would have to be reviewed or amended in the course of time in the light of new socio-political conditions” (Frankel, 1998: 15). This was to create problems in the early days of the SANDF. A number of APLA and MK respondents who had either resigned or were dismissed from the SANDF reported that they were punished because they contravened the Military Discipline Code which they did not fully understand. Others were dismissed for insubordination after failing to obey instructions from their white seniors issued in Afrikaans. There were frequent media reports of incidents of alleged racial discrimination by white soldiers against their black counterparts. These alleged incidents took the form of unfair punishment, assaults, slurs, discrimination and unfair dismissals.

Former APLA and MK soldiers reported that they were subjected to racism more than any other group because of their history of participation in the liberation struggle. Some of the ex-combatants decided to resign due to alleged incidents of racism. In some cases former SADF officers instigated hostilities between former members of APLA and MK on the one hand and black SANDF recruits on the other:

There was a time when APLA and MK soldiers were accused of stealing a gun. They went on strike protesting against the punishment handed out. I remember seeing them in a group singing 'SADF iya sizonda' – SADF hates us. We were called in fully armed in the company of military police and dogs. APLA and MK soldiers were not armed; they were beaten and loaded onto military police vans (Interview with Jacob Mokgomase, former SANDF member, Johannesburg, 29.07.2000).

New SANDF recruits were separated from former APLA and MK soldiers not only during training but also in terms of facilities. According to Mokgomase, former APLA and MK never took meals at the same time as SANDF recruits, and they used different showers. *“Due to the separation, former APLA and MK soldiers used to isolate themselves and sing freedom songs. We envied them and wished we could join them and learn the songs that they were singing. However, we could not because of the separation (Interview with Jacob Mokgomase, former SANDF member, Johannesburg, 29.07.2000).* Despite the preferential treatment given to SANDF recruits, black SANDF recruits also experienced racism from both their white peers and from the former white SADF officers. In some cases the conflict got too serious: *“I came close to shooting a white colleague. At one stage a white colleague was thoroughly beaten for referring to one of our colleagues as a kaffir. We received a verbal reprimand and the assaulted colleague was told never to use the word again because since Mandela became a president blacks have achieved some status” (Interview with Jacob Mokgomase, Johannesburg, 29.07.2000).* Despite ongoing reports of racial tensions in the SANDF, General Masondo dismissed all allegations of racism:

If I am an officer, and I punish you for doing something wrong and you did something wrong, then you say I punish you because your are black, who is

racist? There are times maybe, sometimes whites may do something wrong to you, for a reason. But you see, I do not want to start there. I start from what did you do? What did he do? If he did something wrong to you, I don't care what he did it for. I punish him on the basis that he is a senior officer and that he has not done his job. It is a better way of looking at it. Because if I say, it is racism, and he happens to like some blacks outside the defence force, how can he be racist, because being racist he can't select people (Interview with General Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

However, BMATT was aware of racial tension and discrimination within the SANDF and had brought these incidents to the attention of the Ministry of Defence in a number of reports. “The British Military Advisory and Training Team warned of the ‘far-reaching’ implications of the hardening of race attitudes at the 1 SA Infantry Battalion in Bloemfontein by the military top brass towards former guerrillas in their ranks” (*Sunday Times*, 19.09.1999). The danger became manifest on September 16, 1999, when Lieutenant Sibusiso Madubela murdered seven of his white colleagues and a white civilian woman at Tempe military base near Bloemfontein, before being killed by a shot from one of his colleagues. Other shooting incidents subsequently took place at the Phalaborwa 7 SA Infantry Battalion (*Independent Online*, 11.07.2000) and Simonstown naval base where black soldiers shot and killed white SANDF members (*Sunday Times*, 24.09.2000). Incidents of shootings between black and white SANDF members were also reported during South Africa’s peace support operation in Burundi (*Independent Online*, 11.07.2000, 20.05.2005).

The mother of Lieutenant Sibusiso Madubela stated that he was a victim of racial abuse at the base. According to Madubela’s mother, her son had been stabbed by a white colleague at the base in a racial incident, but there was no record of the stabbing in Madubela’s file at the base. “My son has been a victim of racism at work. He was once stabbed by his white colleague and had been complaining for years that his white colleagues had been victimizing him” (cited in *Sunday Times*, 19.09.1999). However, four weeks before the Tempe killings, Madubela (who had graduated as a lecturer in racial tolerance), made a statement in front of his class of twenty students about how he had grown and learned to deal with his anger. “He said that he didn’t hate whites any more – although there were some people who were troublesome” (*Sunday Times*,

26.09.1999). At Madubela's funeral, "in contravention of SANDF directives, several soldiers, including some from Madubela's base, changed into APLA uniforms for the funeral" (*Sunday World*, 03.10.1999). SANDF Chief General Sphiwe Nyanda, Defence Minister Mosiuoa Lekota, and General Masondo all dismissed suggestions that the killings were related to racial tensions in the SANDF:

If somebody felt that he was not treated properly and it turns out that the people with whom he works are all white and he gets angry and shoots them, these whites could have been just irresponsible, but not racist. The problem is that in this country we still think in a racist fashion. Just about a few months ago a black chap in the Free State shot black people, about the same number as the white people that were shot at Tempe. Did it get the same coverage? If two young people fight, one is black and another one is black, and I come to them and say, 'why are you fighting?' and we solve it. But if it is between a black and white person, it receives national attention. It is true we cannot run away from history, but why use history to justify certain things? I mean, if I find two young people fighting, I should not look out for their colour; I should find out why they are fighting. Sometimes a criminal does something and simply because he does it on an opposite race then we lift that criminal act and give it a political texture. Why? I am not saying that there are no racists. If we continue to look at phenomena in racist spectacle we are not helping to counter racism (Interview with General Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

Following the Tempe killings, more reports of racial tensions in the SANDF began to appear frequently in the press. In September 1999, at the Potchefstroom base in the North West Province, white soldiers were allegedly reporting to work with their personal weapons, an act which is forbidden in the SANDF. It was reported that at the same military base, a senior officer made derogatory remarks about black soldiers during a parade before handing a letter of resignation to the North West command the next day. Furthermore, it was reported that the officer had told the assembled troops that he was a member of the *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging* (AWB – Afrikaner Resistance Movement) and that he would be leaving the army to serve the white right-wing organisation (*Sunday World*, 26.09.1999). In October 1999 black SANDF members at a military police base in Potchefstroom handed Parliament a petition

alleging racism at the base, including random demotions. Most of the disgruntled soldiers were former members of the Bophuthatswana Defence Force (BDF), APLA and MK.

The soldiers [claimed] that their white seniors had told them that blacks ‘can win everything but the army’. They also [alleged] they were told not to bother applying for courses because they would not get promotions, that they [got] summarily demoted, that they [faced] trumped-up charges and [had] ill-discipline records summarily inserted into their military files... These soldiers [said] in the petition that a senior once told them: ‘there are too many blacks in the unit and I will make a point that this situation changes’ (*Sunday World*, 03.10.1999).

On February 3, 2000, Rifleman Philip Matlou of 118 South African Infantry Battalion in Ellisras, Limpopo Province, was punched and throttled by the base’s Regimental Sergeant-Major Daniel Ferreira for wearing a sangoma’s bracelets. “I was still under salute when Ferreira punched me on my left eye. I fell to the ground and collapsed” (cited in *Sunday World*, 14.05.2000). Later, on July 17, 2000, during a visit to the General Support Base in Polokwane, Limpopo Province, Minister of Defence Mosiuoa Lekota stated that “there [were] officers who [used] their presence in the SANDF to sabotage the process of reconciling our people” (*The Star*, 18.07.2000). He noted that all those who came forward to air their grievances were black. The Defence Minister was beginning to acknowledge that there were some serious problems in the SANDF.

Following the Tempe shooting, a Ministerial Committee of Inquiry was established. The Setai Commission was chaired by Dr. Bethuel Setai; other members were Mrs. N. Lamani, former Senator and a Member of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), General J. Geldenhuys, retired Chief of the SADF, and Colonel Mbongwa, retired Colonel of the SANDF. The general objective of the commission was to investigate the circumstances relating to the killing of eight members of the SANDF at the Tempe Military Base on September 16, 1999. Furthermore, the commission was to ascertain whether racial, political and other sectarian discrimination or tension existed within the SANDF. According to the final report of the Setai Commission, submitted in June 2001, racism undoubtedly did exist in the SANDF and manifested itself in many

ways. These included: outright abusive language based on cultural origin; failure to empower members as well as active attempts to reduce their job responsibilities; subjecting members to assaults and intimidating them, to ensure that they did not report the cases to the police; excluding members from the life and activities of the unit by not letting them participate in decision-making processes; seemingly acting in an indifferent and disinterested manner where grievances of the black troops were concerned; summarily condemning black members and not giving them a second chance, even on minor infractions; not giving black members the benefit of the doubt and always saying that they were "taking a chance" when they tried to explain their predicaments; abusing rank and using it as a mask to give orders that were not fully understood or were regarded as irregular by a member; and highlighting small infractions and making them look big (*Ministerial Committee of Inquiry Report*, 2001).

The report further pointed out that many ranking blacks suffered exclusion and were given few responsibilities in the workplace. Some were subjected to social exclusion in an environment where whites were in the majority. In March 2001, Chief of the SANDF General Sipiwe Nyanda also acknowledged that racism was very much alive in the SANDF. "At present [2001] black soldiers who are promoted are sometimes used for menial jobs and often report to less experienced white officers" (*Sowetan*, 08.03.2001). This was also revealed by Major Mbatha, who argued that most commissioned black officers sat at their desks the whole day with no jobs because they were not allocated to their rightful positions, and that most senior black officers had to salute white juniors. Jacob Mokgomase, former SANDF soldier, took this further by stating that former APLA and MK soldiers were generally regarded as being the most junior members of the SANDF, to the extent that they had to salute new SANDF recruits, black and white. Due to the slow progress of transformation in some areas of the national defence force, seven years into democracy former members of APLA and MK complained that "white former SADF elements still [boasted] that they [were] in charge of the military" (*Sunday World*, 18.11.2001).

General Masondo maintained that the problems in the SANDF were blown out of proportion:

If you go to schools, you will find teachers who are good, teachers who are cruel, and teachers who are useful. I am not sure whether other departments in this country have integrated more than we have. I know they will look at us. We are the people who should have the worst tensions because we are the people who yesterday were prepared to shoot each other [in combat] but the situation does not show that (Interview with General Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

General Sipiwe Nyanda argued that even as he continued to root out racism in the military he would never disempower or restrain white officers from disciplining black subordinates “who did not put their shoulders to the wheel”. He accused some members of MK of trying to bring their culture of consultation between soldiers and officers into a conventional defence force “where it shouldn’t be” (*The Star*, 29.11.2000). In contrast to the position adopted by General Masondo, General Nyanda and Minister Lekota, former MK cadre General Binda argued that the process of integration was not properly constituted. The basis of his argument was that the vacuum left by the absence of a commissar system for former MK soldiers had not been filled. The MK commissar system allowed MK soldiers to raise their grievances with the commissar. According to General Binda, there were always some disagreements between MK commanders and commissars. This was because while commanders focused on military training, commissars were often concerned with the introduction of cultural and recreational activities like singing and drama to relieve the stress of military training. MK soldiers could take their grievances to their commissars 24 hours a day. According to General Binda, a commissar was like a mother to the soldiers. However, no equivalent structure existed in the SANDF. General Binda argued that, on the part of MK, the process of integration was not clearly thought through:

We went in blindly, we could blame ourselves that we were not ready. For us it was employment first. Things were hamstrung by what came out of CODESA. We needed a political understanding on our side why we needed to integrate. Those of us in senior positions are more concerned with strategic issues, for example, how to locate the defence force in the light of budget cuts. We are talking to ourselves and not to our soldiers on the ground. We need someone

to say “right about turn”. The black soldiers who are shooting at their white colleagues are not yet aware that the source of their problems is the compromises made by their leaders. If the leadership does not read between the lines, when that realisation happens, these soldiers will start shooting at their leaders (Interview with General Binda, Pretoria, 08.08.2000).

In his address to the Joint Standing Committee on Defence on October 12, 2001, on the Setai Commission final report, Minister Lekota said that in pursuit of the transformation goal some important steps had been taken, including addressing the disparity between mainly black troops commanded by predominantly white officers. He cited the first black woman appointed Officer Commanding of an Infantry Battalion, the first black Navy driver and first black fighter pilot as examples of achievement in this direction (Minutes of the Joint Standing Committee on Defence meeting, 12.10.2001).

However, while these changes form an important part of transformation, another important step is to change attitudes. “It is a truism that it is easier to change policies and structures than values and practices” (Cawthra, 2003: 41). Some scholars have observed that there is no internalised overarching culture and value system within the Department of Defence to build trust and respect between and among the different groups. This, it is argued, is a major weakness in the SANDF’s attempt to bridge the diversity within its ranks (Heinecken, 2005). According to Colonel Sigela, the general attitude of most of the white former SADF officers in the SANDF is that “*we built this defence force; we are not going to allow anyone to take it away from us*” (Interview with Colonel Sigela, Thaba-Tshwane, 12.08.2000).

5.6 The Termination of Integration and Demobilisation

5.6.1 An Official Evaluation of the Integration Process

In 2000, during an evaluation of the integration process, the Portfolio Committee on Defence identified a number of irregularities. They were uncovered by an audit carried out by the Auditor-General, who was tasked with the responsibility of monitoring the integration process of former liberation soldiers into the ranks of the SANDF. The purpose of the audit was to establish whether it could be accepted that integration had taken place reasonably. Some of the irregularities were that two individuals were identified as having integrated into the SANDF, demobilised and then re-integrated at a later stage. Despite an earlier agreement that pseudonyms would not be used for integration, three individuals were identified as having been integrated into the SANDF under pseudonyms (Minutes of the Portfolio Committee on Defence meeting, 13.09.2000). Other irregularities included:

- Two out of 42 applicable cases were identified where fraudulent military service certificates had resulted from a forged signature on the certificate.
- Three instances were uncovered where duplicate demobilisation payments were made.
- Thirteen out of an applicable 119 integrated members did not know their combat names. This was attributed to the fact that some people had used unclaimed combat names and the fact that confusion as to their 'file name' has resulted from frequent changes to combat names.

During the process of investigation, which focused on the integration process from its inception, 1,235 individuals were identified and interviewed. Ten per cent of names (i.e. 2,994 of the total of 29,939) on the Certified Personnel register and 532 files were used for the study. The process revealed that 6 per cent of MK names were not reflected in the CPR, while for APLA the number was 33 per cent. Furthermore, 49 MK names (from the sample) were not reflected in the consolidated CPR; for APLA the figure was 37. The investigation further revealed that although some members' names appeared on the original CPR, they were missing from the consolidated CPR.

This made members of the Portfolio Committee on Defence doubt the integrity of the consolidated CPR (Minutes of the Portfolio Committee on Defence meeting, 13.09.2000). The Portfolio Committee on Defence accepted that a limited amount of fraud had occurred and that the SANDF should proceed as if the process has been adequate. However, a provision was made for the law to take its course when cases of fraud were discovered. It was accepted that for objective reasons liberation movements were not able to keep records that are as good as government's. The Portfolio Committee on Defence also concluded that it would be extreme and unwarranted to spend R40 million on further investigation²³ of the full population of NSF soldiers who had integrated (Minutes of the Portfolio Committee on Defence meeting, 13.09.2000). No cost breakdown was provided to explain this huge amount.

At the beginning of the integration process in 1994, it was agreed that Non-Statutory Force members had to integrate within a reasonable time. In 2001, the *Termination of Integration Intake Bill* [6 of 2001] was passed, aimed at terminating the processes of integration and demobilisation. The assumption was that six years constituted a reasonable time to bring integration to an end. The Bill was intended to provide for amnesty cases and for others who, for some exceptional or other valid reason, had not yet integrated. On February 27, 2001, the Portfolio Committee on Defence heard that there were an additional 262 members on the CPRs of APLA and MK who could be considered for any proposed final intake. The number excluded 82 former members of APLA who were reported to be either in prison but not on the APLA CPR (23 members), or in prison but not on Prisoners list or CPR or students from abroad and not on the APLA CPR list (Minutes of the Portfolio Committee on Defence meeting, 27.02.2001). The cost of integrating 262 members at R69,991 per person was estimated at R18,338 million, excluding the costs of logistics, uniforms, accommodation, food and training. Again no cost breakdown was provided to explain this huge amount. These costs, it was suggested, would have to be offset against the 2001/2002 recruiting budget which was intended to recruit 1,600 school leavers into the SANDF; their numbers would have to be reduced according to the number of NSF members who integrated. The Department of Defence argued that the South African Army did not have the capacity, budget or resources to handle mass intakes of NSF

²³ One of the options that were debated was to conduct a full audit of the entire integrated population.

members or to provide bridging and other training for large numbers of integrates. It had only planned to deal with a final intake of approximately 200 NSF members during 2001 (Minutes of the Portfolio Committee on Defence meeting, 27.02.2001).

At the Public Hearing on October 4, 2001, to discuss the Termination of Integration and Demobilisation legislation, the Portfolio Committee on Defence invited the submission to the Committee of the names of bona fide MK and APLA members whose names did not appear on the Certified Personnel Register. Lists containing 4,033 names were submitted on November 4, 2001. The PAC/APLA had submitted a list of 1,419 names and MK a list of 2 614 names of persons whom they claimed were genuine former APLA and MK members whose names did not appear on the CPRs. However, in terms of the legislation, a member of the NSF could not be considered for integration or demobilisation if her/his name did not appear on the CPR. As a consequence, the legislation to end integration and demobilisation was promulgated without any amendment to provide for the addition of further names to the CPRs (Department of Defence, 2004). The *Demobilisation Amendment Act* (No. 43 of 2001) and the *Termination of Integration Intake Act*, (No. 44 of 2001) formally and legally brought the integration process of Non-Statutory Force members to an end as at December 31, 2002.

On May 27, 2003, a final report on integration was presented to the Portfolio Committee on Defence. However, the report was rejected as a final document because there were “many gaps” which included the results of the auditing of ranking (Minutes of the Portfolio Committee on Defence, 27.05.2003). The final and revised integration report was presented to the Portfolio Committee on November 9, 2004. According to the report, the integration process of the Statutory Force members in all the services had been successfully completed, in accordance with Sections 224 and 236 of the *Interim Constitution* of 1993. The South African Air Force completed the verification of all records on October 31, 1999, and the South African Navy on October 31, 2000. The South African Army and the South African Military Health Service completed the verification process of former SADF and TBVC members on June 30, 2001 (Department of Defence, 2004). In terms of APLA and MK a total of 9,809 demobilisation gratuities had been paid out, including 677 gratuities paid to dependants of deceased former NSF members. The total amount paid in respect of

demobilisation grants amounted to R242 million. These payments were made since the implementation of the *Demobilisation Act*, 1996, and ended on December 31, 2002, in terms of its subsequent amendments (Department of Defence, 2004).

5.6.2 The SANDF after Ten Years of Democracy

The final integration report submitted on November 9, 2004, indicates that a total of 114,956 uniformed members from the seven different armed forces integrated into the SANDF between 1994 and November 2002. From a total of 42,020 former members of APLA and MK (9,864 and 32,156 respectively) placed on the CPR between April 1994 and October 11, 1996, a total of 21,212 (6,421 APLA and 14,791 MK) soldiers integrated into the SANDF, while 9,809 were demobilised. In terms of the statutory forces, 82,705 were from the SADF and 11,039 from the TVBC forces (see Table 5.1). However, by the time the final report was submitted, only 56,192 were still serving in the SANDF. The breakdown was as follows: 4,244 former APLA members, 9,313 former MK members, 37,233 former SADF members and 5,402 former TVBC members.

Table 5.1: Composition of the SANDF: 1994 and 2004 Compared

FORMER FORCE	TOTAL ON CPR (1994+)	DEMOBILISED	INTEGRATED	STILL IN SERVICE 2004
APLA	9864 (6,000+3,864 added on or before 11.10.1996)	9,809 (breakdown not provided)	6,421	4,244
MK	32156 (27,801+4,355 added on or before 11.10.1996)		14,791	9,313
SADF	82,705	Not Applicable	82,705	37,233
TVBC	11,039	Not Applicable	11,039	5,402
TOTAL	135,764	9,809	114956	56,192

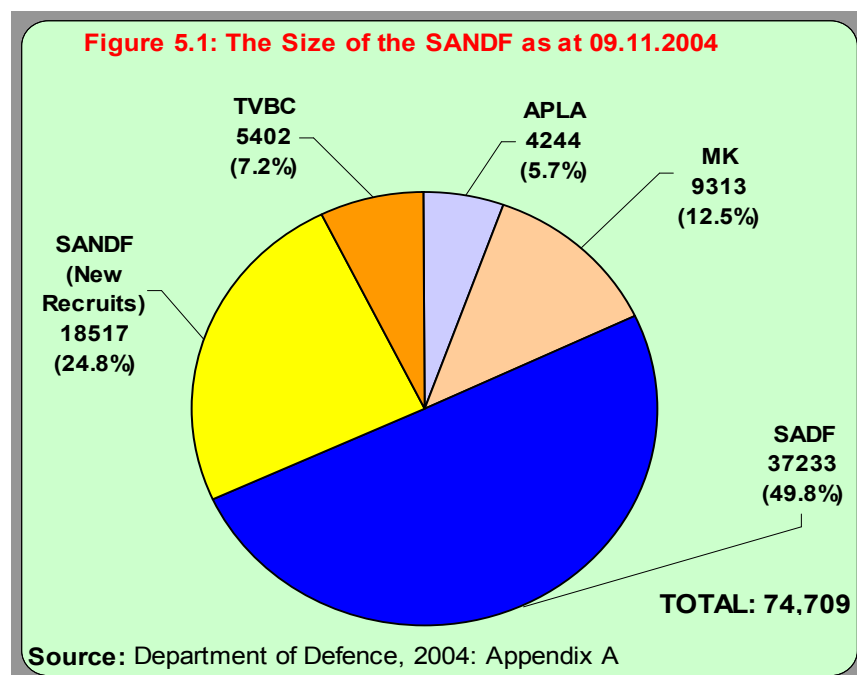
As Table 5.2 indicates, by November 2004 a total of 58,764 had left the SANDF through natural attrition including dismissals, death, the expiry of contracts, resignations, retirement and voluntary severance packages. This, combined with the

9,809 former APLA and MK soldiers who were “demobilised” in a parallel process, meant that the SANDF had “lost” a total of 68,573 soldiers. This excludes a total of 10,999 former APLA and MK soldiers whose names were on the CPRs of their respective forces but who never turned up for either integration or demobilisation.

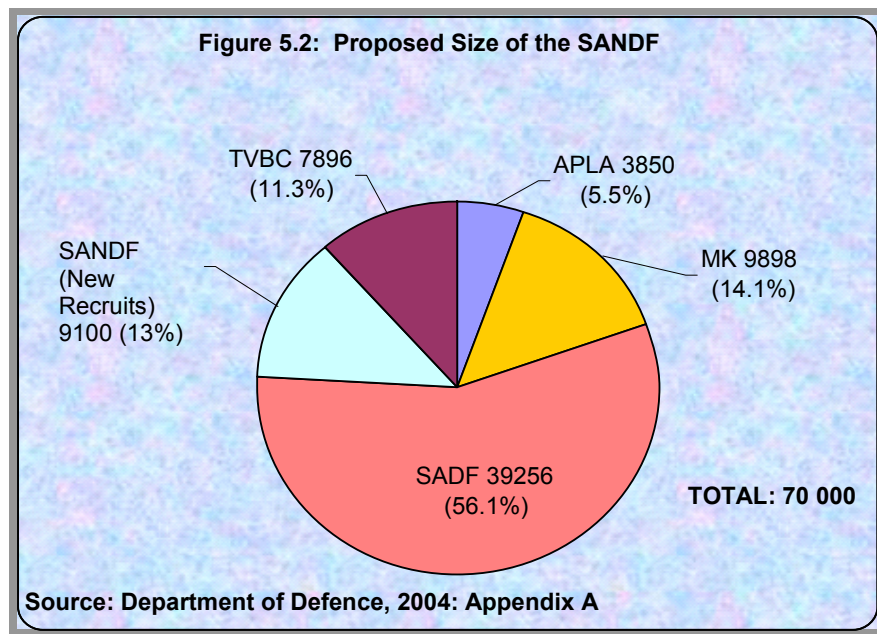
Table 5.2: Integration and Losses as at November 2004

FORMER FORCE	INTEGRATED	STILL IN SERVICE 2004	LOSSES
APLA	6,421	4,244	2,177
MK	14,791	9,313	5,478
SADF	82,705	37,233	45,472
TVBC	11,039	5,402	5,637
TOTAL	114,956	56,192	58,764

At the time of the submission of the final integration report in November 2004, the total number of uniformed members of the SANDF from both the integration process and the recruitment of school leavers stood at 74,709. As indicated in Figure 5.1, this included 18,517 SANDF recruits who made up 25 per cent of the integrated SANDF. This was because, as stated in section 5.3, the recruitment of school leavers with no military background ran concurrently with the integration of the seven armed forces. Former members of the SADF accounted for half of the total number of members of the new SANDF in November 2004.



There are two important points to note about the total number of uniformed members of the SANDF as indicated in Figure 5.1. First, the total number was only 4,709 above the total envisaged in the Defence Review (1998). In terms of budget allocation and the average personnel cost per individual, a figure of 70,000 (including civilians) was considered a viable full-time component for the Department of Defence, as indicated in Figure 5.2 (Department of Defence, 1998b). Second, the Department of Defence had managed to get rid of 58,764 soldiers who had previously integrated without embarking on a process of large-scale demobilisation. This meant that rationalisation, as far as it concerned the reduction of the size of the SANDF, was becoming less important.



Although the integration process was formally concluded on December 31, 2002, bridging training was still in progress when the final report was submitted in November 2004. A number of former NSF personnel remained within Bridging Training Programmes in some of the Services, with a 100 per cent completion rate anticipated by the end of 2005.

- All the former NSF members in the SA Army had completed their bridging training as well as their Corps Bridging Training and thus were all qualified in accordance with their letters of appointment.
- The SA Air Force had 746 serving former NSF members. Forty-two members were expected to complete their Bridging training. Nine members were busy with courses. The SA Air Force was 96 per cent complete with Bridging Training.
- The Chief of the Navy introduced new processes to expedite Integration and Bridging Training in the SA Navy. All former NSF members in the Navy had completed their basic Bridging Training and 55 were expected to complete their Progression Training during 2005.
- In the South African Military Health Service only 53 former NSF members still had to complete their Basic, Development and Functional Bridging courses. These courses were expected to be completed during 2005 (Department of Defence, 2004).

As discussed earlier, some APLA and MK soldiers such as Major Mbatha complained about being under-ranked. In late 2000, the Department of Defence embarked on a process to identify former NSF members who may have been prejudiced during the first integration intakes at Wallmannstahl, Hoedspruit and De Brug because the processes followed then had not been refined through experience. An audit was carried out of 2,015 serving, former NSF members. This led to the SANDF effecting the rank adjustments of 384 members who were identified as having been under-ranked (Department of Defence, 2004). The 384 members were re-ranked as follows:

- 205 Non-Commissioned Officers in the rank groups Corporal to Warrant Officer II were re-ranked to Non-Commissioned Officers in the rank levels Sgt to Warrant Officer II.
- 106 Non-Commissioned Officers in the rank levels Corporal to Warrant Officer II were re-ranked as Officers to rank levels Lieutenant to Lieutenant Colonel.
- 73 Officers in the rank levels Lieutenant to Major were re-ranked to Officers' levels Captain to Lieutenant Colonel.

At the time of the submission of the final integration report, a robust audit trail was being conducted by the Auditor-General to ensure that only genuine and properly motivated cases were re-ranked in accordance with departmental, financial and Department of Defence human resources guidelines (Department of Defence, 2004). While members of the JMCC agreed that rationalisation would be the last phase of the process of forming the SANDF, the phase did not form part of the agenda on the day the final integration report was submitted. Thus, demobilisation was postponed. As stated earlier, postponed demobilisation refers to a demobilisation-reintegration process that has been clearly announced although the actual implementation is not quite clear (Kingma, 2001).

5.7 Analysis: Demobilisation as a Process of Exclusion

5.7.1 Introduction

The key questions of this study are: why and how was the demobilisation process conducted and what were its consequences? As stated in the introduction of this chapter, the process of demobilisation was linked to the restructuring of the armed forces. It included the integration of seven armed forces, as has been described in sections 5.2 through 5.6. The process of integration was to have been followed by a reduction in the size of the integrated SANDF, a process known as rationalisation (this in essence meant demobilisation). However, for various reasons that will be explored below, rationalisation was indefinitely postponed. In this context, some former APLA and MK soldiers were released through a process known as demobilisation. To address the first question, this section will first focus on the factors that necessitated a reduction in the size of the SANDF (rationalisation), which was indefinitely postponed. Second, the section will focus on why the demobilisation of former APLA and MK members was conducted despite the postponement of rationalisation. Since the broader rationalisation was indefinitely postponed, in addressing the second question the section will focus on how the release of former APLA and MK soldiers from the SANDF was conducted.

5.7.2 Reasons for Demobilisation in the SANDF

Though the context of the demobilisation-reintegration processes varied from country to country, it is possible to identify four factors that led to the demobilisation of soldiers in different countries. First, a peace accord may be reached between fighting parties as was the case in Angola, Namibia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, where parties to conflict agreed to stop fighting, demobilise their respective armies and create a smaller new national army (Colletta, Kostner and Wiederhofer, 1996; Kingma and Sayers, 1995; Porto and Parsons, 2003; World Bank, 1993). Namibia is an exception because there the armed groups were completely disbanded before independence (Colletta, Kostner and Wiederhofer, 1996). The second factor that can lead to demobilisation is the defeat of one of the fighting parties. For example, in Ethiopia the Ethiopian Popular Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) seized power and established the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) in May 1991, followed by the demobilisation of the defeated Derg army (Colletta, Kostner and Wiederhofer, 1996). Third, demobilisation may take place as a result of the perceived improvement in the security situation. This is what happened in Uganda, several years after the end of conflict. The new government took power in 1986, but an Act of Parliament to demobilise 50,000 soldiers was passed in 1992 (Kingma and Sayers, 1995). Lastly, demobilisation can take place due to the shortage of adequate funding and the perceived economic and development impact of the conversion of (human and material) resources to development. For example, in Uganda, apart from the perceived improvement in security, economic constraints influenced the decision to demobilise (Kingma and Sayers, 1995). It was expected that demobilisation would lead to a significant reduction in military expenditure (Kingma, 1998).

In South Africa demobilisation was anticipated because of two broad reasons. First was the perceived and real improvement in the national and regional (military) security environment. During apartheid, South Africa's military involvement in Namibia and Angola constituted an important element in South Africa's political policy, determined first by "the ultimate security of the Republic of South Africa in relation to regional security; secondly, South Africa's own domestic political considerations; finally the political situation in Namibia itself" (Du Pisani, 1988: 18). In the early 1990s, there was recognition that there was no conventional military threat

in the short-to-medium term. This was because (with the exception of Angola) a number of South Africa's neighbours had ended internal armed conflicts by 1994. Internally, the end of apartheid also meant that there was no longer any reason to fear attack from those fighting to overthrow the regime (Cawthra and Chachiua, 2004). The second reason for demobilisation in South Africa was the perceived economic and developmental impact of a reduction in defence expenditure. This was to be achieved, among other strategies, through a reduction in SANDF numbers. In the context of an improved security environment, the government acknowledged that the greatest threats to the South African people were socio-economic problems like poverty, unemployment, poor education, the lack of housing and the absence of adequate social services, as well as the high level of crime and violence. Since there was some recognition that some crime was rooted in deprivation, it was logical for the newly elected government "to prioritise socio-economic development strategies as a long-term approach towards the resolution of internal security" (Cawthra and Chachiua, 2004: 106).

The reduction of the defence expenditure in general and the size of the SANDF in particular made sense because, six years into democracy, South Africa was still faced with a number of developmental challenges. According to a UNDP (2000) report:

- Approximately 18 million or 45 percent of South Africans lived in poor households which earned about R352.53 per month per adult. In mainly rural provinces, the figure was above 50 percent.
- 61 percent of Africans were poor compared to 1 percent of whites.
- Women were more likely to be poor than men.
- South Africa was ranked as the third most unequal society in the world.
- About 42 percent of economically active women were unemployed, compared to 27 percent of men.
- Limpopo Province, Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal were the poorest provinces while Gauteng and Western Cape were the richest.
- Three in five children lived in poor households.
- The largest proportion of those in the top income quintile were whites (65 percent of households) and Indians (45 percent). Only 17 percent of coloureds and 10 percent of

Africans earned incomes sufficient to put them into that category (UNDP, 2000, <http://www.undp.org.za/sahdr2000/balancesheet.pdf>).

Due to all these developmental challenges there was a compelling need to reallocate state resources to development, initially to be achieved through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and later replaced by the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macro-economic policy. The challenge was to rationalise the SANDF and contain military spending without undermining the country's core defence capability in the short or long term (*White Paper on Defence* (1996). The rationalisation of the SANDF meant the demobilisation of soldiers employed by the “integrated” national defence force.

5.7.3 Factors Influencing the Postponement of Rationalisation

The *Interim Constitution* (1993) provided for three phases in the formation of the SANDF – integration, consolidation and rationalisation. Integration consisted of two aspects: “the physical aspect of bringing together the forces and that of welding them together by developing attitudes of belonging, oneness, loyalty and a common sense of purpose” (Masondo, 1997: 57). This would be followed by a process of consolidation, which was the phase of preparing members for various positions in the SANDF. This included the completion of bridging training by all members of APLA and MK and the staffing of the different Arms of the Service and divisions of the SANDF. The consolidation phase was also meant to allow the SANDF to assess the staffing of all the Arms of the Service and divisions. This would ensure that the right quantity and quality of human resources were put in the right places. The staggered integration process resulted in an overlap with the consolidation phase (Department of Defence, 1998b).

The last phase in the process of forming the SANDF was rationalisation, which was the “reduction of the Regular Force to approved force levels through, *inter alia*, the retrenchment of military personnel following integration” (*White Paper on Defence*, 1996: 23). During this phase, soldiers who found themselves in overstaffed divisions would be released so as to meet the required size of those divisions. Those who were ageing in divisions (such as the Infantry Battalion) that required younger staff

members would also be released. In this sense rationalisation was not only about reducing the size of the SANDF (down-sizing), but also about achieving the right balance, hence the concept of “right-sizing” (discussed in sub-section 5.7.7). During military negotiations, the SADF accepted that rationalisation would begin only after the completion of integration (Frankel, 1998). Rocky Williams confirmed that there was an agreement that rationalisation would follow the completion of integration:

The decision to demobilise was made before the beginning of the integration process. We expected that everyone would report for integration. We expected 137,000 people to be brought together and once we had mustered them, once we had trained them, we would then demobilise. The broader commitment was that yes, we needed to down-size but would only do that after integration had been completed; this would be done in a major way. We were expecting integration to be a three-year process (Interview with Rocky Williams, Pretoria, 28.07.2000).

Rationalisation in the Department of Defence was part of a broader process aimed at reducing the size of the public service. The apartheid government had over the years created an inflated and fragmented public service. At the end of the multi-party negotiations, eleven systems of government and administration existed, each focusing on a particular geographic area. The Republic of South Africa could be regarded as the core system. There were also the so-called independent states of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei (TBVC states), and the self-governing territories of Gazankulu, Kangwane, Kwa-Ndebele, Kwa Zulu, Lebowa and QwaQwa. Each of the ten systems of government and administration contained the three basic components of systems of governance: a legislative assembly, a political executive and an administrative organisation staffed by public servants. Each of the eleven systems also had its own public service. The *Interim Constitution* (Act 200 of 1993) envisaged a single public service deployed between a central administration and nine new provincial administrations.

As stated in Chapter 4, Joe Slovo’s sunset clauses made provision for all public servants in the employ of all former governments to continue in their respective jobs, with the retention of certain terms and conditions of service guaranteed. As a

consequence, there was large-scale redundancy in the public service due to the amalgamation of different public administrations. In terms of the military, Section 236(2) of the *Interim Constitution* (1993) made provision for all members of the statutory forces to continue in employment, as had been the case prior to the elections. To deal with the inflated public service (including the Department of Defence), a Voluntary Severance Package (VSP) was initiated to allow public service workers to voluntarily leave the public service. In the Defence Force the VSP was more attractive to members who had served for longer periods because of unclaimed leave, which resulted from long periods of military operations in the region during the SADF's regional destabilisation campaign in countries such as Angola and Namibia (Interview with Tsepe Motumi, Pretoria, 18.04.200).

In the Department of Defence, rationalisation meant down-sizing the military, which in essence was demobilisation. In explaining and defining rationalisation in the defence force, Reich (2000) argued that personnel structures of the Defence Force had to be made affordable. In 2000, 57 per cent of the defence budget was spent on personnel, which according to Reich was unacceptable and untenable. The plans at the time to re-align the total defence budget to a ratio of 40 per cent for personnel, 30 per cent for capital expenditure and 30 per cent for operating costs implied that the personnel strength of the DOD had to be reduced as part of the transformation process (Reich, 2000). In terms of budget allocation and the average personnel cost per individual, a figure of 70,000 was considered a viable full-time component for the Department of Defence (Department of Defence, 1998b). The calculation of the severance package did not make it a viable option for members and employees with limited years of pensionable service. The main problem with the VSP was that because it was also based on the pension fund contribution, which was the major ingredient, it was only beneficial to the former statutory force members and disadvantaged former non-statutory force members (Masondo, 1997). As a method of rationalisation, the VSP was ineffective due to its voluntary nature. In the context of the high unemployment rate, it was unlikely to be an option for many soldiers, most of whom might have lacked the skills needed in a civilian economy.

It was expected that the size of the Department of Defence would also be reduced through natural attrition which included deaths, dismissals, resignations and the

expiry of contracts. On expiry of the short-term and medium-term contracts, based on behaviour or course progress or proven inability to adapt to the standards and expectations of military service, some contracts would not be renewed. It was recognised that contract expiry would lessen force reductions:

On expiry of a service contract, members who wish, and who have performed well, may be afforded the opportunity to apply for a further contract with the DoD. The Non-renewal of contracts in respect of those members who, by their behaviour or course progress, have proven their inability to adapt to the standards and expectations of military service, coupled to ceasing of recruitment in such ranks, will lessen any force reductions at such levels when final actions are being implemented (Department of Defence, 1998a).

The Minister of Defence approved all non-renewals of short-term contracts. A board which included BMATT made recommendations to the Minister according to a set of criteria. “Most of the recommendations for not re-enlisting members [concerned] those members who had adverse disciplinary records” (Department of Defence, 1998b: 77). However, it is worth noting that the contract system was used against former members of APLA and MK, evident in the fact that the majority of them were employed on short-term contracts. The April 1996 figures indicated that 12,473 (or 84 per cent of 14,869) former APLA and MK soldiers were employed on short-term contracts as indicated in Table 5.3:

Table 5.3: Non-Statutory Forces Personnel Statistics as at April 15, 1996

SERVICE SYSTEM	APLA			MK			TOTAL		
	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL
Long-Term	148	83	231	1147	312	1690	1295	395	1690
Medium-Term	155	7	162	498	37	697	653	44	697
Short-Term	2649	165	2814	8956	703	9659	11605	868	12473
Civilians	0	0	0	5	4	9	5	4	9
TOTAL	2952	255	3207	10606	1056	11662	13558	1311	14869

Source: Department of Defence Personnel Office, 1996

The employment of a large number of former APLA and MK soldiers on short-term contracts would accelerate the process of reducing the size of the SANDF. However, the abuse of the contract system was uncovered by the Integration Committee (IC).

When IC examined these, it was people who had been in the NSF for more than seven years. It was then agreed that all people with seven or more years in the NSF before 1994 should be in long term contract. Discussions were held to remove those that have been four years or three years before 1994 from short term to medium term or long term. Agreement has been reached and those with four years are in the long term and those with two and three years in the medium term (Masondo, 1997: 62).

The intervention of the IC bore fruit, evident in the fact that by October 2001, 39 per cent (5,942 out of a total of 15,129) of former APLA and MK soldiers were employed on long-term contracts, 57 per cent (or 8,649) on medium-term contracts and only 4 per cent (a mere 538) were employed on short-term contracts (Department of Defence Personnel Office, 15.10.2001).

5.7.4 Postponed Demobilisation: Employer-Initiated Retrenchment

The main demobilisation (rationalisation) strategy in South Africa was the Employer-Initiated Retrenchment (EIR). It was envisaged that the bulk of retrenchments would take place before the year 2000. To achieve this, by 1998 a Personnel Rationalisation Work Group (PRWG) had been established within the Department of Defence to oversee the rationalisation process. “The composition of the PRWG [included] all constituent forces and a representative of the Secretary for Defence and BMATT, and [was] aimed at ensuring a transparent process within the framework of fair labour practices” (Department of Defence, 1998b: 79). There were five principles governing retrenchments:

- The selection criteria used for deciding who would be retrenched would be as objective as possible
- No member would be considered for retrenchment while disciplinary action against the member was contemplated, or was in progress, or he/she was detained pending disciplinary action, suspended from service, or was serving a sentence of

detention for a first offence

- Consistency in the application of a general SANDF policy would be maintained in the DoD.
- Members who were still participating in bridging training while the retrenchment process took place would not be considered for separation unless the member was not capable of performing at the required level to meet the course requirements
- Irrespective of his/her period of service in the SANDF, all members and employees would be entitled to at least one month's notice prior to their last day of service in the SANDF (Department of Defence, 1998b: 79).

In order to facilitate the process of rationalisation by 2000, a special infrastructure had been established in the form of regionally-located Base Advice Centres (BACs) (Reich, 2000). The BACs were aimed at addressing the problems of uncertainty and stress resulting from retrenchment. At BACs soldiers would receive advice and details regarding leave, gratuity, pension, resettlement costs, subsidies, state guarantees, housing (state/private), study contracts, medical care and medical continuation, kit records, departmental debts, pending military Public Service Act Personnel legal actions, injury administration, medals and awards, salaries, mainframe data, et cetera. There would also be briefings and seminars on a wide range of topics such as personal financial planning. It was envisaged that BACs would provide a service during normal working hours, but emergency situations would be dealt with by personnel whose telephone numbers were available from the local after-hours duty personnel (Reich, 2000). However, the EIR was never implemented, and this meant that demobilisation in South Africa was postponed.

There were four reasons for the postponement of EIR. First, as late as February 2001 a total of 13,117 APLA and MK soldiers had not reported for integration (Minutes of the Portfolio Committee on Defence meeting, 27.02.2001). In June 2001 General Masondo reported to the Joint Standing Committee on Defence that he had been asking both the ANC and the PAC to identify the APLA and MK people who had not reported for integration, but that the response rate to this request was very low

(Minutes of the Joint Standing Committee on Defence meeting, 13.06.2001). The main reason for the discrepancy between the number of people on the CPRs and the number of people who actually came forward was that APLA and MK lists were inflated for the purposes of negotiations (Interview with Tsepe Motumi, Pretoria, 18.04.2000). In his presentation before the JSCD, General Masondo reported that some people were enlisted fraudulently. Some senior officers had enlisted people who were not members of any military establishment (Minutes of the Joint Standing Committee on Defence meeting, 13.06.2001). The non-appearance of these soldiers during integration significantly reduced the anticipated number of members of the SANDF.

The second reason for the postponement of the EIR was the rate of natural attrition in the SANDF. In March 2000, Brigadier General Reich reported to members of the Portfolio Committee on Defence that, with the integration of the statutory and non-statutory forces, the SANDF peaked at 102,000. Furthermore, by means of natural attrition, the voluntary severance package and resignations, the figure had come down to about 83,000 (Minutes of the Portfolio Committee on Defence meeting, 07.03.2000). In his February 2001 report, Brigadier J.J. Keeling, Commander of the BMATT, stated that the delay in the start of rationalisation/retrenchment had been very beneficial. This was because concerns about releasing 20,000 soldiers from the SANDF had abated. The report pointed out that natural attrition accounted for about 3,000 a year across the SANDF (*BMATT Report*, February 2001). In July 2001, Motumi observed that given the rate of losses through natural attrition it was unlikely that the EIR would ever be implemented (Interview with Tsepe Motumi, Pretoria, 01.07.2001). For example, in April 1996, the SANDF employed a total of 101,353 people (24,176 civilians and 77,177 uniformed members) (Department of Defence Personnel Office, 15.04.1996), but by October 2001 the number had been reduced to 77,182 people (16,946 civilians and 60,236 uniformed members) (Department of Defence Personnel Office, 15.10.2001).

Thirdly, rationalisation was a serious political issue which had to be treated with some sensitivity. According to Tsepe Motumi, Parliament rejected rationalisation because it would largely affect black soldiers who made up the majority of members of the

SANDF. It was anticipated that retrenchments would lead to tensions and accusations of discrimination, hence the idea was rejected.

Lastly, with the recognition of military trade unions, Members of Parliament wanted to avoid protracted labour disputes which might result from any announcement of the retrenchment of a large number of people from the Department of Defence (see for example, *The Sunday Independent*, 24.07.2005; *Independent Online*, 24.07.2005). “Members of Parliament agreed with the idea of rationalisation, but the Department of Defence was told to explore alternative methods” (Interview with Tsepe Motumi, Pretoria, 11.08.2005).

5.7.5 Demobilisation: The Exclusion of Former APLA and MK Soldiers

There is a tendency for some scholars to present the demobilisation process as if it was planned and implemented as part of military transformation. Scholars in this category include Shelton and Alden (1998), who argue that phase one of the military transformation process included the integration of different forces and the education and training of all members of the new SANDF to meet international standards of competence and professionalism. In their analysis, they observe that phase two of the process involved the voluntary demobilisation of former liberation force members as well as former SADF members opting for a severance package. “The final phase is expected to include a major rationalisation process in accordance with the new force design outlined in the recently approved Defence Review” (Shelton and Alden, 1998: 4). The same analysis is offered by Winkates (2000), who discusses demobilisation as the second phase of military transformation, and distinguishes three phases in the transformation of the SANDF.

Phase one of the process, integration, has been completed, at least in terms of achieving the desired ethnic weightings for the [defence] force. The seven antagonist former statutory and non-statutory armies have been incorporated into the SANDF... The second phase of transformation, that of downsizing or demobilisation, is well under way... The third and final phase of transformation, rationalisation, is yet to begin. Rationalisation will realign the force structure (service organisation, units, and functions) with the approved force design (Winkates, 2000: 467).

Liebenberg and Roefs (2001) also present demobilisation as if it was part of the original plan for military transformation. In defining demobilisation they state that the concept “refers to former combatants of the non-statutory forces (MK, APLA, AZANLA, Inkatha VIP Protection Units, and others) *who were nominally (administratively) integrated in order to be demobilised* without entering service in uniform in the new SANDF” (Liebenberg and Roefs, 2001: 19, emphasis added). As has been hinted earlier and as will be discussed below, demobilisation was not part of the original plan, but came as an afterthought. The definition also contains some factual inaccuracies. First, former members of the Azanian National Liberation Army (AZANLA)²⁴ were not part of the integration process and thus could not have been demobilised. Second, members of the Inkatha VIP Protection Unit were never incorporated into the SANDF; only former members of the KZSPU were.

Motumi and Mckenzie (1998) were among the first group of scholars to offer a comprehensive analysis of the process of military transformation, especially on how the demobilisation of former APLA and MK emerged as an additional process. Those who followed this analysis included Batchelor, Cock and Mckenzie (2000), Mashike (2004) and Mashike and Mokalobe (2003). However, while Batchelor, Cock and Mckenzie (2000) follow an analysis provided by Motumi and Mckenzie (1998), their argument that demobilisation was divided into two processes presents the release of former APLA and MK soldiers from the SANDF as if it was part of the original plan for military transformation:

In South Africa, *demobilisation is divided into two distinct processes, known as ‘demobilisation’ and ‘rationalisation’*. Demobilisation occurred from 1996-1998 and was aimed solely at soldiers from the liberation armies who either did not meet the standards for integration into the new South African National Defence Force (SANDF) or did not wish to be integrated (Batchelor, Cock and Mckenzie, 2000: 41).

It is only through reading the rest of the text that it becomes clear that demobilisation was introduced as an additional process. However, the weakness of their argument is

²⁴ The Azanian National Liberation Army (AZANLA) was the military wing of the Azanian People’s Organisation (AZAPO), a Black Consciousness liberation organisation which did not take part in negotiations for transition to a democratic dispensation. Consequently, AZANLA soldiers were neither integrated into the SANDF nor formally demobilised like their APLA and MK counterparts.

that it does not emphasise the fact that demobilisation was a process of exclusion, although this is implied. Furthermore, it fails to recognise the fact that rationalisation was in fact postponed demobilisation.

The postponement of rationalisation until after the completion of integration meant that, when the integration process began, there was no demobilisation policy to deal with people who could not or were unwilling to join the SANDF. Political leaders, military leaders and soldiers were all concentrating on forming a representative national defence force. As Motumi argues, “*Soldiers were assembled in order to integrate into the SANDF, not to demobilise*” (Interview with Tsepe Motumi, Pretoria, 01.07.2001). Expectations were high among former APLA and MK. According to Major Mbatha, former members of APLA and MK members saw themselves as becoming full members of society:

We thought integration would bring us much closer to society. We thought we were becoming really integrated into society and would no longer be cut off. We were moving from being a separate entity to becoming part of a larger social organisation. Morale was high and by the time the bus arrived at Wallmannstahl comrades had composed a song “Siyo joina SADF” (we are going to join SADF). These soldiers were singing this song not knowing what was awaiting them (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000).

Among those who entered the assembly points were the sick, the aged and those without the required educational qualifications. Constitutionally all these soldiers were members of the SANDF by virtue of being listed on the Certified Personnel Registers of their respective armed forces. Thus, legally no one had the power to turn them away before the beginning of rationalisation. As stated above, former members of the SADF and TVBC forces remained in their positions and ranks while their qualifications were verified to determine whether they were suitable for those ranks. Meanwhile, former members of APLA and MK were subjected to a process of selection which would identify those who were deemed qualified to join the SANDF. As stated earlier, some of those who did not qualify to join the SANDF on the basis of

age were sent on paid leave while others remained at assembly points until the official announcement of their demobilisation.

Demobilisation began without adequate planning. Thus, those who had reported earlier but who had not been accepted for integration had to spend some months waiting at assembly points for the process to be agreed. The group included about 100 former MK members from Mahwelereng in Limpopo Province who spent twelve months at Wallmannstahl, after which they were told to return home and wait for instructions (Interview with Standbo, former MK soldier, Mahwelereng, 22.01.2002). Planning “only began in earnest when a crisis emerged over what to do with the elderly and infirm ex-combatants who had failed to meet the standards set for integration. Demobilisation planning was inadequate and unsystematic” (Batchelor, Cock and Mckenzie, 2000: 45). Lack of adequate planning clearly indicated that demobilisation was an afterthought

The demobilisation process happening those many months later was like an afterthought. What was critical was to address the old and the veterans, and that is what actually motivated for the demobilisation criteria. It was the original motivation for demobilisation. It was later realised that you cannot address the umgwenya,²⁵ what about the 1976 Detachment, the Young Lions. Hence, it was then decided to expand to cover them (Interview with Motumi, Pretoria, 18.04.2000).

Demobilisation applied to former APLA and MK soldiers who were not eligible for integration on the basis of age, education level or health, those who were eligible but who chose not to be integrated into the SANDF, and those who were not satisfied with their rank or package after placement (Batchelor, Cock and Mckenzie, 2000). The process was decided on in a top-down manner without much ex-combatant involvement in the planning process, and was not informed by detailed research and analysis of the needs of ex-combatants (Batchelor, Cock and Mckenzie, 2000). A former MK soldier argued that the process was aimed at excluding former APLA and

²⁵ This refers to the first generation of MK soldiers. According to MK legend, they crossed the Limpopo River on top of a crocodile's back into what was then Southern Rhodesia, hence the name *umgwenya*, which means crocodile.

MK soldiers. *“The process was not properly planned. It was not meant to say thank you for participating in the armed struggle... Hence, most of us thought that demobilisation was meant to get rid of us”* (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000).

Further evidence of inadequate planning was the absence of any attempt to win political support for the process of demobilisation (Batchelor, Cock and Mckenzie, 2000). According to Rocky Williams, former SADF officers did not understand demobilisation as a political process:

All the risks associated with demobilisation, for example that soldiers may struggle to find a job outside the military, were anticipated, given the experiences of World War I and World War II. However, there was no real political will to deal with demobilisation in an effective way. There was no political will, both at the political and administrative levels. There were other pressing concerns, such as getting the new arms package and obtaining a job in the administration. Most white [SADF] guys did not understand demobilisation as a political process. They did not have the intellectual and political understanding of demobilisation. Anyone who did not qualify [to join the SANDF] was treated the same as others and put in the same category (Interview with Rocky Williams, Pretoria, 27.08.2000).

Due to inadequate planning, the demobilisation process was badly implemented. Demobilisation began without the necessary legislation in place, which led to the process being halted at the end of 1995. The Demobilisation Bill was only tabled in Parliament in October 1996. “Those eligible for demobilisation could not obtain their benefits until the Bill was passed” (Batchelor, Cock and Mckenzie, 2000: 45). The first group of 372 former APLA and MK soldiers were demobilised in September 1995 (Williams, 1996). The enactment of the *Demobilisation Act* (No. 99 of 1996) followed in November 1996, retrospectively authorising the payment of gratuities that were paid before the promulgation of the Act.

More evidence of bad implementation was that some former APLA and MK members were repatriated from neighbouring countries directly into assembly areas (Frankel,

2001; Masondo, 1994). On their arrival, some of these soldiers were told that they did not meet the criteria for integration into the SANDF or that their names were not on the CPRs of their respective armed forces. The former APLA and MK soldiers whose names appeared on the CPRs but were not eligible to join the SANDF were demobilised. This was done despite the fact that there was no information about the families of the ex-combatants, where they would live after demobilisation, criteria to evaluate reintegration into society, mechanisms for continuing support or employment opportunities (Motumi and Hudson, 1995). As James Ngculu was to observe years later, former APLA and MK soldiers were demobilised and thrown into the pool of unemployment with no help (Minutes of the Joint Standing Committee on Defence meeting, 12.10.2001). There was another category of former APLA and MK soldiers who returned to South Africa after the ANC's suspension of the armed struggle in 1990. Although dispersed all over of the country, technically they remained mobilised until they entered the assembly points for integration into the SANDF. "In effect, the vast majority of former MK and APLA soldiers would be called up to the assembly areas after having spent more than 12 months in South Africa, as part of the wider society" (Motumi and Hudson, 1995: 116). Some of these soldiers were called to assembly points during integration, only to be turned back to their homes as demobilised soldiers without any meaningful reintegration assistance.

Since demobilisation was implemented without adequate planning, the *Demobilisation Act* (99 of 1996) made no reference to long-term reintegration assistance; it only stipulated the provision of demobilisation gratuities. However, the Defence Review (1998) made reference to "Human Resources Conversion this being the process of addressing *the reintegration of rationalised soldiers back into [civilian] society* through a number of programmes which would typically include en-skilling of those soldiers that facilitates their re-entry into economic society" (Department of Defence, 1998b: 146, emphasis added).

It was clear that the reintegration of former soldiers was planned as part of the rationalisation process and that demobilisation did not feature in the plans. The general attitude of former SADF officers to the process of "demobilisation" was captured in the words of General Reich: "*It is government's responsibility to address the needs of former members of the Non-Statutory Forces, those people were never*

part of the Department of Defence; thus we are not responsible for their welfare” (Interview with General R.G Reich, Pretoria, 08.08.2000). To some extent the argument made sense because former APLA and MK soldiers were demobilised before they formally became members of the SANDF. Demobilisation was defined as “*the disbanding of members of the former non-statutory forces who do not enter into agreements for temporary or permanent appointment with the South African Defence Force,*²⁶ as contemplated in Section 236(8)(d) of the Constitution” (*Demobilisation Act*, 1996, Section 1(v), emphasis added).

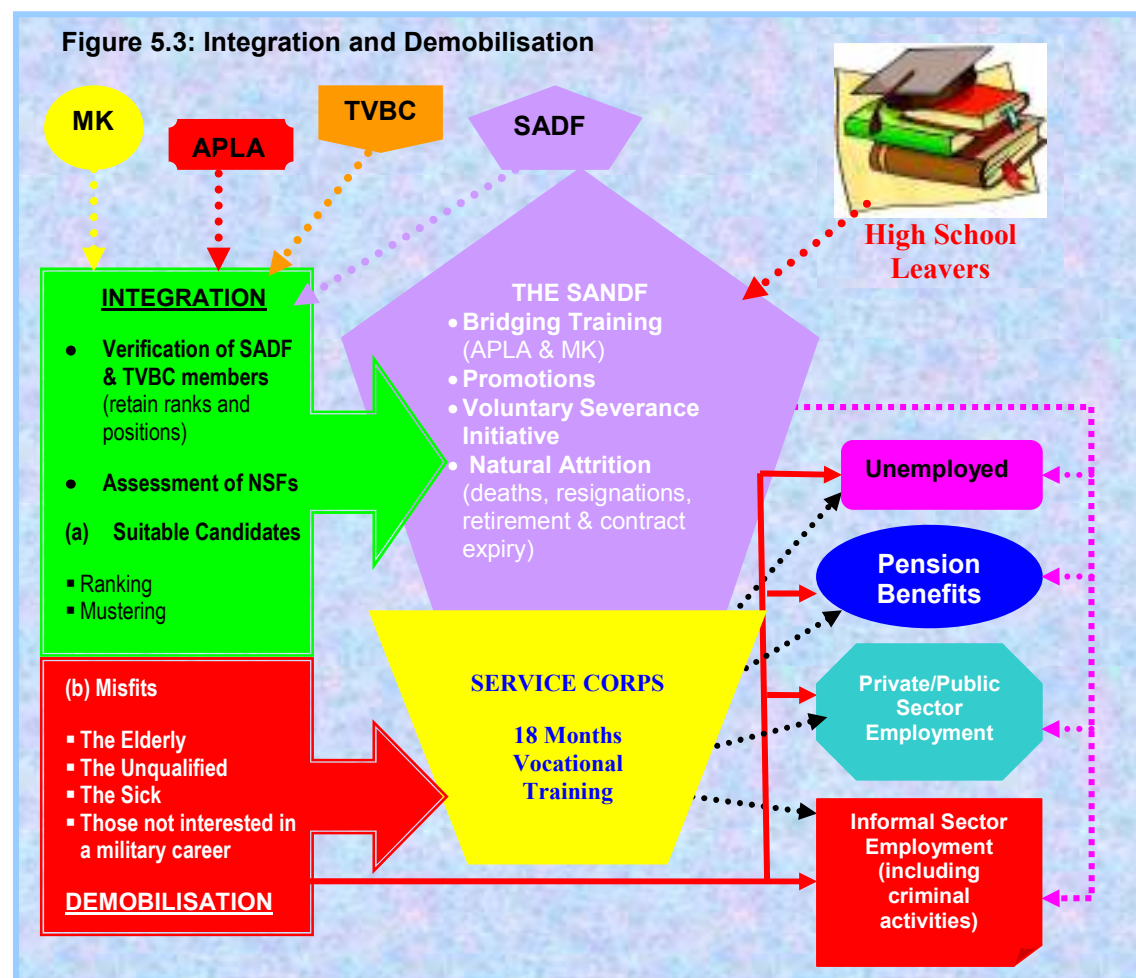
An ineffective reintegration programme was announced which consisted of three elements – a once-off cash gratuity based on the number of years a soldier had spent in the former NSF, a voluntary two-week counselling programme, and an opportunity to join the Service Corps (all these will be discussed in detail in the next chapter). However, the Service Corps, which was to provide some assistance in long-term reintegration, was non-existent at the beginning of demobilisation (Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Mokonoto, Pretoria, 26.10.2000). Some former APLA and MK soldiers were more keen to accept the demobilisation gratuities: “*Some of the [APLA and MK] people were not committed to a military career because they had no intense military training and hence took the R12,000 and left quickly*” (Interview with Major Mbatha, Thaba-Tshwane, 05.08.2000).

The implementation of demobilisation made it a process of exclusion. The release of former APLA and MK soldiers was similar to the elimination of applicants from an employment short-list. Former APLA and MK soldiers who were regarded as qualified were enlisted into the SANDF and proceeded to undergo bridging training, while those who were not eligible to join the SANDF were demobilised. For others it served as an alternative to integration. This group included former APLA and MK members who had found alternative employment in the public or private sector, those who were eligible but not interested in a military career, and those who were not happy with their rank and package following integration. It is thus wrong to argue that integration “has been followed by demobilisation to reduce the SANDF to planned levels” (Cawthra, 2005a: 6; 2005b: 98). Demobilisation was not about the reduction in

²⁶ Note the use of the name SADF instead of SANDF, even though the Act was passed in 1996.

size of the SANDF, but was aimed at releasing those who did not qualify and those who were not interested in joining the SANDF. As Figure 5.3 indicates, demobilisation became an alternative, not a successor, to integration. Former APLA and MK soldiers were either integrated or demobilised.

As stated above, all former APLA and MK soldiers who were officially demobilised had the option of joining the Service Corps for vocational training. As Figure 5.3 indicates, some of those who were demobilised did not join the Service Corps. Some joined the unemployed masses of South Africa, others survived on pension benefits, others joined the public or private sector as full-time employees, while yet others embarked on small businesses in the informal sector. (All these categories of demobilised soldiers are discussed in Chapter 7.)



The process of releasing former APLA and MK members indirectly reduced the envisaged number of members of the SANDF. According to the final integration report, 9,809 former APLA and MK soldiers were demobilised between 1994 and 2004 (Department of Defence, 2004). This process was not in the original plans for the formation of the military and while it reduced the number of soldiers who were constitutionally members of the SANDF, that was not the intention.

5.7.6 Right-sizing the SANDF

The fact that the down-sizing of the Department of Defence has been achieved through other means has not rendered the process of right-sizing unnecessary. This is because very often members who leave the military through the natural attrition process are not necessarily the people the military wants to get rid of in the light of its efforts to improve the ethnic balance and quality of the forces (Kingma, 2001; 2004). In this sense, natural attrition has the potential to undermine the goals of right-sizing. Thus, since 1994 the Department of Defence has been recruiting high school leavers for the purposes of right-sizing; the process ran parallel to the integration of the different armed forces. This is because rationalisation remains relevant for the purposes of right-sizing in order to achieve a balanced force.

A balanced force is one with the capabilities to meet a wide range of contingencies rather than one with equal numbers of all possible weapons systems. Balance implies that the force should not be over-specialised to the extent that strategic gaps, which could be exploited by an enemy, are created... The aim is to achieve a balanced defence force rather than a balanced Army, Air Force and Navy. For this reason, 'jointness' between the arms of the service will be promoted. The SANDF must also be a flexible force which allows for expansion or reduction of force levels according to operational requirements and budgetary considerations (Department of Defence, 1998b: 15).

Right-sizing entails balancing experience with innovation. For example, the introduction of new military technologies may be suitable for new and young recruits without experience of the old technologies. However, it is still necessary to retain some experienced officers to staff the command structure. Right-sizing is more

complex than it appears, because it involves the rationalisation of the individual units within each Arm of the Service (army, air force, navy and SAMHS).

For example, in the army you cannot have members of an Infantry Battalion who are 45 years old and expect them to run like they are troopers. Still within the army you have to make sure that you have a right balance between the engineers unit and other units. Note that I am still discussing the right-sizing of the army and have not started discussing other services. In some cases you have no option but to make way for new recruits to fill in the gaps, because you have 70,000 as the target size of the SANDF. This might require reducing the number of the personnel in one unit, e.g. army infantry battalion, in order to make way for new recruits in the army engineer unit (Interview with Tsepe Motumi, Pretoria, 11.08.2005).

In 2002 the Department of Defence began to implement the Human Resources Strategy 2010, which seeks to ensure the establishment of the most effective, efficient and economic human resource composition of the right quantity and quality in the right place at the right time (Lamb, 2004). The achievement and sustainability of the goals of transformation depend on how the Department of Defence deals with problems in the SANDF. In February 2001, the BMATT report indicated that the level of discipline was still low. Over 8,000 SANDF members were awaiting court martial, 1,000 above the total number of members of the South African Navy which at the time stood at 7,000 (BMATT report, February 2001). This should have been anticipated given the experience of the National Peace-Keeping Force as discussed in Chapter 4.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the process of demobilisation in South Africa was introduced without adequate planning and as a consequence it was badly executed. This was because the main concern was with the process of forming the SANDF through the integration of seven armed forces – the SADF, TVBC forces, APLA and MK – and the incorporation of members of the KZSPU. The *Interim Constitution* (No. 200 of 1993) provided for three phases in the formation of the SANDF, namely

integration, consolidation and rationalisation. It was envisaged that integration would be followed by consolidation, which included the completion of bridging training by former APLA and MK members. It was anticipated that after the completion of integration and the staffing process, the process of demobilisation (known as rationalisation) would commence. Demobilisation was anticipated because of two broad reasons. First was the perceived and real improvement in the national and regional security environment. Second was the perceived economic and development impact of the reduction in defence expenditure.

Once the process of integration began, it became evident that some former APLA and MK soldiers could not be integrated into the SANDF. These were the aged (some as old as 65), the sick (including the disabled) and those without the required educational qualifications. The fact that these people remained on the CPRs of their respective armed forces until the beginning of integration was itself evidence of the lack of adequate planning. The JMCC had anticipated that these categories could not be integrated, but was not empowered to take decisions on matters such as demobilisation. While originally some elderly former APLA and MK soldiers were sent on paid leave, a decision was later taken to demobilise all those who were not eligible to join the SANDF. The process was extended to include former APLA and MK soldiers who were eligible but who chose not to be integrated, as well as those who were not satisfied with their rank or package after placement. Due to the absence of adequate planning, the process of demobilisation was badly executed.

As stated in Chapter 3, during the process of demobilisation-reintegration soldiers ideally go through four consecutive phases – assembly, discharge, short-term reinsertion and long-term reintegration. However, in South Africa, since rationalisation was anticipated as the last phase in the process of forming the SANDF, there was no adequate planning, evident in the fact demobilisation began before the finalisation of the relevant legislation. Soldiers were assembled for integration and not demobilisation. Thus, when a decision was taken to demobilise them, they were psychologically unprepared for the exit from the SANDF, while those executing integration were unprepared for the process of demobilisation. The worst shortcoming of the process was that some former APLA and MK soldiers were assembled after spending twelve months as civilians within their respective communities. Due to the

lack of adequate planning, these former guerrillas and others who were repatriated from camps in neighbouring countries experienced the process as disbandment aimed at excluding them from the integration process. For others, demobilisation became an alternative to integration. The latter included those who were eligible but chose not to be integrated and those who were not satisfied with their rank or package after placement.

Due to the lack of adequate planning, an inadequate demobilisation package was quickly instituted. This consisted of a once-off demobilisation gratuity which ranged from R12,000 to R48,000 depending on the time individuals had served in either APLA or MK prior to integration, a voluntary counselling programme for two weeks, and an opportunity to join the Service Corps for eighteen months. However, due the problems encountered during the process of integration, which included delays in processing the integration of former APLA and MK soldiers, some became angry and frustrated. Thus, some took their demobilisation packages and left with neither counselling nor considering vocational training in the Service Corps. Those who took the demobilisation gratuities included some former APLA and MK soldiers who were repatriated directly from camps outside South Africa and had no other personal belongings except suitcases of clothes. Without any counselling to assist with transition to civilian life in a post-Apartheid South Africa or any attempt to locate their families, they were demobilised. As Chapter 7 will show, the majority of former APLA and MK soldiers had not achieved economic reintegration. Furthermore, while they had achieved social reintegration in some areas, in others they remained on the fringes of society as a group which saw itself as distinct from other members of society.

However, before discussing the consequences of demobilisation, the next chapter discusses various integration programmes that were instituted to assist former APLA and MK soldiers in their return to civilian life. It will be argued that these programmes were ineffective as measures to assist former APLA and MK reintegrate into civilian society.