

editorial comments that there is a disturbing feeling in the final decade of this century that one's expectations will "strew the ground like statues of antique deities."

In terms of sheer destruction and human suffering this century may have no parallel. The barbarity of humans inflicted on his own kind will probably exceed the total of all the preceding centuries that mankind inhabited this earth.

Liberty after all is the right or power to do as one pleases and if its price is eternal vigilance, whose rights is one to respect and whose to criticise? Traditionally the liberals have been cast in the role of critics of the excesses of the government of the day, if allowed to do so. In the future what role will it profess to play taking into consideration the failure of others ideologies to bring peace and justice in our world?

Will our future expectations also end on barren soil, lifeless?

HASSIM SEEDAT

Qualbert,
Natal

No that simple

ANN COLVIN and Chris Mhlongo claim that true liberals should join the ANC. It is not that simple.

Certainly the ANC has, for many years, stood for ideals with which liberals fully identify. However, having consistently opposed the evils of the government, we must continue to speak out against injustice and, if necessary, against malpractices committed in the name of liberation.

We cannot give unquestioning allegiance or uncritical acceptance to a political line and it takes courage to stand firm in spite of the need to be seen as "politically correct."

Now, more than ever, the liberal must entrench his/her unequivocal independence by endorsing universally accepted values and principles which promote dignity, respect and tolerance for all human beings. To call a non-supporter of the ANC who will not abrogate his/her moral responsibility, an "opponent of democracy" is very unliberal!

In any case, the ideologies of both left and right would seem, at present, to be destructive to liberty and prosperity, exchanging one form of collectivism for another and showing little regard for individual autonomy.

ANN GRAYSON

Pietermaritzburg

GERALD SHAW, associate editor of the Cape times, examines De Klerk's failure to empower a full investigation into suspected clandestine activities in the security forces.

DANGER POINT

PRESIDENT DE KLERK'S standing at home and abroad is in question as never before in his three remarkable years in office.

There are renewed doubts about his control of the security forces as further evidence comes to light suggesting that clandestine operations to destabilise the ANC have continued throughout his presidency, in spite of many assurances to the contrary since March 1990 when he first promised that all secret projects would be placed under strict Cabinet control.

Much is not yet clear, but for many of his critics President De Klerk already stands exposed as a leader with a double agenda, negotiating with the ANC on apparently equal terms while his security chiefs were running a campaign of anti-ANC disinformation by Military Intelligence. He is accused of failing to control the clandestine arm of the security forces, effectively condoning assorted dirty tricks even assassination. He is accused of allowing the resources of state to be used to weaken the ANC and so improve the chances of the NP at the polls.

There is also widespread suspicion, particularly in ANC circles, that the Nationalist government has maintained or condoned some kind of clandestine Third Force, stirring up hostilities between the ANC and Inkatha and generally keeping the pot of violence on the boil.

THE CRISIS of confidence came to a head when the Goldstone Commission raided a Military Intelligence establishment in the Transvaal recently and uncovered documents indicating that MI had re-employed the notorious CCB agent, Ferdi Barnard, a convicted murderer, after the CCB had been partially exposed in the media and officially disbanded. There have been other disclosures indicating that Military Intelligence has been running a disinformation campaign to damage the ANC and an admission by an SADF

general that he had lied to the Harms Commission about CCB plans to assassinate anti-apartheid activists.

The Goldstone disclosures, it seemed, would be Mr De Klerk's great opportunity to smash what could possibly be an illegal conspiracy in the security establishment. It appeared probable that the hundreds of files presumably dealing with clandestine operations which Goldstone had discovered at the secret headquarters of the so-called Directorate of Covert Collection would be placed in the custody of the commission, enabling its investigators to get to the truth of the matter once and for all.

Mr De Klerk did not seize this opportunity, but instead appointed an SADF general to take over supervision of Military Intelligence and conduct an investigation of its operations. The DCC files, it appeared, would remain in the custody of the SADF. After a two-hour meeting between Mr De Klerk and Judge Goldstone, it was announced that the Goldstone Commission would investigate all security forces and private armies and it was said that the SADF investigation of Military Intelligence would be carried out in collaboration with the Goldstone Commission.

Yet many remain sceptical. Once again it would be a case of the SADF investigating the SADF. It was not clear how far the Goldstone Commission would be allowed to go in its independent investigation.

No one questions the integrity of the SADF general who has been landed with the invidious task of investigating his own colleagues. Yet the record of recent years suggests that there is scant prospect of getting at the truth by such means. This time it would be different, we may hope, but much depends on whether the Goldstone Commission is given unfettered access to the files of the DCC. Without such access its investigation will not command much credibility.

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Danger point

WHILE Mr Nelson Mandela, anxious to keep the negotiations on track, is at this point still giving the State President the benefit of the doubt, others in the ANC are rather less trusting. Unless the current investigation succeeds in convincing the public that the whole truth has been uncovered and published for all to see, ANC distrust and cynicism about the negotiating process will grow.

As some in the ANC are asking: How can you negotiate with people — let alone go into an interim government with them — when you are convinced

they are using the resources of the state to harass you and destabilise your organisation?

The NP for its part, is just as concerned about the activities of the ANC's so-called self-defence units and wants to see MK disbanded before it will feel more at ease.

At the time of writing, the ANC national executive committee was meeting in Durban to discuss the leadership's conciliatory proposals for the next phase of negotiations and the danger was that those who are loath to share power in

government with the National Party, even for a limited time, have been given enough ammunition to hold up the process.

A spectre of mistrust hangs over the whole proceeding with suspicions on both sides about double agendas and dirty tricks.

Just at the point when a negotiating breakthrough is on the cards, President De Klerk's reluctance to submit Military Intelligence to independent scrutiny has placed everything he has achieved in jeopardy. ●

Between Sharpeville and Bisho

crowd produced a petrol bomb and the police fired at the crowd.

Witnesses denied that any member of the crowd had produced a petrol bomb. They said the gathering was peaceful and the police were hostile.

Although the commanding officer claimed to have fired a warning shot, the order to fire came almost immediately after it.

The police did not use alternative less violent crowd control methods because they had been deliberately refused equipment such as teargas, rubber bullets, loudhailer and birdshot. They were equipped solely with lethal weapons. The crowd comprised a significant number of children and women. As in Sharpeville, the overwhelming preponderance of people were shot in the back or the side. Only one out of 20 fatalities was shot directly from the front.

On 26 March 1990, a crowd of about 50 000 gathered in Sebokeng and some 90 policemen confronted them. The mood of the crowd was excited but not menacing or aggressive. The crowd moved to some 40 metres away from the police line, but there was very little stoning and no immediate threat to the police. Firing began without an order to shoot. A constable fired a teargas canister from a stopper and sparked a chain reaction in the police line. Shooting lasted between 10 and 20 seconds. Some 60 rounds of ammunition were fired. Five people were killed and 161

wounded, 84 from behind.

The subsequent commission of inquiry, chaired by Mr Justice Goldstone, found that the shootings were unjustified, as the force used was immoderate and disproportionate.

On 24 March 1991, a group of some 200 ANC supporters gathered in Daveyton on East Rand. No permission was obtained for the march. The ANC stated that the police arrived on the scene, gave the group ten minutes to disperse and then, while the men were still discussing the issue, opened fire. The men ran away but were trapped by a second police vehicle, from which shots were also fired. Twelve ANC supporters were killed and 27 injured. One policeman was hacked to death and two injured.

On Friday 9 August 1991, Mr F.W. de Klerk was scheduled to address a meeting of the National Party in the Commando Hall in Ventersdorp. Right-wingers are said to have threatened to disrupt any meeting held by the State President in the town. Shortly before the NP meeting was to begin, some 2 000 AWB supporters — heavily armed with pistols and hunting guns — approached the Commando Hall, which was guarded by approximately 2 000 policemen, and attempted to break through the police line. AWB supporters were initially repulsed, following an exchange of teargas from both sides. AWB supporters then attacked two minibuses, firing on one. The police then opened fire on

AWB supporters. One AWB man was shot dead, one was killed instantly by a careering minibus and a third died later in hospital, also having been knocked down by the minibus. In the ensuing street battle 48 people were injured, including six policemen and thirteen AWB supporters.

The AWB claims that the police acted without warning, and had been ordered to 'shoot to kill'. The police concede that this order was given, but that this was only after three policemen had already been shot down. In addition, the police claim that — even after this order was given — mainly teargas and birdshot were deployed; and that 'no ball ammunition' was used. It seems, however, from the reports of journalists present at the scene, that the AWB supporter shot dead by the police was killed either by SSG buckshot or by sharp ammunition.

According to the police, 10 889 gatherings were held during 1990 and the first seven months of 1991. Of these, 1 360 were authorised. In 70 instances, permission was sought and refused. For 851, permission was not sought, although the gatherings were planned in advance.

Spontaneous gatherings, for which no permission was obtained, numbered 8 608.

The total number of illegal gatherings held in the Republic, during 1990 and the first seven months of 1991, was 9529. Of these, three gave rise to sustained controversy because of deaths and injuries resulting from police actions. ●