

CODESA III or any other forum — may well become more difficult. Nor indeed, has the prospect of what we might call the government's other possible strategy, aiming for an NP-ANC duumvirate, in any way been enhanced.

What we may see instead is a greater determination by the ANC to push for concessions in an area the government is least disposed and perhaps least able to make them: control of the security forces. Indeed, any forthcoming battle over the federal or unitary nature of the new constitution may well pale into insignificance compared with the struggle for control of the security forces — seen as the final guarantor by the NP of white living standards and as the key instrument by the ANC for breaking the back of white minority rule. Few should doubt that the third round of the negotiation process looms as much tougher than the second; and there is no guarantee that the match will not last a full ten rounds.

Against that, there is some speculation that, in a desperate bid to rescue the economy, both the ANC and NP may decide to go for broke in an earlier than expected election in recognition of the fact that only a fully legitimated government can conceivably hope to re-establish political order and attract much needed foreign investment. And in that case, what can be argued is that the Bisho massacre will have had the major consequence of having increased the determination of the international community to despatch an army of electoral monitors.

MUCH HAS been said in recent times concerning the fact of South Africa's increasing marginalisation. With the end of the Cold War, the West can concede black rule and, if need be, allow South Africa to collapse back into its declining continent as just another chaotically run African country. But against that, what is really not in the West's interests is for South Africa to descend into civil war. It would be far more convenient if a new South Africa could be ruled by an indisputably, legitimated government. However, what the massacre has done has been to suggest that, for all Mr De Klerk's nice face, the government has scarcely changed its spots. To put it bluntly, a government so crass as to kill protesters in front of the television cameras can scarcely be

In the years between Sharpeville and Bisho many have died

ON MONDAY, 7 September 1992, at least 24 ANC demonstrators were shot dead and nearly 200 wounded when Ciskei soldiers in Bisho opened fire on a 40 000 strong crowd protesting against the homeland's military rule. The permission had been granted by Ciskei authorities for the march and a rally to be held in the Bisho Stadium.

trusted to hold a free and fair election. To put it equally bluntly, what the outside world now wants to see is the election of an at least ANC-led government, so that the issue of apartheid finally goes away.

ALL THIS implies bad news for the NP's projected Christian Alliance. Quite how an election will be conducted in this country whilst violence is so rife remains a question which neither the ANC nor NP have as yet given adequate attention. However, what the idea of the Christian Alliance rests upon is the ability of its various ethnically-defined constituents to deliver their ethnic votes. And behind this lies the long experience of controlled and rigged elections in the bantustans.

But what would happen if in Bophuthatswana, KwaZulu and Ciskei there were to be a truly free vote? What would happen if in the secrecy of the polling booth and the integrity of the vote counting process the ethnic construct fell apart? The answer is self-evident: the Christian Alliance could well be blown apart.

In the final analysis, what the Bisho massacre has done has been to reinforce the international community's determination to push for a viable settlement in South Africa. It has had enough of its Somalias and its Yugoslavias, and if nothing else, it would prefer South Africa to hang together.

That requires a genuinely democratic election. That has to be good news for the country as a whole; but it is a far more ambiguous message for Mr De Klerk and the National Party.

● Professor Southall's article was written immediately after the Bisho massacre.

According to journalists who were on the scene, the shooting took place after some protesters stormed through an open rear entrance to the stadium, while another group of demonstrators removed a section of razor wire adjoining the stadium. It is reported that the Ciskeian troops opened fire on ANC marchers without any warning. Brigadier Gqozo insists that his soldiers had received orders to shoot in self-defence

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TO CONTROL
DEMONSTRATING
CROWDS**

after shots were fired and hand grenades were flung at them from within the ANC crowd. The ANC says that the shooting was unprovoked and that the Ciskeian soldiers had at no time been in danger.

Other ANC supporters were stopped by Ciskeians shortly before reaching the border on their way to the march. They were thoroughly searched and the troops swore at them and said they were fooled by Chris Hani into believing they could topple Gqozo. The troops were also reported to have said that in Ciskei they did not use teargas and they did not have bullets to waste by firing warning shots.

Surely, soldiers are taught the circumstances justifying the use of different types of equipment, the handling of various weapons, and how to assess whether a crowd is aggressive and threatening, or merely excited.

Emphasis should always be placed on the need for minimum force and its gradual escalation. The first step should be to speak to the crowd. If this did not result in its dispersal, a warning should be given that, following a specified time,



force would be used. Tearsmoke should be used first depending on wind and other conditions. Only after that should rubber bullets be used, or possibly bird-shot. Live rounds of ammunition should not be used in the absence of particular threat to the soldiers or to others. No firearm should be loaded until the commanding officer has ordered this.

The commanding officer should keep in constant contact with his men, informing them how to handle particular situations and keeping them as calm and confident as possible. If the crowd failed to disperse, force could be used but the force used should not be greater than necessary and should be moderate and proportionate to the circumstances of the case.

Firearms and other lethal weapons should be used to disperse a gathering only where weapons less likely to cause injury or death had first been used to no avail; or where there had been violent behaviour on the part of the crowd. In addition, firearms should be used with all reasonable caution, without recklessness or negligence and without causing unnecessary injury.

THERE HAVE been many demonstrators killed or injured over the years.

On 21 March 1960 several thousands of people gathered near the police station at Sharpeville to protest against Africans having to carry reference books. The demonstration was peaceful and had been in progress for some hours, when an unidentified member of the police force is said to have panicked and fired a shot without warning and without an order to do so.

This was followed by shots from numerous other members of the force, including the policemen manning machine guns. Sixty-seven people were killed and 186 injured. Of these forty were women and eight were children. The police said in justification of the shootings that they thought that they were being attacked. But of the bullet wounds that could be classified, 30 were inflicted from the front and 156 from behind.

On 21 March 1985 a police patrol in two armoured cars confronted a crowd marching from Langa to KwaNobuhle to attend a funeral in contravention of a magisterial prohibition imposed on the gathering. The gathering was peaceful. According to the police a member of the

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Political commentator ANTHONY HEARD believes the root cause of Bisho-type massacres is the Bantustan system which the Nationalist government "clings to like a bad habit."

SUCH TRAGEDIES ARE INEVITABLE OUTCOME OF VERWOERD'S CRAZY VISION

IT WAS all so obvious. The dream had to become a nightmare, the government's creation a Frankenstein.

Yet it took 33 years for South Africans to witness the events that signalled the death-throes of the Bantustan policy. And to this day the government shows unwillingness to ditch the scheme, clinging to it like a bad habit.

An SADF-trained brigadier from Ciskei was the agent of the latest terror. But if it was not Brigadier Gqozo it would have been some other tinpot dictator who would have done it. Bishos were built-in inevitabilities of the system.

To heap all or most blame on Ronnie Kasrils's charge of the light brigade is, literally, to seek a red herring. A cacophony of criticism has been directed at this flamboyant adventurer. Yet were he a Chinese hot-head in Tiananmen Square, he would have been hailed to Pretoria's rafters and feted by White South Africa.

The blame for the deaths lies squarely on Brigadier Gqozo: the responsibility rests with President De Klerk; and the root cause must be sought in the crazy vision of Bantustans which Dr Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd announced to Parliament in 1959.

In doing so, in the debate on the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Bill, Verwoerd was laying the legislative foundations for what happened to African National Congress protesters in Bisho, in "independent" Ciskei.

IT IS ideologically important to note that they were not South African government troops who fired indiscriminately into a crowd of protesters, killing about 28, wounding nearly 200.

No, they were the troops of a puppet state of Pretoria's whose collapsing flagpole at independence summed up its rickety nature.

Bisho drew attention as never before to "Bantustans" set up under apartheid, and still thriving, in a perverse sort of way, to this day.

In various Papa Doc Haitis scattered around South Africa, brutality and disrespect for decent standards have become the order of the day. In this system, tear gas, warnings and orthodox crowd control give way to unheralded volleys of deadly fire.

Because the Bantustans are its creature, unrecognized by the world, the government of F.W. de Klerk must carry ultimate responsibility for what happened — if not specific blame for pulling the trigger. That is a constant, whatever the inquiries find on specifics.

While argument rages over the rights and wrongs of Ciskei troops gunning down scores of civilians who had broken through a line drawn by a magistrate, it is instructive to look back to the ideology that started it all, and to consider what can urgently be done about it.

DR VERVOERD was Prime Minister from 1958 to 1966, the years I happened to be in the Press Gallery. When the Nationalist caucus chose him to succeed Hans Strijdom, a prescient Nasionale Pers journalist, Schalk Pienaar, turned to fellow journalists and muttered to us: "This is bad news. His mind is far too tidy."

Within a year of his accession, Verwoerd informed the country and the world of his new vision. It concerned setting up "Bantu" states.

There was much excitement, and confusion. There were henceforth to be not one but about nine or ten South Africas, and very fragmented. There was a helter-skelter map-race, as journalists sought to pinpoint where the boundaries of these states would be. A country whose



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. ●