

they occurred very shortly after the Government's appointment of a parliamentary select committee to investigate the University Christian Movement (as well as three other organisations). It is difficult to imagine a governmental act of more transparent cynicism or (to look at it from another angle) of more grotesque naivety. Perhaps it can most accurately be described as an instance of gangster tactics: you tell a man that you are going to give him a chance to explain his case and that you will attend to what he has to say as impartially as you can, and then, as he raises his head to the ceiling (wondering, perhaps, how he is to make his point-of-view clear to a somewhat obtuse investigator), you fetch him a blow under the jaw, watch him fall unconscious to the ground, gag him, and then — bending down to him with a sympathetic smile on your face and a notebook in your hand — you prepare to listen to his story.

The Government has recently performed many acts of this calibre — the banning of Mr. Mewa Ramgobin, who in reviving the (perfectly legal) Natal Indian Congress had begun to show something of the real feelings of thoughtful Indians; the banning of Mr. Dempsey Noel, the Natal regional chairman of the Labour Party, a party brought into being as a result of the Government's grand offer to allow Coloured people freely to control their own affairs; the expulsion from the University of the North of Mr. A.R. Tiro, who in speaking at a graduation ceremony shocked certain important white people by telling a few home truths (this expulsion was the handiwork of the Turfloop authorities, but these authorities, as a subsequent statement by the Prime Minister made clear, are mere extensions of the Government); the unexplained expulsion of a number of prominent Anglicans, including the Bishop of Damaraland, from South-West Africa at the very moment when the Secretary-General of the United Nations was about to visit the territory; the arbitrary removal of passports from officials of NUSAS, another of the organisations to be studied by the parliamentary select committee. . .

All these vicious and mad acts of the Government's REALITY condemns and despises.

RUGBY

Can it do more than that, however? It can analyse a little.

What it finds is that essentially the Nationalist Government's attitude is that of a heavy, tough, not very intelligent rugby player.

The sacredness of rugby in Nationalist circles is of course a well-known fact. It is no coincidence, for example, that summit meetings between Mr. Vorster and Mr. Smith usually take place on Test Match holy days. And indeed it might be said that just as the British parliamentary system has often been thought to resemble some aspects of the game of cricket, the South African Government's way of dealing with awkward and delicate situations seems to have been based quite specifically upon the philosophy of ruthless scrummaging and "kicking for touch". Certainly the Government's recent actions and attitudes could be distilled into five simple words: push hard and kick hard.

Two things are to be noted, however. First, rugby players, even unintelligent ones, can afford to try to be a little imaginative — to throw the ball around a bit, to "give it some air" — when things are going their way, when they feel that they are on form and in control. It is when they are in danger of losing the game that they put most of their energy into pushing and kicking. The implication seems obvious.

Second, and of course far more important, pushing and kicking are permitted on the rugby field. In the realm of government and of human intercourse they are intolerable.

P.S. A further instance of the role of rugby in South African political life has been provided, in the midst of recent baton charges upon students, in a remarkable reference to the defeat of the Springbok team made by the suddenly-famous policeman, Colonel P.A. Crous: "Many of my men have been on edge since the rugby match". □

VIOLENCE IN CHURCH & STATE

On Friday, June 2nd, 1972, a detachment of the South African Police, armed with rubber batons, marched to St. George's Cathedral, Cape Town, where university students were demonstrating quietly in favour of a call by NUSAS for free and compulsory education for all up to Junior Certificate. The police were not summoned to quell any disturbance. They had practised baton charges on the lawns behind Parliament before marching to the Cathedral.

It would appear that, whether the police were ready and willing to use violence or not, there was no excuse for doing so, however trifling, until one of the students, using a loud-hailer, transformed the legal demonstration into an illegal public meeting. He was ordered to desist and to hand over the loud-hailer. How long he delayed is not accurately known, but according to reports it was not for long. This therefore brief delay served as the pretext for one of the most shocking events in our recent history. The police were ordered to charge.

The police then lost all control of themselves. They struck left and right with their batons, at students, reporters, passers-by, even, ironically enough, at some of their own colleagues dressed in leather-jacket mufti. When students fled into the cathedral, the police pursued them, shouting out obscenities, calling women bloody bitches, even striking them in the face with their batons. Many people had to be treated for injuries, varying from slight to substantial.

It must be reported that Colonel Crous, second in command, asserts that he was assaulted from behind before the order to charge was given. This order was apparently given by Brigadier Lamprecht. But no one knows who the assailant was. Furthermore, the reporter from the "Natal Mercury" asserts categorically that if any assault took place, it must have been after the order was given.

NEWS OF THE ASSAULT

News of the assault quickly reached the other university centres, profoundly disturbing the English-speaking campuses. The effect on the Afrikaans-speaking campuses was considerably smaller. The effect on Indian, African, and Coloured campuses was also small, largely because each of them was already involved in demonstrations following mass expulsions at the African University of the North. The news also profoundly disturbed English-speaking people throughout South Africa, with the exception of that miserable minority led by the Warings and the Horwoods,

who pick up the crumbs from their white master's table. Its effect on Afrikaans-speaking people, on Indian, African and Coloured people was also decidedly less marked, many of the first group being in favour of the police action, the other groups being largely preoccupied or indifferent.

That is the reason why the event has been so shocking. It has demonstrated the lack of common interest and purpose, not only between white and black, but also between Afrikaans- and English-speaking, for whether we like it or not, the Cape Town assault was by policemen overwhelmingly Afrikaans-speaking on students overwhelmingly English-speaking. The assault was furthermore approved by the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Justice and Police, all Afrikaans-speaking. There are reasons to believe that it was not only approved but also premeditated.

In almost every society the rapport between police and students is not great. Policemen are trained to obey, students to enquire and question. Therefore apart from any differences in temperament, there are differences in aim, and these can add up to a complete incompatibility unless the authorities — that is the Government — understand both aims and sympathise with them. There is absolutely no sign that our Government understands the aims of students who enquire and question. They expect students to obey. They expect students to behave like junior policemen. They expect students to accept the kind of society that Afrikaner Nationalism has created.

QUESTIONS

Very sombre questions are raised by these events. Was the boerehaat campaign at Oudtshoorn not an election gimmick at all, but rather an expression of Afrikaner Nationalist hatred of others that suddenly came to the boil? And what brought it to the boil?

One must not look for simple explanations. The situation is too menacing, too disturbing for that. Though luckily not characterised by the loss of life that set Sharpeville as an event apart, it has elements in common. One of course is that it is another shocking example of police reaction to protest. But there is also one tremendous difference. There is good reason to believe that the police panicked at Sharpeville. There is no reason to believe that they panicked in Cape Town.

Is this then to be a deliberate policy of Government, decided by the whole Cabinet in session, dictated by or consented to by the Broederbond, supported to the hilt by the S.A.B.C., approved of by the heads of BOSS, the Security Police, and the ordinary police, that protest, however peaceful, is to be everywhere dealt with by force, by charges, truncheons, teargas, and dogs? If so, these are grave days we are living through.

REASONS

And what can be the reasons for it. One is forced to the conclusion either that Afrikaner Nationalism has reached a crisis of such a magnitude that its actions have become totally irrational, like those of people who jump from sixtieth storey windows to escape the fire that rages within. The truth is that the policies of racial separation of the Nationalists are not working. Their racial universities

(except so far their own) are turning against them. Their political creations (except their own) are proving difficult to handle. They are being spoken to by black leaders in a way which must make them inwardly and sometimes outwardly grind their teeth with rage. We have heard so much claptrap from them of how peaceful the progress of separate development will be that it must be galling to them to realise that it isn't going to be peaceful at all.

Things fall apart, that's the trouble. And there's only one way to put them together again, and that's with the truncheon, the teargas, and the dogs. If ideas are recalcitrant, then break the heads of those who hold them.

Afrikaner Nationalist politics is essentially a crisis-politics. But the crisis is becoming unbearable. Then reason leaves the scene. What men like the Honourable Theo Gerdener must feel in these circumstances one does not know, but his own private thoughts must be anguished.

When reason leaves the scene, when irrationality rules the stage, many things are possible. Will the Government be prepared to yield for ever its outward policy? Will the New Zealanders and the Australians swallow all this student-beating and continue to play games with us? Will the Englishmen swallow any insult to do the same? Will dialogue with African states be foregone? Will the Government run the danger of starting a fifth column inside its own defence forces? Will young English-speaking soldiers swallow the identification of militarism and religion that is made by Major Shylock Mulder of the Defence Force, a self-confessed admirer of Hitler?

DANGER

In other words, the Government has embarked — or appears to be embarking — on a course of great danger. Will reason, even belatedly come to the rescue? If the Government continues, the end of Afrikanerdom will become more certain. But lots of us will get hurt.

We all have our duties. We as liberals will try to carry out ours. But there are others who either do not recognise their duties or who approach them with too much fear and too much caution. Students at the Afrikaner Universities, you have a duty to stop thinking with your blood, and to start thinking with your minds. Do you believe all this intellectual muck about communism, liberalism, socialism, humanism, internationalism? Do you believe this muck about the dark powers? There are dark powers all right, but they are here, in ourselves, in you, in this Government that rules without compassion.

And Sir de Villiers Graaff, on you and your United Party there also rests a tremendous responsibility. You are in grave danger of exalting law and order above righteousness and justice. Your luke-warmness to students won't rally young voters to your standard. If you must tell us that you don't like all the things they do, then tell us. But for God's sake, praise them unequivocally for their stand for morality and justice in our public life. □