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HE claim by the Afri on-
gress that the Pretoria explosion was
. directed at a military target is transparent
self-justification. To detonate a bomb in a car
in a public place is to commit wanton murder.
By accepting responsibility the ANC signals a
new and gwful phase in terror tactics.
In the wake of the atrocity, it would have
required extraordinary forbearance from the
South A_f?can Defence Force not to strike

back. FrÃ©m a military, and an emotional,
point of view retaliation becomes difficult to
resist when the mere existence of hostile
bases in â\200\234safe housesâ\200\235 across the border
mocks a nationâ\200\231s grief.

When South Africa raided Maseru late last
year it occasioned international condemna-
tion. In the event, the raid turned out to be
almost entirely counter-productive and ill-
conceived. Mondayâ\200\231s Maputo raid, it may be
argued, was different because it was a re-
sponse to appalling provocation and therefore
more easily justified than the earlier pre-
emptive strike. Moreover, the South African
Defence Force has stressed that it did all it

"~ could to minimise unnecessary casualties.
(The extent to which it achieved this intention
is impossible to gauge since estimates of the
death toll differ so widely, emphasising the
adage that truth is the first casuaity of war.)

Yes, attacks of this kind very probably -
release national tension and may well deter
aggressors. Those are positive advantages.
Yet it is all too clear that they can do harm
too. :

They cannot avcid hurting the innocent,
they harden attitudes and they provide no
solutions. The effect of across-border raids is
to further destabilise a part of the continent
that is already too unstable for comfort.
Heightened tension between neighbours is not
conducive to peaceful co-existence. Interna-
tional condemnation generates a climate un-

helpful to solving South Africa's problems.

Readers will have their own views on the philosophic necessity of retaliation. Heaven knows, an event of the magnitude of the Pretoria atrocity converts the concept of 'turning the other cheek' into a taunt; invites the biblical redress of an eye for an eye.

Be that as it may. In the end, this country and this sub-continent cannot afford to contemplate a future in which we lurch from strike to counter-strike to strike again. The law of diminishing returns applies, and each new onslaught, on either side, has to be more formidable than the one before to achieve the limited objective of trying to cow the enemy. It is a situation in which, ultimately, there is no winner except violence.

There are no easy alternatives nor glib solutions. The violent lunatic fringe is a fact of life and the utopia where terrorism can be wished (or smashed) away does not exist. The goal, however, should be to create a society so united in its common aims as to erode the base from which terrorism operates.

Any system of government, any proposal, that polarises large groups of people heightens the risk of providing terrorists with more fertile breeding grounds. A system that promotes common interest and tries to minimise

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MANY viewers and listeners will no doubt agree that, in the excitement caused by the recent by-elections and the Constitutional Reform Plan, the SABC over-reached itself as a blatant political pro-

agandist for the National
arty.

Yet, in spite of the SABC's appalling record, people in high places are still prepared

1 to defend it. Even the SABC
maintains
biased.

An alarming aspect of the problem is that television and radio, by their very nature, are easily able to deceive the public.

What one sees or hears is so fleeting, and passes so quickly, that one is really not able to make a proper evaluation of the propaganda technique that is being used, or even to realise that it is happening.

The other aspect of the problem is a widespread lack of understanding of the true functions of the SABC, on the one hand, and of newspapers, on the other.

If that were grasped, the

public would be able to form a better assessment on television and of the Press ... and would realise that it is the Press and not the SABC that is their lifeline to liberty. I shall deal with these two aspects; and I turn first to the SABC and to its propaganda methods.

As I indicated earlier, when words and images flash past in quick succession, and are

gone beyond recall, one cannot remember all that has been said; nor does one acquire a comprehensive grasp of what has been put across.

For that reason we need to be particularly grateful to Mr Greg Garden, a lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, who took the trouble to monitor television political broadcasts during the last two weeks in April.

Armed with stopwatches and other scientific accoutre-

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By Dr JOEL IIERWI

MPC for Edenvale, in an edited version of his speech at yesterdayâ\200\231s Transvaal Provincial Council session

ments, the vigilant Mr Garden ascertained that the time allocated to the five political parties was as follows:

Â® National Party â\200\224 79,1%.
Â® Conservative Party â\200\224 8%.
@ Progressive Federal Party
â\200\224 52%.

40New Republic Party â\200\224 9%.

Â® Herstigte Nasionale Party
â\200\224 2,8%.

The overwhelming, totally unjustifiable preference given to the NP is obvious. SABC bias is unmistakable.

When you get to the smaller parties you find the SABC is actually engaged in a three-way bias.

Why should the PFP, which is the official Opposition, be given less time than the CP?

And why should the NRP, a moribund group who raised 312 votes in Waterkloof, get almost exactly the same time share as the PFP?

This does not happen by accident. Since the SABC policy is to boost the Nats, the policy cannot be fully effective unless the SABC also denigrates the most formidable opponent of the NP ... and the most formidable opponent happens to be the PFP.

'or that reason, the PFP gets contemptuous treatment, while the NRP â\200\224 the tired, worn-out political shark party that is trying to worm its way into the Nationalist Party â\200\224 gets privileged treatment, with Mr Jaws Raw (as he may become known) getting almost as much exposure as Dr Slabbert.

Mr Barend du Plessis, the Deputy Minister concerned, persists in denying that the SABC is guilty of distortion or manipulation.

The SABC, he says, has a strict code and also has the right to interpret the news!

This is a specious kind of argument. What Mr Du Plessis omits to mention is that

the news staff of the SABC is

packed almost entirely with

dyed-in-the-wool supporters of the Nats . :. and being biased in favour of the Nats is something that just comes naturally.

It is not an offence or a crime to support the Nats, but one can readily imagine that, if the SABC news staff were gacked with dyed-in-the-wool

rogs, a very different news service would emerge.

In other words, what is missing from the SABC news service is a sense of balance, something that would come if the news staff itself was more

PA3RR%e SABC so blatantly one-sided and propagandist, this brings me to the newspapers, which obviously have a far more important role to play in a country where a biased, slanted SABC enjoys the monopoly of radio and television.

In considering the newspapers, a good starting point is provided by Mr Brian Page, MP for Umhlanga.

Mr Page stated that the SABC â\200\234is no more biased than the newspapersâ\200\235.

Mr Page no doubt imagines he is defending the SABC with that remark. In fact, it is a crashing indictment.

If the SABC, for example, is no more biased than Beeld, then it is very biased indeed; the difference being that Beeld is fully entitled to be biased, whereas the SABC is fully obliged not to be biased.

The SABC is not entitled to be biased because it is paid for by all the taxpayers. .

It is grossly abusing its powers, functions, duties and responsibilities by showing a bias â\200\224 in this instance, a bias of immense magnitude â\200\224 towards one political party.

Newspapers â\200\224 and this applies to newspapers in every democracy â\200\224 are entitled to be biased, and indeed most of

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them are biased in one way or another.

The reason is that, when you have many papers holding a diversity of views, opinions, prejudices and biases, they reflect exactly the diversity of biases and prejudices among people as a whole,

This brings me to the question of the duties of a newspaper company on the one hand and its duty to shareholders on the other.

When an investor looks round for a share to buy, and has to choose between a newspaper and a jam factory, he ought to know that apart from his expectations of a dividend a newspaper is necessarily affected by a

ations that do not remotely apply to a jam factory.

If the investor buys newspaper shares, he must be presumed to have taken these factors into account. But even if he has not done so, and is dissatisfied with his purchase, he has a simple remedy. He can sell his shares.

A newspaper obviously needs to make a profit. If it is not viable, then it will simply fold.

But newspapers, even when they lose, have a history of not being allowed to die so easily. Their value to society, to the nation indeed, even to the world of nations is so vital that they are often kept going in spite of the losses . . .

So when people talk lightly about closing down the Rand Daily Mail because of the interests of shareholders, they obviously do not realise that it would be less drastic for dissatisfied shareholders to take their investment somewhere else, rather than let a newspaper die.

SAAN shareholders, we know, are in fact getting very good dividends despite the Mail's problems; secondly, in-

vestors should foresee that newspapers necessarily have problems, far outside the scope of ordinary business enterprises: and thirdly. if an

going on, no one compels him to remain a shareholder. . . as I've indicated. he can easily sell his shares; and, fourthly, the vociferous critics who don't even own any shares should at least keep their mouths shut.

At any rate it is gratifying to know that the directors of SAAN are alive to the implications of their duties.

One thing at least is certain. As between the SABC and the Rand Daily Mail, when it comes to political news, the Mail will provide an immeasurably more accurate and balanced picture than the SABC.

BISHOP Desmond Tutu, giving evidence at the Eloff Commission of Inquiry into the South African Council of Churches in Pretoria yesterday, said he would defy a banning order and that he deliberately did

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not carry a pass.

This is my country and I am not going to be told that my movements are unnecessarily restricted, he said.

He had also advised couples who wanted to marry across the colour

bar to do so, in defiance

of the Mixed Marriages

Act.

+ The liberation struggle was part of the Ministry of Christ, he said, and by participating in it, the SACC was taking part in God's glorious movement to set his people free.

Civil disobedience would help prevent the State from being unjust, he said, quoting frequently from a Bible he kept at his side.

The State is our servant and when it ceases to be this then it loses the loyalty of its subjects, he said.

If people say you cannot do these things, I say what is left? What else can people do when they do not have political power? What method must they use?

The SACC national conference had adopted a resolution supporting civil disobedience but had never acted on it, he said.

Bishop Tutu also said he supported the banned African National Congress in its goal for a democratic and non-racial South Africa, times condemned its violent methods.

If they were responsible for last Friday's bomb attack, then I condemn that as naked terrorism. In the same way, I condemn the SADF attack on Maputo.

Bishop Tutu told the commission he was in this whole business not because of politics, but because of his understanding of the Bible.

The role of the church was to speak the truth in season and out of season, to make people realise what the real issues were, to be God's

agent for reconciliation and to take on a measure of suffering as part of the Christian witness.

Cross-examination of Bishop Tutu continues today.

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DEFIANT: Tutu says he would defy banning order.

