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EDITORIALS

1. The White Election

This editorial has had to be written before polling day.

The best that anyone could realistically hope for on that day was that the PFP/NRP alliance would do rather well, the 'New Nationalists' win a seat, the Conservative Party do rather badly, and the far-right Herstigtes lose their deposits. There was, of course, never any chance of unseating the Nationalists.

In spite of the fact that the result was a foregone conclusion and that the Parliament which resulted can by no stretch of the imagination be described as democratic there was still some value in the election. For one thing it may have given President Botha an excuse to retire, and we could certainly do with that.

For another, it provided the occasion for the first significant breakaway from their Party of Nationalists on the

left. All the important breaks in the past have been on the right. The fact that these 'New Nationalists' still carry with them a fair amount of Nationalist ideological baggage should not surprise anyone at this early stage. Logic suggests that their new position will force them to abandon more and more of it as time goes by. If that should happen the way would start to open for an important realignment of forces within Parliament which could draw to it other elements on the Nationalist left who lay low during the election for fear of losing their seats. Then the prospect of negotiations between Parliament and the extra-parliamentary opposition might become a real possibility. For although the greatest pressure for change will certainly continue to come from outside Parliament, it is essential, if we are to avoid revolution, that there should be enough sensible people there to be able to persuade that institution eventually to react constructively to that pressure. □