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## EDITORIALS

### 1. Any Hope?

Looking back at the Municipal Elections – how they were run and what came out of them – is there any hope for us?

On the black side, no amount of statistical juggling can hide the fact that, despite a vastly expensive propaganda campaign and a massive show of strength by the 'security forces' in the lead up to the elections and on the day itself, most people just weren't prepared to vote. There was no way that they were going to buy the kind of group-based local government the Nationalists were offering.

On the white side, it is a depressing reflection on how far to the right anti-Nationalist expectations have moved, when commentators take comfort from the fact that the Nationalists still control a place as unimportant as Tzaneen, or that the Conservatives didn't succeed in taking over all the Free State's smaller towns. The truth is, as the results show, that a large part of rural white South Africa has closed its eyes against the real world of today and has them firmly fastened on the fantasies of Dr Verwoerd, that many major centres have more reactionary Councils than they had before, and that only Cape Town, Durban and a few others seem prepared to face the future with their eyes open.

Yet, however unpromising the election results may have been, all is not gloom elsewhere.

The meeting between Rugby's big guns and the ANC is a quite remarkable event. Anyone predicting beforehand that such a thing could happen would have been advised to see a psychiatrist. But it did happen, and it is becoming increasingly obvious that there is a new and growing band of whites, many of them Afrikaners of influence and loyal party supporters up till now, who have just had enough of the bumbling disasters which pass for Nationalist Party policies. They seem prepared, even though they may not

much like the prospect of it, to face the inevitability of a non-racial future. The National Democratic Movement and the Independent Party have shown some ability to exploit this important crumbling at the edges, on the left of the monolith of Afrikanerdom. These two can surely get their act together with a De Beer-led PFP and bring some order and hope back into the ranks of whites opposed to apartheid? There are hints that by the time you read this, it may have happened. We hope so.

On the black side too, there are hopeful developments. In the week before the Municipal Elections. Aggrey Klaaste, Editor of The Sowetan, and his Assistant-Editor, Sam Mabe, launched a campaign in Soweto which they simply called **Nation-Building**. Before an audience of 400, half black, half white, they called on black and white to put behind them the violent excesses which have become such a feature of the political lives of both communities. They called on all South Africans to start reaching out beyond the narrow confines of their groups and their ideologies, to confront the hopes and fears of those who up till now they have simply regarded as adversaries, and to divert their hitherto destructive energies into constructive **Nation-Building**.

It takes brave men to talk such talk in Soweto, but this is perhaps an indication of a changing mood there. Match this with the disillusionment of an important section of the Afrikaner Establishment with P.W. Botha's Government, and we may be seeing something – a new movement born out of the violent traumas of the last years, our growing isolation, and a collapsing economy, towards **real Nation-Building**, embracing everyone.

If you look hard enough, there is hope. □