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## EDITORIALS

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### NOW WHERE?

For an organisation whose consuming passion for more than sixty years has been to secure the survival of Afrikanerdom in Africa what could be more destructive of that aim than the Nationalist Party's performance over the two months since REALITY last appeared? During that time the Party has held its Provincial Congresses, taken a far-reaching decision on Namibia, and elected a new Prime Minister. Each of these events, in its different way, has shown that the Party has no conception of what is required to ensure the Afrikaner a future here.

For instance, at two of the Party's Provincial Congresses, in Natal and the Transvaal, delegates spoke of their fellow black South Africans in the most insulting language and were not even rebuked for it by the party leadership. Indeed, in Natal, where the insults seemed to come in equal measure from English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking delegates, the provincial leader of the party appeared to defend the right of delegates to insult black people if that was what they wanted to do. Does he think that black people don't read what white politicians have to say about them? Or that, if they do, no harm is done to Afrikaner survival prospects when they read the kind of thing that was said at his congress? At the Transvaal Congress, apart from the

offensive things said about having to share post office queues with black people in places like Pietersburg, loud protests were raised against the suggestions in some Afrikaner academic circles that Africans might be given more than the 13% of South Africa that the apartheid dispensation provides for, and that the Bantustans might be better consolidated. The party leadership, never very brave when confronted by its own supporters, assured them again that it would never exceed the 13% land allocation or deviate from its patchwork consolidation plans of 1975. Yet can it for one moment think that black South Africa will ever accept this lop-sided arrangement as a basis for Afrikaner survival?

The other notable feature of the Nationalist Party congresses was the series of speeches made at them by the Minister of Defence, now Prime Minister. They were emotional and belligerent statements on Namibia at a time when negotiations there were at a delicate and crucial stage, and in our view totally irresponsible. These negotiations now seem to have collapsed, South Africa having rejected Dr. Waldheim's plans for their implementation on two main grounds, the size of the UN peace-keeping and administrative force he suggested and his

proposal that the elections in the territory should be delayed for a few months. The South African government claims that a peace-keeping force of the size Dr. Waldheim thinks necessary will swing the election SWAPO's way and that a delay in the election date will do the same. Both arguments seem highly dubious. Is there any previous record of a UN peace-keeping force of the kind proposed for Namibia using its position to try to influence the local situation? None that we know of. On the other hand who can suppose that the massive South African Defence Force and Police presence in Namibia is not going to influence the kind of election the Administrator-General now intends holding? After all do we not know well the lengths to which S.A. government agents have gone before, in such things as homeland and Representative Council elections, to try to make sure that the people they wanted to win those elections did win them? As for the delay in the election date it is quite clear from Mr Ahtisaari's original report and from statements subsequently made by the political organisations concerned that the only people who did **not** want a postponement of the elections were the South African Government, its Administrator-General in Namibia and the party it supports in the election, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance. It wasn't only SWAPO which wanted a postponement, every other party did. And significantly, while the election date seemed to have become a matter of unbreakable principle by the time Mr Vorster announced the rejection of Dr. Waldheim's plan, within a week that principle had been bent sufficiently to allow a postponement just long enough to accommodate the wishes of AKTUR, the Nationalist Party's white off-shoot in Namibia, but not long enough to accommodate the combined wishes of those far more important elements in the situation, SWAPO, the Namibian National Front and Mr Andreas Shipanga's SWAPO Democrats. Mr Vorster's stated reasons for rejecting the Waldheim plan are at best, flimsy, especially when one weighs them against WHAT the possible consequences of that refusal could be. At worst they raise the question whether the Nationalists ever had any intention of allowing an election to take place in Namibia which might produce there anything but the government they wanted. The doubt implicit in this question has grown with the election of the new Prime Minister.

As already mentioned Mr P. W. Botha devoted large parts of his public speeches in the weeks before the Government announced its decision on Namibia to castigating the UN and SWAPO. Who can doubt which way his vote went when it came to deciding whether those proposals should be accepted or rejected? After all is he not said to be the man who contrived the invasion of Angola in an attempt to install a friendly government there? After such a

misjudgement who can now feel with confidence that he would have judged rightly over Namibia . . . or will in the future? Yet, at this time, when what South Africa needs above all at the head of its affairs is a diplomat of extreme sensitivity, the Nationalist Party caucus elects a man whose only previous venture into the field of foreign affairs was a military fiasco. This is not to suggest that either of Mr Botha's opponents had the qualities South Africa needs now. It is interesting to note, however, that Mr Pik Botha, who must have learnt something of what goes on in the world and has shown some appreciation of the need to make at least some superficial changes in apartheid, could muster only a miserable 22 out of the 172 votes on which our fate appears to rest.

Nationalist Afrikaner leadership has in recent years been telling the world and the continent that its people are an African people with a special knowledge of Africa who know what is required for them to be able to continue to live here in peace and amity. Africa has never disputed the Afrikaner claim to be an African people, what it does dispute is its claim to that special knowledge. And who can say it is wrong?

The things said at the Nationalist Party Congresses this year show that many of its supporters regard the presence of people other than themselves in this part of the continent on anything approaching a condition of equality as offensive. Do they think Africa will ever accept them on that basis? This same attitude of superiority, we suspect, lies behind the rejection of a reasonable even if imperfect solution to the Namibian question and the election at this time of a belligerent Prime Minister with a militaristic bent. Both suggest that the Party labours under the illusion that South Africa can still buy security through its military strength. Neither suggests that the future course of events in our country will be based on a reasonable assessment of what is required for a tiny minority of less than 5 million to survive at the tip of a continent of over 200 million. For the military solution can be no more than short-term. Simple arithmetic says that.

Mr Vorster has gone. We feel no regret about that. It is said that the responsibilities of office led him to moderate his views and that this happens to all Prime Ministers. Well, if he did moderate his views he did it far too slowly, for he leaves South Africa in a far more desperate and difficult situation even than the one it was in when he took over. And will Mr P. W. Botha moderate and change his views under the responsibilities of office, and will he do it fast enough to ensure Africa's acceptance of a permanent Afrikaner presence here? We hope so, but there is nothing in his past to suggest that he will. □

## A FACT by Vortex

The whites of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe  
perfectly illustrate  
the human capacity to change,  
to recognize the path of fate,  
to adjust to new realities,  
but alas, too late.