

It is certainly something quite new in Africa to find white people in such proportions (a quarter-of-a-million of them) voting for change based on a future worked out together with their black fellow-citizens.

But the Progressives should not let their natural feelings of jubilation run away with them. The fact of the matter is that the Nationalists hold over 130 seats in Parliament and the Progressives less than 30 and the threat from the Herstigtes is growing ominously. The PFP has made a breakthrough, but time is short, and the momentum must be maintained. The Party's task now is not only to win more recruits from outside its ranks for a programme of negotiated change but to keep reminding those within its ranks of what that change is likely to involve. In particular they must be conditioned to the fact that the constitutional

guarantees the party advocates for minorities, desirable as they may be, will only get support from a new National Convention if they are clearly seen as an attempt to guarantee rights and not to entrench **privileges**. For ultimately, as Dr. Slabbert himself has repeatedly stated, any guarantees written into a constitution will only last if the majority of voters feel they are necessary and good. In short, white voters must be prepared for the fact that, whatever constitutional guarantees the National Convention accepts, the society which it ushers in will be very different from today's.

Keeping this fact before white voters will help build PFP credibility in black eyes, and on that credibility, as much as on white votes, will depend its capacity to influence the future. □

2. THE RAND DAILY MAIL

Allister Sparks has described his sacking from the editorship of the Rand Daily Mail as a symbolic act. And it is. It symbolises many things, not least the blindness of business.

Can the businessmen who own the Mail not see that they have given a spectacular, uncontested victory to the Prime Minister's "total strategy" which will make every other redoubt in his opponents' lines of defence more difficult to hold?

Can they not see that they have dealt a terrible blow to those black people to whom the Mail, over the years, has given the feeling that, perhaps, after all, there are still white people who will put out their necks and fight on their behalf — and who, in turn, have continued to give their support, even if tacitly, to the principles of negotiated change and a non-racial future?

Can they not see that they have given a powerful boost to those who argue that, in a capitalist society, when it comes to a clash between principles and profits, it is the profits that will always win? The owners of the Mail tell us that they sacked Mr. Sparks solely because his paper wasn't profitable enough. This, if one knows anything at all about the arguments going on in the black community about the future shape of our society, seems to us to be the worst argument of all. It will surely convince many black doubting-Thomases, not yet persuaded that Marxism is the answer to their prayers, that capitalism and the free market system is not for them? And how will the owners of the Mail feel about that?

Maybe this time next year the Rand Daily Mail will be showing a profit. We hope that, if it is, somewhere in its Balance Sheet will be recorded that it was almost certainly achieved at the expense of all the rest of us. □

3. MORE DIVIDED THAN EVER

If the Republican Festival in May was supposed to be some sort of healing exercise, binding together the diverse elements in our society, even if only for one brief hour, it could hardly have been more of a disaster. Its final days were marked as much by the sound of exploding sabotage devices and vehement protest as they were by that of marching feet, martial music and the cheers of the crowd.

Long before that the Festival was being boycotted by all the major non-Afrikaner churches, the non-Afrikaner universities, a host of lesser organisations, many white individuals, and the entire black community of any consequence. And how could it be otherwise? Why should anyone celebrate with everyone else a republic imposed on him

without his consent, and founded on the principle that only by keeping apart from those other people could conflict with them be avoided?

Yet even intelligent Nationalists seemed quite unable to understand this massive rejection of their celebrations. During May Archbishop Hurley wrote a letter to members of the Catholic Church urging them not to take part. The main reasons he gave for this call were that the twenty years of the Republic we were being asked to celebrate had been marked by, and continued to be marked by, uprooting of whole communities, increasing rural poverty, widespread urban misery, "and the constant humiliation of being discriminated against in the matter of human rights,

in fact of being deprived entirely of certain rights, like the right of sharing in the political life of the country . . .”.

This letter seemed particularly to enrage Professor Gerrit Viljoen, Minister of Education, one-time head of the Broederbond, hailed now by most of the press as some kind of super-verligte, and certainly one of the most intelligent Nationalists of them all. His reply to the Archbishop's letter was to describe it as a “one-sided, twisted, exaggerated, prejudiced and mischievous version of the alleged evils of the country” — hardly a reasoned reply to the charges contained in the letter.

This clash, between the archbishop and the professor, highlighted a growing division within the ranks of white South Africa. Of course there have always been such divisions but for years they were about issues quite irrelevant to our future, like the old Boer/British feud. Now they increasingly reflect different views on the nature of our society and its future. This difference was dramatically high-

lighted during the celebratory month of May, in the military trial of Charles Yeats for his refusal to answer his call-up to military service.

There is no need here to go again into the detailed reasons Mr. Yeats gave in that trial for that refusal. His statement of belief was carried fully in our last issue. What they amounted to, apart from their inherent pacifism, was his conviction that the “war” in Southern Africa, in which he was being told to play his part, was avoidable, if only the South African authorities could bring themselves to sit down and negotiate with their opponents.

But of course they can't ----- yet! That they will one day we have no doubt. Like Archbishop Hurley and Charles Yeats we think that day should be very soon. Out of those negotiations might come a republic that all of us could celebrate together.

Let's hope we don't have to wait another 20 years for that day. □



Republic Festival – Two Salutes