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EDITORIALS

1. That Election

There was no comfort to be had by anyone with 20th Century thought processes in the result of the May 6th all-white election. It reversed with interest REALITY's modest hopes that the Progressives might gain a few seats and the Conservatives lose a few. Instead we now have a party as the Official Opposition whose spokesman on Law and Order is a member of the violent, racist, anti-semitic AWB. And he is not the only member of the Opposition whose affiliations lie there, where Hitler would have felt at home.

Whether those who planned the campaign to brand the election an irrelevant circus considered this outcome we don't know but that that campaign seriously affected the turn-out for the PFP there can be no doubt. It persuaded numbers of radical opponents of apartheid in key constituencies that to vote was a waste of time, and it persuaded many others, who would normally have worked for the PFP in the run-up to the election, that to do that was a waste of time. That lack of workers led inevitably to the lack of voters on polling day.

Perhaps without the 'irrelevant circus' campaign the PFP

would have retained its position as the Official Opposition, and that would have been very important, but the general rightward trend in white thinking would still have been the most important revelation of the election. And it is good that we should know it. It confirms once more that Nationalist Afrikanerdom, whether NP, CP or HNP, has no intention of handing over power to anyone else in a hurry, that it is supported by a large number of white English-speakers in this, and that its reaction to internal violence and external pressure will be harsh and unbending. We see little prospect of any short-term change in this attitude or of the new Independent Nationalists influencing it. They seem to have forgotten very quickly that a large part of their vote came from Progressives, and by no stretch of the imagination can that be seen as representing a changing mood amongst Nationalists. In any event they have a long way to go before they reach the point where what they offer approaches what the extra-parliamentary opposition is willing to talk about.

A grim road lies ahead, and with most of white south Africa in its present mood, the day of 'liberation' still lies a long way off. □

2. The Future.

As of mid-1987 the future looks pretty bleak.

The blowing up of COSATU House, the Johannesburg Court bomb, the Maputo raid, the new Emergency – what hope for a normal life for one's children, or even one's grand children, lies in more of all that? None at all!

Some hope may lie, though in van Zyl Slabbert's Institute

for Democratic Alternatives for S.A. (IDASA) which held its first conference in Port Elizabeth recently, and then arranged the visit to the ANC in Dakar.

We hope to have a report on these and subsequent developments in REALITY. □