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COVER STORIES

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Voters in what should be the last whites-only election support sharing power with the black majority. Can De Klerk and Mandela now make it happen?

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By BRUCE W. NELAN

victory of such magnitude on an issue so fundamental could easily push a political leader toward hyperbole. But President EW. de Klerk was not exaggerating a bit when he said in Cape Town after last weeks referendum, ttToday we have closed the book on apartheid?

Many more books will have to be written before the countrys problems are solved. But white South Africans-including a majority of the Afrikaans-speaking descendants of the original Dutch settlers_v0ted resoundingly for continuing negotiations with their black compat! on a new constitution. At least 85% 0 6 registered voters turned out, and 68.6% of them said yes to the talks, aimed at creating a new political system in which the black majority will participate fully.

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Even De Klerk and his government were surprised at the 2-to-1 mandate for reform. A population widely perceived as the most stubbornly racist in the world was effectively agreeing to give up its monopoly on power and share it with a black majority that whites have traditionally feared, persecuted and patronized.

uGood and sensible people must be breathing sighs of relieffi was the verdict of Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Others agreed. tlSouth Africa is a diiferent country today? blared Business Day, Johannesburgls financial daily. Said the Sowetan, the largest black daily: llWhites did the right thing?

In spite of the triumph of reform at the ballot box, De Klerkls main negotiating partner, Nelson Mandela, president of the African National Congress (A.N.c.), could not share the euphoria. The countryis 30 million black citizens still suffer profound inequalities in housing, education, medical care and other basic necessities. As Mandela watched whites streaming to the polls, he said, uI still cannot vote in my own country." But when it was over, he smiled and said at last, Itl am very pleased?

White South Africans voted their

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fears, their hopes and their wallets. Business leadersjoined De Klerkis de facto alliance with the liberal Democratic Party, chipping in for a massive advertising campaign that predicted renewed international sanctions and economic disaster in the event of a no vote. One ad, recalling the cancellation of landing rights abroad for South African Airways, depicted a deserted airport runway with the caption liWithout reform, South Africa isnlt going anywhere., ,

Another ad showed an empty cricket ground and advised, "Without reform, South Africa hasnit got a sporting chance? That was a particularly telling shot. One of the sanctions that most pained and angered South Africans over many years was the ban on their participation in international sports, especially cricket and rugby. In the days leading up to the referendum, a rehabilitated South African national cricket team had won a place in the semifinals Of the World Cup. Sports-centered South Africans knew that the team on its first overseas tour in 22 years, would have to pull out if the referendum failed. More than a few votes were strongly influenced by the thought.

The naysayers to the referendum, led by the right-wingConservative Party, had little to offer but a return to apartheid and the partition of the country into white and black areas that had proved unworkable in the past. Arguing that the governments course would lead to political and cultural annihilation for the countryis 5 million whites, party leader Andries Treurnicht forged an alliance that included the neo-

Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement, a link that may have damaged the Conservative cause. Former President PIW. Botha, now 76 and retired, also urged a no vote. ill cannotf, he said, lisupport a reform process that leads to the suicide of my people." But even the largely Afrikaaner voting district of George, which includes Bothais former parliamentary constituency, went for reform 65% to 35%. In the end, most whites decided, for their own reasons, that they had to back the government, though clearly many have yet to confront the fact that a transfer of power is likely to be accompanied by

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a redistribution of wealth within the country. iiFi-nancially, we will be better off? said Tinkie van Jaarsveldt, a furniture-store clerk in Vereeniging, south of Johannesburg. ttChangeji said golf pro Gary Player, his the price of survival? A jubilant De Klerk, welcoming the result on his 56th birthday, called it itthe real birthday of the real new South African nation." His position is now immensely strengthened. Until last week he had been trying to enforce his reforms from the top down. But he had lost three parliamentary by-elections in the past nine months to proeapartheid Conservatives, and he could claim no clear popular mandate to negotiate whites out of their exclusive grip on power.

Now he can. After the media blitz and the posters on every corner, the 2.8, million people who voted could not have been under any illusion about the choices before them. Like Mandela, De Klerk saw the paradox in the all-white vote. uThere stricken farmland of Northern Transvaal, registered a no, 57% to 43%. Even the blue-collar mining towns around Johannesburg said yes, though by a narrow margin.

While it was a famous victory, the euphoria was short-lived, giving way to the familiar problems of recession, urban crime and political warfare in the townships where more than 300 blacks were killed in power struggles during the three weeks leading up to the referendum. Confrontation also resumed on the political front.

Three days after the vote, Mandela vowed to halt the governments pla put a 10% tax on b foods and threatened to engineer a series of

strikes and protests tieven if we destroy zwu no.1 HVLS x3v18/ssaua 33:1: LIOMLBO-A31Naru EWIJ. HO: HVLS MDVWE/SSBHd 33H! 1'08130-A31Nunl 3 OMVC who started this long chapter in our historyll had been called upon to end it.

More than half of the countryls 3 million Afrikaners backed. reform, though support from English speakers, who tend generally to be more liberal, was the basis

of De Klerkh surprisingly sweeping success. Of 15 regions, only the Afrikaner the economy? The government has no right to impose such taxes, he said. They must get our express approval? If strikes by black workers could bring down the economy, they probably would have done so years ago. Still, the economy is in serious trouble, battered by sanctions, is an element of justice/, he said, that we "Reconciliation- Is POSSIBLE"

THABO MBEKI, 49, foreign affairs director of the African National Congress, outlines a scenario of hope
By SCOTT MAC LEOD

Q. How do you view the referendum results?

A. All of us were pleasantly surprised at the extent of the majority. We might have underestimated the willingness of white South Africans to support a process of change. The outcome reassured the majority of black people that peace is possible, national reconciliation is possible and acting together as one people, never mind the different colors, is possible. In that sense, you have passed beyond the point where you might say that we might have to resort to arms to bring about change.

Q. What do you expect from the negotiations?

A. The second session of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa should take place before the end of April. It is possible that CODESA will then agree on an interim government.

bastion of 'Pietersburg, in the drought-recession and capital flight. The growth

Q. What would that interim government look like?

A. All the forces at CODESA should be in it. The CODESA decisions will have to change the powers of the President; they are too great. You will shift a lot of the powers to the broad-based government of national unity. In that context, you might leave the President where he is.

Q. How do you reconcile the A.N.C.'s demand for majority rule and President de Klerk's demand for power sharing?

A. Precisely because we are coming from an apartheid society, it might be that the A.N.C., to build a new South Africa, may not be opposed to a coalition government. But we are opposed to coalitions enforced by the constitution. One of the principles that has been agreed to at CODESA is that there would be effective participation of minority parties in governing the country.

Q. Has the A.N.C. finalized its policy on whether to nationalize companies?

A. The A.N.C. has not made a decision. There is nothing in the thinking of the A.N.C. that says, We must nationalize? Nobody should be afraid that the A.N.C. will gobble up everything. The A.N.C. is concerned with economic imbalances in this country. We want to achieve certain objectives. We are not excluding any option, like the option of nationalization or the option of privatization of existing public assets.

Q. One reason for concern is the presence of so many communists in the A.N.C.

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Measurable steps toward that solution session is held next month, A.N.C. officials transfer power from the all-white Cabinet

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man here and a rogue soldier there, the security forces are

' meant a 1.3% annual loss

.say that growth of even

rate has averaged barely

1% a year over the past

10 years. Taking popula-

tion increases into ac-

count, that has actually

in per capita domestic

output. By the end of last

year, 4.7 million adults,

or 47% of the work force,

mostly black, were unem-

ployed and the inflation

rate stood at 16%.

Though most coun-

tries have lifted their eco-

nomics sanctions, South

Africa desperately needs

new investment. The

A.N.C. says the country

would need a 9% annual

growth rate to absorb all

those entering the labor

market. But financial an-

alysts in Johannesburg

4% a year would demand

about \$7 billion a year in

investment from abroad. It is slow in com-

ing because of apprehension about the

political future and how soon it will arrive.

De Klerk wants to get to the future as

soon as possible. ttWe should not waste

any time? he says. stThe uncertainty that

bothers so many will only go away if you

put a negotiated solution on the table?

A. I cant speak for the Communist Party, but I think it is no

longer talking about nationalization. There is certainly no pres-

sure from the Communist Party on the A.N.c.

Q. Will the A.N.c. military wing, Spear oi the Nation, now disband?

A. We believe that it and all other armed forces, like the police,

should come under the control of the interim government.

.Then it will cease being a rebel army. It would become part of

he new national defense force.

Q. Now that whites have voted yes, shouldn't

the A.N.c. end its call for economic sanctions

against South Africa?

A. There is clearly justification for that ar-

gument. But we believe the establishment

of the interim government will be the cor-

rect moment to lift all economic sanctions.

You are dealing with a matter of a few

months until all diplomatic, economic and

cultural sanctions are lifted.

Q. Do you still believe that De Klerk has a

double agenda?

A. A good part of the violence starts from

within the security forces. They (the gov-

ernmentl viewed the violence as helping to

weaken their strongest political opponent,

the A.N.C. The government must abandon

the notion that except for a rogue police-

began in December when 19 political

groups representing all races created a fo-

rum called the Convention for a Demo-

cratic South Africa (CODESA). It set up

five working groups, and one of them

reached agreement on ubasic principlesii

involved in establishing an interim government. When CODESA,S second plenary clean.

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say, agreement on an interim government could be reached. tilt Willi, says Mandela, ttsupervise the transition from an apartheid to a democratic state."

Just how the interim authority will be created is still not clear. According to one scenario gaining currency, Parliament could amend the present constitution to

Q. Are you concerned about a right-wing coup?

A. The possibility is rather remote. They would be acting against the overwhelming majority of the population, black and white. What is important is to ensure that this kind of thing does not happen after the new government has been formed.

You see this thing happening in other countries. People create an atmosphere of instability and the armed forces intervene, saying that the politicians have failed.

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Q. Can CODESA succeed it the Conservative Party refuses to take part in the negotiations?

A. Movement forward is possible. Thirty percent of the whites voted no because they are uncertain of the future.

You have to address white fears. You have to show that when you have an interim government, white babies are not killed and white women are not raped and peoples homes are not taken over. Then they see that you can have a government other than a white government and they are perfectly all right.

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to a government of national unity. De Klerk, however, has said he must retain control of the government until agreement is reached on the text of a new constitution.

To write the constitution, the A.N.C. is calling for a constituent assembly," while De Klerk speaks of a transitional parliament." If negotiations succeed, the two concepts could turn out to be roughly the same thing. The A.N.C. is hoping to come up with a constitution a year from now, while De Klerk says the parties have until 1994, when the next national election must be held under the present constitution.

Despite continuing public arguments, the two sides have agreed on some of the points De Klerk describes as his bottom line? including devolution of significant governmental power to provincial and local levels. He predicts that some tough negotiations lie ahead. The biggest gap is between the A.N.C., S unyielding demand for majority rule and De Klerk's concept of power sharing."

To him, that must mean constitutional provisions for including minority—that is, white—parties in the executive branch and providing them with an effective veto over vital legislation.

De Klerk, wary of the A.N.C.'s long-standing association with communism, also wants a constitutional provision for a market-oriented economic system?

The A.N.C. opposes the provision but denies it is wedded to a plan for blanket nationalization of South Africa's biggest corporations.

The President has said several times that he regarded the referendum as the country's last exercise in all-white voting. Even so, he has suggested that if the

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A.N.C. does not go along with his bottom line items, he would have to submit the outcome of the negotiations to whites for another possible veto. His demand for checks and balances is absolutely fundamental? he says. "We will continue negotiating until we are satisfied that a new constitution will be able to accommodate the needs arising from the complexity of our society."

De Klerk called last week's referendum for two reasons. The first was to obtain a clear mandate for reform, and he got it. The second was to demonstrate the intellectual bankruptcy of the right wing.

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On that he was also successful, largely discrediting the Conservatives, but they and those even more extreme have not yet rolled over. Party leader Treurnicht insists that "the struggle for our freedom and survival continues" and says he will continue to refuse invitations to join the CODESA talks.

De Klerk's advisers are concerned that some of the 876,000 who voted no may

turn to terrorism and cause both physical and political damage. He pledges to take a stand against ultraright forces and not allow them to derail his plans for reform. ttI expect a small radical core group will not just lie down and accept itfl he says, ttand will be thinking of doing some wild things. But that is what the law is for and we will apply the law."

He now knows the majority of Afrika-ners want him to succeed, to restore the country to peace and prosperity and end its pariah status. uAfrikaners have become Africans,w says Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, former leader of the libera-
position in Parliament. tlThey cann t
tinue standing apart. De Klerk has said, Forget it. We tried that, and it didnlt
work.h

Sampie Terreblanche, a professor of economics at Stellenbosch University, was long one of the ruling National Party's policy planners. He rebelled against P.W. Botha's autocratic rule and helped move the party toward moderation. ttThere was always this attitude that the world can go to hellfl he says. ltNow Afrikaners have become aware of the outside world." De Klerk and Mandela are hoping that all white South Africans have finally, permanently, come out of the laager and into the world. -Reported by Peter Hawthorne/Cape Town and Scott MacLeod/Johannesburg
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