

1973 — year United Party won't forget

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THE THREE big political developments of 1973 were: The success of the reformist movement in the United Party; the increasing gravity of the country's problems; and the emergence of the Chief Ministers of the Bantustans as leaders in their own right.

The United Party will not forget 1973 easily. It was a year of turmoil and confusion in which brother fought brother.

Out of the crucible came a stronger United Party: more tightly knit, more purposeful, more enlightened, more impatient with the old, failing order.

the phrase that he had rid himself of a millsteyn round his neck. The baleful influence is gone, and Sir De Villiers today is a changed, and changing man, which is more than can be said for some of his lieutenants.

The year of reform in the UP culminated in the recruitment of Professor Nic Olivier — one of the truly significant developments of 1973. For an Afrikaaner verligte of Professor Olivier's calibre to declare his support for the United Party — and not to fear it as the kiss of

The Schwarz-Basson reformers saved the United Party from an abyss. There is still residual resistance to them in the second echelon of leaders under Sir De Villiers Graaff, but the ethos the United Party is acquiring is theirs. This much is irrevocable.

At the beginning of 1973 the United Party were in the doldrums. They had become an inward-looking, shrinking party run more as an exclusive club than as a political growth point. One by one they had lopped off limbs that should have been co-ordinated parts of an opposition corpus: churchmen, students, academics, newspapers, verligtes of all kinds.

Mr. Marais Steyn had been the theoretician of this strategy — that the UP should purify themselves until they qualified for acceptance by the Nationalist Party: a trojan horse with an empty belly.

Mr. Steyn's own defection was the logical consequence of this strategy: he became a solitary, ineffectual defector.

Astonishing

This was one of the astonishing events of 1973: the ease with which Mr. Steyn was defeated at the UP's Transvaal congress, and then his unexpected decision to join the Nationalists, instead of taking up a position on the cross-benches and operating as a Nationalist agent from there to disrupt the United Party.

Mr. Steyn just freaked out, which showed how totally unacceptable his strategy had become to UP followers. He knew he had come to the end of the road. When he crossed over no one followed him. It was the political flop of the year. Yet he had been virtually deputy leader of the United Party. There is a moral in this somewhere for someone.

As far as can be ascertained, the UP suffered no ill-effects from Mr. Steyn's defection. On the contrary, many people were hugely relieved when he left. Like a self-sealing tube, the UP rolled on unperturbed.

Even Sir De Villiers, who once described Mr. Steyn as his right hand and his left hand, seemed to be relieved.

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SIR DE VILLIERS GRAAFF
... changed man.

death — means something is stirring in South African politics.

The pity is that it was left to the Transvaal UP to "discover" Professor Olivier, and not the UP hierarchy in the Cape, where he lives.

This is still what one finds so



MR. JAPIE BASSON
... party reformer.

frustrating about South African politics: the total inability, intellectual and instinctive, of some of the UP leaders to see that a whole new scene is opening out before them.

What the UP should have done, as 1973 came to an end, was to grasp the fact that the Bloemfontein congress, finally, had put the party on the map, and that a whole range of new parliamentary talent suddenly had become available. Immediately, the UP should have put two score or so of their old stalwarts out to graze (in the nicest possible way, of course) and brought in the new talent.

The effect on the electorate would have been electrifying, but instead most of the old faces are returning to Parliament — and what earthly use they will be to the United Party in the dramatic year that lies ahead, I cannot imagine. What a missed opportunity!

UP expansion

There are still some people in the UP who do not see what the reformist movement is about: that it has brought an expansion to the United Party which, in time, could lead to a verligte front being formed in South Africa.

Such a front would not be a ganging up against Afrikaner nationalism, but a fusion of the best verligte elements in all the political parties, Nationalist included.

If there is any other way of voting verkrampste Nationalists out of office, I would like to hear it. The whole momentum of events in 1973 pointed in this direction.

There are all manner of Afrikaner verligtes, who, for example — to quote Professor Olivier — are looking at the UP today with new eyes.

This is where the Opposition's political potential lies today, and for the UP to ignore this potential because they want to return a score or so of their old troupers to Parliament merely for sentimental reasons is incomprehensible. The issue is South Africa's future, not the feelings of a few MPs.

The Progressive Party cannot ignore this slow shift towards a verligte front. At the moment

its fortunes are uncertain.

There is no mistaking the appeal the reformist movement in the UP exercises for some of their followers, but, on the other hand, there is also a profound scepticism in their ranks that the UP could ever reform, as witness their participation in the Schlebusch Commission.

It is asking too much of the United Party or the Progressive Party, in the present run-up to the general election, to expect them to do anything except slog it out on public platforms, but at least one can hope that they will inflict as little permanent injury on each other as possible.

There is a whole new ball game coming up, and it would be a wise precaution for politicians of all parties to keep their options open.

The UP's troubles in 1973 served to conceal the gravity of the Nationalist Government's problems, but now they will come under public scrutiny.

Some of these problems are assuming awesome dimensions. Here are just a few of them:

The economy refuses to pick itself up, a severe inflationary upsurge is predicted for the second half of 1974, the colour bar is holding back productivity, the Black labour force is becoming sporadically restive, the Bantustans are becoming a law unto themselves, the Col-

oured Persons Representative Council is almost a shambles, dialogue with Africa is dead, Lesotho and Botswana are drifting out of South Africa's neighbourly reach, Ovamboland is under emergency rule, the future of South West Africa is precarious, Australia and New Zealand have turned against us, the prospect of South Africa's being expelled from the United Nations becomes more forbidding every year — and



MR. MARAIS STEYN
... freaked out.

now we have an oil boycott.

The Government clearly are undecided how to handle the situation.

Their immediate, primeval instincts have been to clobber their opponents, but this, instead of improving the position simply aggravates it.

At the same time, they are trying out a verligte approach to some of their problems: urban Africans, sport, minimum wages, the industrial colour bar, Bantustan independence, petty apartheid, etc.

Most of this verligtheid, of course, is not fundamental change, but marginal adaptation. It could not be otherwise, with a general election coming up and the Nationalist Party falling back on their old verkrampste standbys. But what will Mr. Vorster, the Prime Minister, do after the election?

Obviously, it would be folly for him to clamp down on his extra-parliamentary opponents. This problem would not be relieved, and the friends he needs overseas would find it just that much more difficult to help him.

As for introducing anti-Press legislation, this would be sheer provocation.

The sensible thing for the Nationalist Government to do would be to take advantage of the UP's new verligtheid to widen the scope of their own verligtheid.

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THE SUNDAY TIMES Sayings

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● An ultra-leftist liberal cannot be used as a censor . . . it contradicts the whole essence of censorship.—Mr. Jannie Kruger, chairman of the Publications Control Board.

● Church and nation should not be confused. The church was not intended to intervene in everything, not even in all the good things of life. — Dr. A. P. Treurnicht.

● I am suffering from political rejection.—Professor Chris Barnard.

● It has been reported



MISS NORMA LEVY



MR. JANNIE KRUGER

that I like White people. You don't like them, they grow on you. — Pearl Foster, wife of world lightweight champion Bob Foster.

● No Afrikaner man would offer another man a flower — least of all Dr. Albert Hertzog. — Mr. Jaap Marais.

You, the boerevroue, have kept our country clean while others have been defiled. I ask you ladies to gird your loins and pray for oil. — Dr. Piet Koornhof, Minister of Sport, in his Day of the Covenant appeal.

● I can't understand how these people (clerics) can criticise my act without knowing what the full performance entails.—Stripper Glenda Kemp.

● Mr. Marais Steyn is not just my right hand; he is my left hand too. — Sir De Villiers Graaff.

● We all say irresponsible things in the heat of the moment. — Mr. Marais Steyn commenting on his statement that the Nationalist Government was the worst which God ever cursed a country.

● It's all right for people like Dominee Kemp and me



MRS. HELEN SUZMAN

to go to Europe, for we are spiritually armed against temptations. For anyone else it would be a serious mistake. — Mr. Gert Yssel, the arch miniskirt hater.

● I love those pictures which the Vaderland uses of me. They make me look like a Jewish vulture about to devour small Christian children. — Mrs. Helen Suzman, MP.

● We have not banned it — we have simply decided not to give it any playing time. — SABC comment on alleged ribald song "My ding-a-ling."

● The wave of strikes in Natal has little to do with more money for Africans. They were caused by agitators. — Mr. Marais Viljoen, Minister of Labour.

● Sons of the Xhosa nation . . . the dawn has come on a vital working day for your people. Don't let the sun catch you under your blankets. — Dr. Hans Abraham, Commissioner-General of the Xhosas.

● The United Party is an export model of the Nationalist Party; parliamentarians are deaf and Afrikaans students are "slagpat." — Breyten Breytenbach.

● I voted Conservative at the last general election since the Tories were my best clients. — Mrs. Norma Levy, call-girl in the Lord Lambton scandal.

● It's only masculine, dominating women who want to become priests. — Prebendary Henry Cooper, Canon of Bloomsbury, London.

● All teaching in all subjects aims to stimulate interest. It would be odd if this were not true of sex lessons. — Mr. Roger Probert, Birmingham (UK) headmaster.

● I find the effort of trying to look beautiful from eight in the morning until late at night rather terrifying. — Brigitte Bardot.

● Oil is a legal force in our hands, and so far we have not used it as a real weapon. — Sheikh Yamani, Saudi Arabian Oil Minister.

● There can be no white-wash at the White House. — President Nixon.

● The trouble is that when one starts denying things, people assume that the things one does not deny must be true. — Mr. Geoffrey Johnson Smith, British MP.

● I don't believe there's anything in the Constitution that says that the powers of the presidency be separated from the truth. — Senator Sam Ervin, United States.

● The houses in most of London's most beautiful squares were bought and raised by speculators. Number 10 Downing Street was built by a speculator, and there has never been any



DR. PIET KOORNHOF

unwillingness to occupy it. — Mr. Evelyn King, British MP.

● It is not difficult to mislead simple, gullible people who believe in witchdoctors and the throwing of bones. — Mr. Ian Smith, Prime Minister of Rhodesia.

● If politicians lived on praise and thanks they'd be forced into some other line of business. — Mr. Edward Heath, Prime Minister of Britain.



MR. GERT YSSEL



BRIGITTE BARDOT

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