

in this issue . . .

EDITORIALS: 1. Real South Africans	2
2. Poles Apart	3
CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO WAR by Charles Yeats	4
LAWYERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS by Ernie Wentzel	7
REPUBLICAN SONG AND ELECTION by Vortex	8
THE NATIONAL EDUCATION UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA	9
ORGANISED BLACK POLITICAL RESISTANCE 1912-1950; Part 2: 1930-1950 by Tom Lodge	10
TRIBUTE TO E.V. MAHOMED by J. F. Hill	13
A FRESH CLEAR VOICE: REVIEW OF SHABIR BANOOBHAI'S ECHOES OF MY OTHER SELF By Colin Gardner	14
DURBAN HOUSING IN CRISIS by Crispin Hemson	15
REVIEW OF J. M. COETZEE'S WAITING FOR THE BARBARIANS by John Passmore	18
RICK TURNER'S CONTINUING CHALLENGE: A REVIEW OF HIS THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE by Colin Gardner	20

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EDITORIALS

1. REAL SOUTH AFRICANS

In recent months two people have died whose lives were wonderful examples of what, in our view, a good South African's life should be. They were E.V. Mahomed and Nell Marquard.

Their backgrounds could hardly have been more different. E.V., whose family could not afford to see him through to the end of school, the Stanger bookkeeper who taught himself almost all there was to know about the South African political scene; Nell Marquard, with her roots in the university world, teaching English, married to Leo, one of South Africa's most profound political thinkers, one of the greatest of the Afrikaner dissidents.

Both Nell and E.V. were amongst the first members of the Liberal Party of South Africa. E.V. founded the Party's Stanger branch, was its driving force for many years, became National Treasurer of the Party, and was finally banned, the ban still being in effect when the Government closed the Party down. With Leo, Nell forged a partnership which was an inspiration to Liberals of

all ages and groups for many years, but particularly to young Liberals during the hard and frustrating years from the Nationalist accession to power in 1948 to Leo's death in 1974. And after his death she still kept on fighting for what they had both so firmly believed in.

Each of these two formed a remarkable relationship with one of the leading black political figures of our day. E.V.'s close friendship with Chief Luthuli and his family was something which developed over many years. They were the two outstanding figures in the Stanger community. When the Chief was banned, and E.V. was still free, the Mahomed office and home became Luthuli's channel of communication to the outside world. But in spite of this friendship E.V. never joined the Congress Movement. Its sectional organisation was something he could not accept. It was in the Liberal Party that he found the non-racial political home he wanted.

The story of Nell Maarquard's friendship with Robert Sobukwe is extraordinary. As she wrote in REALITY at

the time of Sobukwe's death, it was a friendship which 'began and grew in letters'. When the notorious 'Sobukwe clause' was added to the General Laws Amendment Act, so that Robert Sobukwe could be kept on Robben Island after completing his sentence, Nell wrote to him, although she did not know him, to ask if he would like her to send him the 'New Yorker' and 'The Listener'. He said that he would, and from there grew the friendship which was to be confirmed and cemented when Robert Sobukwe was finally released from gaol and banned to Kimberley, where Nell Marquard soon went to visit him.

These two, the Stanger bookkeeper and the Stellenbosch lecturer, achieved neither great fame, nor power, nor riches, but something greater than all three.

They showed that the primary constraint which the South African situation places on us all, the racially restrictive conditions into which we are born and in which we grow up, can be overcome - that the best South Africans are those to whom their own and anyone else's race has come to mean nothing. These are the kind of people we need for the future. □

2. POLES APART

In March Bishop Desmond Tutu was in the United States, predicting that South Africa would have a black Prime Minister within 10 years.

Meanwhile, back home on the hustings, an election campaign was being fought and the Herstigte Nationalist Party was saying that South Africa would never, ever, have a black Prime Minister, except over its dead body, and the Nationalist Party of Mr. P.W. Botha was saying much the same thing, even if less stridently in some constituencies than others.

That South Africa will have a black Prime Minister one day we have no doubt. The simple arithmetic of the populat-

ion of the country and the African continent decrees that. It is how that day arrives that matters.

When no Herstigte, and not many Nationalists, would dream of even saying a polite word to Bishop Tutu, whose conditions for peaceful change are perfectly reasonable, and a growing number of black people won't talk to any white person, Herstigte, Nationalist or anything else, what hope is there of avoiding the ghastly conflict even Mr. B.J. Vorster could see might come?

Not much, judging by the tone of the election campaign mounted by the various brands of Afrikaner Nationalism. □