

2. BOTHA AND TREURNICHT

Does the Botha/Treurnicht split hold out the hope for important, negotiated change in South Africa? Not much, at this stage, we wouldn't think.

Both Mr. Botha and Dr. Treurnicht claim to be the authentic guardians of Nationalist Party policy. The support for Dr. Treurnicht's version of this policy is already very considerable, probably greater than most people anticipated, and it will almost certainly grow. The question is, how much?

In these early days of the break, political commentators who would like to see negotiated change are hoping that this right-wing pressure will force Mr. Botha to look for friends elsewhere, even to the Progressive Party. We don't know whether Mr. Botha is psychologically capable of such a move, or whether what he regards as progress would

appeal to even the most conservative Progressive and pressure from the Right could just as easily draw him in that direction as push him in the other. However, that change is coming in South Africa there can be no doubt. It will either come by negotiation accompanied by a certain amount of violence, or after a catastrophe.

If it is to happen by negotiation, the moment at which the process started will only become clear in the light of history. We aren't very hopeful, but this break might just be it.

There are, however, two important points to remember.

We haven't got another 100 years to get to the negotiating table. And as long as those who control white power insist that they will only negotiate on the basis of Nationalist principles, we will never get there at all. □

3. THE BUTHELEZI COMMISSION

In our next issue we hope to carry a detailed assessment of the report of the Buthelezi Commission, by Professor David Welsh of the University of Cape Town.

For the moment, all we want to say is that we regard the Report as a most important and responsible document. Although it is concerned only with Natal and Kwa-Zulu it suggests a possible starting point for a shared future for all South Africans. From that starting-point, as confidence in one another grew, we could begin to build together the non-racial future which most of us want. The report has won widespread support in Natal. It has only been rejected by the Nationalist Party, which says it is in conflict with the

basic principles of apartheid, by the New Republic Party, which says its policy provides the answer to everything, and by the Natal Indian Congress, which says it is committed to the Freedom Charter.

We hope these are not firm positions from which these three bodies have no intention of ever moving. After all, negotiated change can only come from negotiation and at the end of it all everyone, no doubt, ends up with something less than they would like to have, but reasonably satisfied with what they have got.

To reach that happy point one has to start somewhere, and the Buthelezi Report could be the place to do it. □

THE GRAND OLD MAN HAS GONE

by Alan Paton

The Grand Old Man of Edendale, the ANC, and the Liberal Party has gone. H. Selby Msimang, once the National Deputy Chairman of the Party, died at Edendale on Monday the 29th March 1982, at the age of 95.

When one heard of his death, one's dominant emotion was not so much sorrow at his death, as gratitude and admiration for his life.

One was glad that he was able to see in REALITY of March 1982, that magnificent cover photograph of himself, and to

read the warm tribute that was paid to him by Peter Brown. He was much loved by members of the old Party.

He can be remembered for many things, but one of the greatest was that in these days of racial alienation, and of Black bitterness and frustration, he still continued to exemplify in his life the enduring principles of liberalism: a belief in human liberty, in social justice, and the rule of law; and the wide tolerance for the otherness of people whose origin was very different from his own.

Anger he could feel, hatred never. He was what one might call a noble man. □