

LEO MARQUARD

FOUNDER, FRIEND AND FIGHTER

by Edgar Brookes



Leo Marquard

The Natal Witness

Leo Marquard was a Founder. He founded NUSAS, he founded the Liberal Party, he was a foundation member of the Institute of Race Relations. He was thus a pioneer of South African thought.

Leo was also a wonderful friend. None of those who worked with him can think of him as anything else. He was always the same, always good-humoured, always tolerant. If you met him after a long interval you found in him the same friend whom you had last seen years ago. Leo was a fighter — not an aggressive “militant” but a steady soldier, courageous in attack, unbroken in defeat. He was of the same metal as the British soldiers who sang “Tipperary” on the Retreat from Mons. Disappointment did not sour him, vituperation did not inflame him. He was unconquerable.

He had that unusual and wonderful combination of enthusiasm and patience. He believed profoundly in education as a weapon. A true liberal, he did not scorn reason, and had no time for histrionics, superficial emotion and meaningless violence. He wrote much — and how well and lucidly he wrote! — and during his years with the Oxford University Press gave to the public other peoples’ writing which but for him might never have been published. In the Army Educational Services he did work of great value.

He never ceased to be a good South African. His vocation was not one of exile and protest but of persevering and courageous work in his own country. We thank God for him.

“ His life was gentle and the elements
So mixt in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world ‘This was a man.’”

How much he owed to his valiant and understanding wife. To our dear Nell we offer our sympathy and our pride in him whom she and we have lost. □

Leo Marquard was born in 1897 in Winburg in the Free State.

He was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University where he graduated with a B.A. (Hons.) degree and a Diploma in Education in 1923.

In 1924 he founded Nusas.

From 1939–45 he helped Dr E. G. Malherbe in establishing the army education services and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel and awarded the M.B.E. (military).

In 1945 he represented South Africa at the inaugural conference of UNESCO with J. H. Hofmeyr.

From 1946–62 he was Editorial manager of The Oxford University Press, Cape Town, during which time he helped found the Liberal Party.

In 1973 he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Laws by The University of the Witwatersrand.

In May 1974 a second honorary degree will be conferred posthumously on him by The University of Natal.

He was a member of the Editorial Board of Reality.