

say, he was a man of rugged commonsense who managed to get tremendous pleasure out of life — an achievement to which his lovely sense of humour and his common touch contributed appreciably. He loved good stories and told many.

Nationalists, I believe, respected him, particularly his ice-cold logic and intellectual integrity. And although they started from the premise that he was politically “verdwaald”, they, the “super patriots”, were never able seriously to doubt his South Africanness, his “egtheid”. In their heart of hearts they knew that there was nothing “uitheems” about his liberalism: they must have realised that he was a natural liberal.

But Leo was no starry-eyed idealist. He never had any illusions about the difficulty of the path the liberal in South Africa had to tread. In his first book on South African politics, “The Black Man’s Burden”, written under the pseudonym of John Burger and published in 1943 while he was serving in the Army, Leo wrote:

“... liberalism is fighting a gallant rearguard action and all it can do is to try to prevent the forces of reaction from having it all their own way. It is, indeed, apparent that the limits of reformism have been reached and that any further improvement in the living conditions of the non-European proletariat will have to be achieved along the lines of industrial action rather than by liberal influence in politics.”

“The Black Man’s Burden” sheds a good deal of light on Leo’s fairly radical early thinking and confirms, as I suggested earlier, that he was among the first to warn against the fascist cancer and to see communism in its right perspective. So, for instance, he wrote: “What the Nationalist Press mistakes for communism is sheer discontent blindly directed against an exploitation whose nature the African does not understand.”

In another passage he pointed out that “the Union is a precursor, and not a follower, in the matter of racial doctrines. Long before the Nuremberg laws were promulgated in Nazi Germany, South Africa had laws compelling its citizens to be careful about their grandmothers”. He saw the real peril facing this country as fascist racism and pinned his faith in a “strong and educated working-class movement of all workers, European and non-European. Along that path alone lies hope for the future.”

Leo, perhaps more than any South African of his generation, tried to make people think in sane and unemotional terms about politics. He set countless men and women of all races on the road to thinking rationally and getting their priorities right. For that alone his memory deserves to be honoured. □

# A TRIBUTE TO LEO MARQUARD

by David Welsh.

It is now exactly four years since Leo Marquard died at the ripe old age of 77. For some years prior to his death his health had been indifferent, but right up to the end he remained, for the most part, cheerful, and also intellectually alert and lively.

In watching a number of people I know grow old I have often wondered what circumstances combine to produce that mellowness and tranquility that were so characteristic of Leo. He could look back over a long life-time of rich experience, rewarding activities, interesting friends and colleagues, and he could, if he had been induced to do so (which I doubt) sense the glow of satisfaction that a successful career and life must bring.

More important, though, I think that Leo’s serenity came from a combination of unshakable moral convictions about the nature of the just and compassionate society, and his never-failing openmindedness and willingness to consider new ideas. He was sincere in his beliefs and he never felt that sheer dogmatism was necessary for their defence.

It may seem that in the South Africa of 1978 to look with admiration at the life of a liberal is to engage in the celebration of lost causes. I have been saddened by conversations with some of my elderly friends to sense in them a feeling, not articulated in so many words, that all their efforts had been a waste of time; that the rise and consolidation of apartheid amounted to a trampling on their convictions and ideals.

Leo never indulged in this essentially self-piteous kind of thinking — or at least I never detected a trace of it: Neither was he unduly optimistic or immune to pessimism.

I am sure that he would have taken the philosophical view that he had done his best, that he had never flinched from the consequences of his convictions, and that his efforts and those of others, while not reaping immediate benefits, would make their contribution in what was (and is) bound to be a protracted struggle.

Leo’s concrete achievements as a scholar and publisher, aside from his activities in politics and student affairs, will stand as a monument to the acuteness of his intellect and his wisdom. **The Black Man’s Burden**, published under the pseudonym of John Burger, and **Peoples and Policies of South Africa** are, in my judgement, Leo’s outstanding books. The difference in tone between the two is also an interesting reflection of the probable change of Leo’s thinking. The earlier book, **The Black Man’s Burden** was published during World War II and reflects his concern with Fascism and its local offshoots or variants. The stance is much more radical than those, who like myself, knew Leo only in later times.

The outstanding quality of **People & Policies** is its ability to convey vividly a sense of the flesh and guts of South African society — more so than any other comparable introductory text. This book has run to four editions and was updated by Leo at least twice. I venture to express the hope here that someone might consider another updating so that its usefulness is not impaired.

The book which Leo might have written, but never did, was of course his autobiography. Some years before his death Peter Brown and I were involved in an abortive effort to persuade Leo to make a start, but, as I recall,

Leo snorted and said that he was far too young to consider doing any such thing!

The way lies open now for Leo's biographer. I hope that these few words of tribute might help to persuade some scholar or writer to undertake the project. The extensive collection of his papers is lodged in the University of Cape Town library, and many other sources would be available in the files of bodies with which he was associated. May I also take this opportunity of asking anyone who has letters from Leo or anecdotes about him to consider sending them to me for addition to his papers?

A biographer would have to go further than recounting the story of Leo's life and times. He would have to address himself to some of the hard questions that are being posed to liberals today, especially by the neo-Marxist left and, to some extent, by black nationalists. For example, has one

of the historical roles of white liberalism been to lead African nationalism up blind, reformist alleys? Is it a conservative ideology, basically concerned with safeguarding capitalism? And have white liberals been hypocritical, insincere etc. etc?

Another interesting facet of Leo's life would be to trace the people to whom he was related and the number of pupils he taught who subsequently became distinguished in their fields. I often used to rag Leo about this, holding that there seemed to be very few (white) South Africans who didn't fall into these categories. His personal influence was immense. All who had dealings with him came away impressed with his vision and commonsense. So far as I am aware Leo had no enemies — and that is an extraordinary achievement for a South African who spent a life-time in public affairs. □

## REFLECTIONS ON

by Peter Brown

## GRAAFF-REINET

Although there were many contacts between Liberal Party and Pan-Africanist Congress members during the few brief years of the PAC's official existence 20 years ago, I did not meet Robert Sobukwe at that time. In fact my one and only meeting with him took place only a few months before his death, in Groote Schuur Hospital, and lasted barely a quarter of an hour. Theo Kotze of the Christian Institute (both of them now banned), took me to see him. It was an inspired thought on his part, on the only day I spent in Cape Town in the whole of 1977, and one for which I shall always be grateful. For, to meet Robert Sobukwe was for me, at any rate, a quite exceptional experience. He had just had a massive operation, should still have been in bed but wasn't, was still very weak, was only just recovering the use of his voice, yet still gave the impression of immense strength. Many people have remarked on the fact that, in spite of all he had been subjected to, there was no bitterness in him. Nor, from my brief meeting with him, was there any despair or any frustration — only a great sadness that the prospects for the full development of South Africa's enormous human and material potential were being frittered away.

So, on March 11th, one went to Sobukwe's funeral in his birthplace of Graaff-Reinet, to honour this remarkable man. What did one find there and with what thoughts did one come away?

We travelled to Graaff-Reinet not knowing at what time the memorial service was to be held and, in fact, we only reached the town just in time to join the funeral procession. The result was that the only seats we could find were so far from the central platform, where it was set up in the middle of the Graaff-Reinet Showgrounds, that we could neither see who was on it nor, later, exactly what was happening round it. We learnt only afterwards that the organisers of the funeral service had been forced to change the programme the previous day and that Helen Suzman and Benjamin Pogrand, a very old friend of Robert Sobukwe's, had been removed from the list of speakers.

When a protesting crowd gathered round the platform and refused to disperse, in spite of repeated appeals over the microphone, it was still some time before we discovered that Chief Gatsha Buthelezi was on that platform and what that protesting crowd was demanding was that he should leave. All one sensed, as the appeals over the microphone became more desperate, was a steadily rising tension in the arena, until it was almost at breaking-point. It was at this point that Chief Buthelezi was persuaded to leave. Those moments between the time he stepped down from the platform and was finally out of the arena, seemed to last for ever. My own view is that he was lucky to get out of there alive. One stumble, one better-directed stone, and anything might have happened. As it was, the Chief and those who escorted him out showed great courage in the face of the most intense hostility. The hostility which forced Sonny Leon and the Transkei representatives and any other black person who had worked "within the system" to leave was not as intense, but still very strong. They had to leave, but they did so with dignity.

Whoever invited Chief Buthelezi to speak at Robert Sobukwe's funeral turns out to have done him a grave disservice and to have shown themselves to be quite out of touch with present political tensions within black society. Most of the black people attending the funeral were bound to be people who went to pay tribute to Sobukwe for the stand he had taken against apartheid from **outside** its institutions. It was inevitable that they should resent positions of prominence being given to people who had decided to work for change from **within** those institutions — a course of action which they claim is a hindrance to the liberation struggle and whose advocates must be discredited. Apart from any other considerations it was clearly of political importance for people working within the system to be on the platform at the funeral service. And to those who felt it would be wrong for people who had adopted an approach rejected by Sobukwe to gain credit from his funeral it was important that they should not be there.