

LIBERAL OPINION

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NATIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT

The Importance of Carrying On

THE LIBERAL PARTY'S 10th Anniversary National Conference took place in Cape Town—the scene of the Party's birth in May, 1953—over the first week-end in July. The state of the South African Press being what it is, the Conference did not get the publicity it might have. Nevertheless, it was an important and significant occasion.

The Chairman's report for the past year and the decisions taken for the future by the Conference showed a political organisation which has come a long way, and done a great deal, during the past ten years.

ACTIVE ALONE

In spite of the encroachment of apartheid legislation, growing Government powers and increasing intimidation, the Liberal Party has become the one effectively non-racial political organisation active in South Africa. Its plans for the future show that it has no intention of being content to remain only that.

During 1962/1963 the Liberal Party either led or participated in almost every important protest against Nationalist laws encroaching on civil liberties. The campaigns against the General Laws Amendment Bill ("90-Days Detention Bill") and the Bantu Laws Amendment Bill were the most important of these.

In the future one of the Party's principal roles will be to continue to protest against infringements of human rights. As the volume of public protest, black and white, declines in South Africa, it becomes all the more important for Liberals to persist in this. If they do not, South Africans will soon forget what human rights are, and they will no longer even know when they are losing them.

THE FUTURE

During the coming year the Liberal Party will continue to proclaim the principles in which it believes at every opportunity. These principles are fundamental to the creation of a decent South African society. The fact that the Nationalists don't like them and have attacked them more vigorously than ever during the past year is the best assurance there could be that these ideas are the right ones.

Also the Liberal Party will continue to fight the application of apartheid policy wherever it can. Apartheid is not a theory which goes no further than the impersonal discussions of a drawing room or debating chamber. It is a policy which, in its practical application, reaches right into the hearts and homes of millions of people. It separates wives from their husbands, children from their parents, uproots settled communities and puts people out of their jobs. Everyday it commits a thousand offences against the human dignity of ordinary

OPPOSITION

It is at the point of its application that it must be opposed—in the Group Areas proclamations, in the Job Reservation proclamations and in the uprooting of settled communities from their long-established homes.

On the grand scale the practical application of apartheid means the establishment of the Bantustans, the Western Cape removal of Africans and the destruction of freehold African rights in "white" South Africa. Liberals have fought this too, throughout the past year, and will continue to do so in the future.

One day apartheid is going to go. Nobody knows exactly how or when this will happen. All that we do know is that it **will** happen and that when it does, we want something different, and much better, to take its place. What will that new society be? It will have to be a very different society from the one in which we live today and one which is prepared to do something about the vast differences in wealth and opportunity which characterise South Africa today. It must be a society which guarantees individual liberties and rejects authoritarian solutions and methods. Its framework is going to have to be very carefully worked out. During 1963/1964 the Liberal Party will conduct discussions at all levels of the Party designed to produce practical solutions to the problems which will confront South Africa the day after apartheid.

PROGRAMME

This then is what the coming year holds for the Liberal Party — a programme of continued protest against each new encroachment on individual liberties; the vigorous and repeated statement of the principles by which the Party stands and which the Nationalists find so objectionable; opposition to every new application of apartheid, whether locally or nationally; and detailed discussion and planning of the new South Africa which will, we hope, succeed the old apartheid one.