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## TWO GREAT SOUTH AFRICAN

It is now some four years since Leo Marquard died. REALITY decided that this was an appropriate moment to honour his memory and remind its readers of what this great Liberal stood for. This we do in two articles by friends of his in this issue. Since that decision was taken Robert Sobukwe has died and he, too, we honour in these pages. One of the accounts we include here, of a friendship with Robert Sobukwe comes from Nell Marquard, Leo's widow.

As the tensions in South Africa rise and racial polarisation accelerates Liberal ideas are in danger of being forgotten altogether or discredited by distortion. Distorting Liberal aims has always been common practice amongst white reactionaries and it is becoming increasingly the practice amongst black radicals. Not only are Liberal aims distorted but so is the liberal record.

Before the early 1950s there was no politically organised body of liberal opinion in South Africa. People who called themselves "liberals" acted as individuals, some were less "liberal" than others and it is easy enough for critics of South African liberalism to find people they accuse of backsliding and not practising what they preached who, by present standards, would not be regarded as liberals at all. Leo Marquard would not be one of them. His whole life was an example of what a South African Liberal's life should be. This example he set as an individual while there

was no organised liberal political life in South Africa and, in 1953, he was one of the founders of the Liberal Party of S.A., which attempted to provide an organised rallying point for the Liberal voice in our country. With the sane voice of his quiet reason Leo Marquard helped the Liberal Party's members, black and white, hammer out a policy which, by the time the Nationalist Government put it out of business, was not much different from the one that Robert Sobukwe subscribed to. It provided political rights for all, in a single South Africa, based on universal suffrage. It wanted an independent judiciary and a Bill of Rights which would protect individuals, not groups, It wanted equal rights for all in every sphere of life, a comprehensive system of social security to protect the weak, and a programme devoted to eliminating the consequences of past discrimination from which most black people suffered.

Leo Marquard believed that the best way to fight for the non-racial society he wanted was through a non-racial organisation. Robert Sobukwe, when he founded the PAC, established himself as the spiritual father of the present Black Consciousness movement. He believed that it was only by acting on their own that African people could generate the pride and self-confidence which was the necessary prerequisite for a successful political struggle against white domination. His vision of "Africa for the Africans" was essentially a non-racial concept. It will be

necessary, as the inevitable distortions creep into memories of what he stood for, that his successors in the liberation struggle are continually reminded that it was a **non-racial** "Africa for the Africans" that Robert Sobukwe wanted.

Because they died having achieved neither political success nor power Leo Marquard and Robert Sobukwe could be regarded as failures in their lifetimes. That would be a very wrong assessment. If they did nothing else they influenced every person with whom either of them came into contact.

Their lives will only have been failures if we allow what they really stood for to be forgotten and a series of distortions to take their place.

Leo Marquard may have been the son of a Free State Dominee and Robert Sobukwe the son of a Graaff-Reinet woodcutter but, by the time of their deaths, either could have lived quite happily under a Government run by the other.

Surely South Africa has something to learn from that. □

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