

S.A. PRESS CUTTING AGENCY

(Incorporating Press Clipping Bureau formerly at Essenwood Rd., Durban)

306 POINT ROAD, DURBAN

PHONE 66403

Telegraphic Address: "NEWSCLIP" MRA

DATE

24 APR 1962

STAR

STOEP TALK

Antony ^{by} Quain

IF YOU WERE ASKED to throw the most impossible party — impossible because it could never happen in South Africa—who would you invite? Its success would depend on each guest accepting each other as a social equal within the limits of the law.

This would be my short list of "unthinkable" guests: An Afrikaans judge of the Supreme Court, the elected African spokesman of some 600,000 Africans who live round Johannesburg, an eminent Coloured leader in the Transvaal, a leading State prosecutor in the treason trial, some leaders of the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress, a cross section of the most rugged "revolutionaries"—members of the executive council of the A.N.C. women's league — eminent White leaders of Johannesburg commerce and industry, Basutoland chiefs.

And while we are letting our imagination run wild we might as well include a certain African leader from a Johannesburg township who, embittered after a term of prison, had the declared ambition of being able to find himself in Eloff Street with an opportunity of killing any White person he could lay hands on.

His expressed idea was that "the best White man is the dead one."

Strange neighbours

I would also invite Leslie Petersen, the militant Coloured leader from Cape Town, notorious for his extreme antipathy to every "privileged" White man. I would seat him and his pretty wife, Olive, next to the Treason Trial prosecutor who had prosecuted their friends.

To ensure the roaring success of this impossible party I would include several die-hard Nationalists to whom you would be a "kaffirboetie" if you shook an African by the hand, and one or two of the more hot-headed members of the Jeugbond—not forgetting, of course, those unobtrusive security men from Marshall Square.

To make the party as improbable as possible, it would go on for four days, with the guests having their meals together—400 at a time—served by Europeans off spotless linen in beautiful surroundings, everyone oblivious to the colour of the skin of his neighbour.

Danger ahead

Impossible? No. I attended the tail-end of this four-day "party" yesterday. I was uninterested, and I went there out of sheer curiosity. I came away vastly impressed.

Who could fail to be?

For lack of space let me quote just Mr. Petersen. He will return to Cape Town today in the same predicament as St. Paul—to be branded by his friends as a traitor (a "sell-out" was the term he used to me).

And I would not like to be in the shoes of my friend, the potential killer from the Johannesburg township, when he publicly renounces—which he will do—his gospel of hate of the White man.

Uneasy conscience

The "party," by the way, was the Moral Re-Armament Assembly at Witkoppen. As an uninvited, uninformed casual onlooker, my conviction is that Communism in Africa has in this movement a tough customer to deal with.

But I wonder what is the root cause of the antipathy towards M.R.A. apart from Communist-inspired hostility.

Could it be the lash-back of a stung conscience among people?