

South African Apocalypse

Edmund Hill OP

“Dear Father – Our Black People here have been quiet lately. I still think they’re doing wrong by burning down their own schools and townships. Why not do it in the white areas?”

“There are so many why’s about our black people, will the S.A. government be able to answer it?”

“1. Why is there apartheid in most churches except the Catholic church?”

“2. Why does the black man not have the same education as the white?”

“3. Why does the black man have to do a job and the white gets the credit for it?”

“4. Why can’t the black man occupy the same position as the white?”

“5. Why must the black man sit upstairs in a bus, when the white sits downstairs?”

“6. Why in the first place did they bribe the black man and steal his land? South Africa belongs to the black people.”

“7. Why is there apartheid in hospitals?”

“8. Why, if there’s been a road accident, can’t the black man help the white?”

“9. Why, if I take Michael to hospital do they first help the white and let me wait for hours?”

“10. Why can’t the Black people work in Cape Town? – They must produce a pass.”

“11. There are so many why’s who can answer it?”

“I have two African guys working for me, and I love them. They’re well educated, decent and religious. I took Michael to work one Saturday. He played with them, walked about the factory with them and even ate with them – the white was astonished. – Do you know what the black man then said to the white? He said, ‘Sir, this child is just like his mother, his heart is open’. Then I thought to myself: Who’s child on this earth will play with a black man and eat with him. Well mine did, and I’m not ashamed to say so. After all, God made us all, Jesus died on the cross to save us all, not only for the white man.”

“If Michael, a child of three, does not see any difference in the black man, how can the white see a difference?”

“Oh, well, we’ll see what happens if Jesus comes again. He did promise to come again. Will he save His people a second time? Will He, as the white man thinks, take them to His Father’s mansions and leave us – the Black People, to find our own way?”

“I think this world is slowly coming to its end. Nations are rising against nation. Children are rising against their parents. The seasons are slowly changing. Children are having children, and I read about a man in Oudtshoorn who’s orange tree had been giving oranges for the past ten years. And now it’s giving lemons”.

This letter, dated 11th October, 1976, was written by a young Coloured woman from the Cape Town area, who has been writing to me regularly, once a month or so, since I left the Cape seven years ago. This is the first time, as far as I can remember, that she has ever commented on politics. It is an interesting example of the ineptitude of the South African regime, in allowing events to politicise, among a few million others, an unmarried mother of slight education and limited horizons. It is worth noting how she begins by assuming a difference and distinction between herself and black people, by whom she there means Africans, and ends by identifying herself as one of them by saying “leave us, the Black People to find our own way”. I told her in my reply that her questions are unanswerable, and that is South Africa’s problem today.

But the point I would like to concentrate on is the last two paragraphs of the extract I have given from her letter. She sees in the current South African situation signs of the approaching end of the world, which are merely confirmed, but by no means overshadowed, by the versatile orange tree at Oudtshoorn. Her eschatological expectations may be naive; but in my opinion they are basically sound. They can, of course, be reasonably secularised. Recent events in South Africa may not portend the immediate end of *the* world, but they certainly presage the imminent end of *a* world, the white South African world, and Mr Vorster appears to have elected that the end should be catastrophic, of a kind that he himself, in a cliché he will never be allowed to forget (at least not by Mr Donald Woods¹), called ‘too ghastly to contemplate’.

But more than this, it is really rather difficult to observe the South African scene without constantly feeling impelled to qualify it or discuss it in biblical terms. I was in Swaziland over

¹Editor of the East London *Daily Despatch*, and the most fearless and clearheaded journalist in South Africa today. He is quite relentless in exposing the humbug and nastiness of the Nationalist party, and knows that for all Mr Vorster’s so-called pragmatism, they are participated in and boosted by the humbug and nastiness of Mr Vorster himself.

the fatal days, June 16th and onwards when the trouble first started in Soweto. I was staying at Bishop's House, and I remember Bishop Zwane saying, as he read about the events there, 'Now I really see what is meant by the saying: Hearing they shall hear and not understand, and so forth'. One can indeed only suppose that God has hardened the heart of the South African Pharaoh, Kragdaddy Bully John Vorster², so incredibly blind is he to the signs of the times, so deaf to the crying out of the stones and the mouths of babes and sucklings.

The recent and impending events in South Africa are genuinely apocalyptic in their meaning, as was the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the destruction of Tyre and Babylon a few centuries earlier, the fall of Rome a few centuries later, the French and Russian revolutions in more recent times. For in them, as in these other catastrophes, we are seeing not only the end of a world, but also an end of the world. They are all dress rehearsals for the final catastrophe, the final judgment, the final salvation; they pre-enact the final conflict.

This is the fascination, and the danger of apocalyptic situations. For that final conflict will indeed be the archetypal conflict between good and evil, light and darkness, God and the devil, Christ and Antichrist. But none of its pre-enactments are so unambiguous, not even the current conflict between oppressors and oppressed in South Africa. All particular conflicts that are not in fact the final conflict are clouded with ambiguity, with mixed motives on both sides, with virtues and vices, heroisms and horrors, wisdoms and follies on both sides. If we look at the political conflict between Black and White down here in a moral perspective, as of course we have to do, then we have to take account of all these ambiguities, we have to restrain our moral judgements on persons and temper our enthusiasms and our passions.

— And if that is *all* we do, then we miss the point entirely, we fail to read the signs of the times, we are caught unprepared. This is all that most white South African Christians are willing or able to do, as can be seen from the correspondence columns of the Catholic *Southern Cross*, and other Church papers. They weigh up the pros and cons, on Bishop Lamont for example, whom they find to have been a supporter of murderers, and they end up by finding quite a lot of pros on the side of the present order, in spite

²The one arch-virtue for the Boer nationalist is *kragdadigheid*, strong arm stuff. Mr Vorster has a well deserved reputation for this. The proper English for it is bullying. He is very good at it.

of many injustices etc., etc., legitimate grievances etc., etc., but the use of violence is never justified etc., etc., and law and order must be maintained etc., etc.; and their judgement, already weakened by their social prejudices, is further clouded by the use of emotive words like 'terrorist' and 'communist'; and they finish up as moral political eunuchs.

So the apocalyptic perspective is very much needed to give a bit of backbone to an otherwise flabby moralising on the situation. It forces us to see that underneath all the ambiguities there is a basic right and wrong; and that the South African system, whether you call it apartheid or separate development or plural democracy (the latest euphemism) represents wrong, represents evil, represents the devil and the powers of darkness, because it is wrong and oppressive, even though not all its protagonists are wicked men and one or two good things have perhaps been done in its name – though you would have to get a white man to tell you what they were, no black man would be able to remember them. The apocalyptic perspective, or intuition forces you to do that most difficult and unpleasant thing, to take sides, to declare whose side you are on. A genuine apocalyptic situation is one in which the serious Christian is forced to come down wholeheartedly on one side in a conflict. The South African situation is such. And as such it is seen and proclaimed by the organ of the Christian Institute, *Pro Veritate*, whose Editor, Cedric Mayson, has only recently been detained.

But doubtless the reader would like to have a more matter-of-fact political analysis and description of the situation. Here is Stanley Uys, a leading political journalist, writing in the *Sunday Times*, 26th September 1976:

If there is one fact that has emerged from the past three and a half months of Black unrest in South Africa, it is that adequate change is not possible within the framework of the National Party. The party is deadlocked irretrievably within itself. It dare not venture beyond the parameters of separate development.....

The Government is in a desperate position where it has no solution for the immense political and economic problems that loom ahead. Politics and economics are becoming an explosive mixture in South Africa, and one must consider that possibly Mr Vorster was right when he said South Africa does not face a crisis – the crisis is still to come.

When it does, one of two things will happen. Either the Nationalists will establish a dictatorship, or they will split. If they split, the White opposition should be ready to

absorb the *verligtes* [the more liberal nationalists] and offer itself as an alternative government.

What pleases me about this prognostication is that I made a very similar one myself just over five years ago, in an article in *New Blackfriars* in September 1971.³ It may have been at least a contributory reason why I was firmly requested not to return to the country some fifteen months later. I trust a more severe retribution does not fall upon Mr Uys, though it has already overtaken his colleague in Cape Town, Mr Eric Abrahams. But my present comment on Mr Uys's prediction is that the Nationalists will not split. They haven't got the guts to do so. That is to say, the *verligtes* among them lack the courage – or perhaps it's deeper than that, they lack the basic psychological equipment – to turn on their present disastrous government and rend them.

There has been considerable *verligte* criticism of the government in recent months, especially of the egregious Dr Treurnicht, who as junior minister of Bantu Education was rather more than most other men responsible for the cretinous policy and conduct (enforcement of Afrikaans medium instruction on African schools in Soweto), which sparked off the riots in June. But Mr Vorster has resolutely refused to sack Dr Treurnicht (he must have known the sort of thing he would do when he appointed him late in 1975; Dr T. has never hidden his infernal light under a bushel), or to countenance any criticism of him. And the *verligtes* in the party dare not directly attack the person of Pharaoh himself. To illustrate the strange kind of psychological cocoon in which the Boer nationalists⁴ have been busy isolating themselves for decades, if not for the whole century, here is one of the *verligtes*, the columnist (in fact the editor) Dawie of *Die Burger* on October 8th or 9th, quoted by the *Sunday Times* on October 10th:

Afrikaners are busy listening to more important voices [than English newspapers, opposition politicians and 'noisy Brown and Black protagonists', who are dismissed as irrelevant and irritating], some inaudible to any but themselves; the voices of their forefathers and their history, of their conscience and good sense, of people of their own kind, whom they trust....

³*South Africa: Dialogue or Disaster*; the second of a pair of articles. The first one appeared in August 1971.

⁴It is considered rude to call Afrikaners Boers. But it is time we questioned the right of the Boers to appropriate the name of the whole continent for themselves and their language – especially when we note that this arrogant take-over makes them refuse the name 'African' to the Blacks, and call them 'Bantu' instead.

'Hush, hush, whisper who dares! Christopher Robin is saying his prayers' is about all I can think of to say about this remarkable affirmation of group solipsism. If Mr Cilliers' (Dawie's) ancestral voices and spectral conscience and good sense prompts him to say to Kragdaddy Bully John 'For God's sake, go', then they would earn our admiring approval. But they haven't and they won't, and he wouldn't do it if they did – and Kragdaddy wouldn't pay any attention if he did.

No, it is going to be a dictatorship all right, set up either by Kragdaddy Bully John himself or some even more unprepossessing successor. Arrangements are already under way; plans to change the constitution to one with an 'executive State President', whose responsibility to Parliament will be more that of Hitler to the Reichstag than of De Gaulle or Giscard D'Estaing to the National Assembly. It will be a very embattled dictatorship, and it won't last as long as Hitler's did, and it will end in blood, as his did. While it lasts it will presumably be even madder than its current progenitor, the nationalist government. Here are two little illustrations of how mad that is:

1) Mr M.V.Botha, Minister of Bantu Affairs (Dr Treurnicht's immediate boss), as reported in the Bloemfontein *Friend* on October 20th:

It is irrefutably true and ethnologically correct that each Black nation basically remains one entity, even if its people happen to be in their homeland and in the White area of South Africa... Consequently the members of a Bantu nation inside as well as outside their homeland will always be connected with each other with regard to their political development.

2) Mr S.L.Muller, Minister of Transport, as reported in the Johannesburg *Daily Mail* in the first week of December: Mr. Muller said he was sick and tired of the word 'change'. He could not open a single English-language newspaper without seeing the word 'change'. It was he said a Progressive Party invention and the United Party had latched on to it too.

'I see it as a communist slogan. I don't say there must be no change or adaptations – a word I prefer. But in the process, I do not want the White man to collapse'.

What is the reality, the real background against which these sinister inanities are being uttered by South Africa's rulers? Let us begin with the police; especially the riot police and the security police. I was very much struck recently by an aphorism in the historical novel *Family Favourites*, by Alfred Duggan. It is about

the exotic Roman Emperor Elagabalus,⁶ who was prudently liquidated after a short reign of about three years, round about 215 AD. Mr Duggan's narrator (an old soldier) remarks, "After the army, the secret police is the most expensive institution in the Empire; and every penny spent on it is wasted". For rather different reasons, I am sure that is true of modern special police forces. In most countries of the world, and certainly in South Africa, the police are rapidly becoming a social scourge of the first magnitude. In Ivan Illich's phrase, they are counter-productive. Thus the security police by their actions systematically promote national insecurity, their intelligence branch provides misleading intelligence, and the riot police provoke riots and create disorder.

There are of course two views about police action in the townships in recent months, and two sets of supporting 'facts', the Black view and the White one. I am in little doubt myself that the Black view is nearer to the truth. But the mere fact that it is the Black view is what really matters, because it shows how thoroughly, how efficiently and how irrevocably the police have succeeded in alienating the Blacks, and at long last turning their longstanding grievances into a bitter mass hatred of Whites.

This, then is the Black statement of the case. What started as a peaceful but determined mass protest by school children against the use of Afrikaans as a compulsory medium of instruction in the African secondary schools (there had been a continuous stream of protest on a lesser scale for months beforehand, all of it falling on deaf solipsist Boer Nationalist ears), was turned into a bloody riot on June 16th by a police officer shooting one of the school boys dead. Thus police devotion to the nationalist virtue of old *kragdadigheid*, and respect for the personality of old Kragdaddy himself, sparked off six months of sporadically continuous unrest that is not finished yet (December, 1976), and will not, in my opinion ever finish again as long as the nationalists remain in power. In the course of this unrest 90% of the violence has been committed (and about 98% of the deaths caused) by the police, much of it wholly wanton; due to police riding round the townships in their 'hippos' and shooting any black youths, or even children, they could see, when there was no riot or disturbance

⁶ I am not suggesting any comparison between Elagabalus and Mr Vorster. I wish I could do so. Had Mr Vorster, and Dr Verwoerd before him, resembled more closely this young Syrian voluptuary, whose chief interests were in racing stables and handsome stable boys, and who was assassinated at the age of 19, I am sure they would have helped to create a happier South Africa today.

going on.⁶ The death toll, in the African estimation, is four or five times as high as the official figure, especially in Soweto (perhaps 2-3000 in all).

The post-riot action of the police is all in the same direction, this time assisted by the magistrates. There is one remarkable case in Pretoria, in connection with riots in the township there of Mamelodi, in which 48 or more persons are accused of public violence of one sort or another. They all, or nearly all, made statements to the police which were duly produced in court as evidence against them. They all then testified that the statements were extorted from them by violence and threats, and the magistrate duly rejected this testimony and accepted the validity of the statements. So far, so normal. But then several of them produced alibis, supported by strong evidence from other witnesses, in one case the White employer of one of the accused, to show that they were not there when the public violence they are accused of occurred. The magistrate has prudently deferred judgment. This story is only one of many. The papers have recently been telling the case of a 10-year old boy who was assaulted by police and arrested, and charged with sabotage, and refused bail. He was arrested at the beginning of November, the case is due for trial in the middle of January. When the case was publicised, (his mother swore an affidavit about it all) the police first said, 'He is not 10, he is 13'. It has finally been settled that he is 12, and after all this publicity, he has been released into his mother's charge on bail.

And what have the security police been doing all this while, having presumably failed to give any warning of the impending explosion of unrest, and been taken completely by surprise? They have been detaining under various suitable laws, vast numbers of leading African adults, journalists, churchmen, trades union leaders, to make quite sure that they cannot give any kind of lead or exercise any kind of moderating influence on the turbulent school children who have been making most of the running. In the course of their activities they have ensured that a few more Black men have mysteriously died in detention. There is nothing like filling your helot population with rage, hatred and frustration for ensuring your national or state 'security'.

Some of the police evidence given before the Cillié commission of enquiry, while intended in the main to exonerate the police, serves merely to confirm this grisly picture. There is the evidence, for example, of the psychopathic (well, manifestly neurotic) Col.

⁶These are stories one hears from Africans, In my "Arcadia" of independent Lesotho, I recently met Africans from the Republic, and from the affected townships.

Swanepoel, notorious in past years as the chief torturer of the Security police, and in a position of authority in Soweto at the crucial time in June. He claimed to be an expert on communism, attributed to communist tactics various traditional African gestures at moments of excitement, said he ordered his marksmen and snipers to pick off agitators, whom he was able to recognise on sight, presumably by virtue of his psychic powers - and other horrifying nonsense of this kind.

There were, to be sure, a number of wiser and more humane police officers around, who realised the importance of playing it cool and keeping, as they say, a low profile. Such a man seems to be Brig. Visser, recently put in charge of the police in Soweto. But he has come there too late, one imagines, to undo the damage caused by the Swanepoels, and the senior officers who put their men into camouflage uniforms, with the express purpose, one supposes, of making them more conspicuous, warlike and terrifying to the local population. Because of their dress and behaviour, says a report in the Sunday Times for December 5th, the riot police have been nicknamed in the Cape Town townships 'Die Terroriste'. A very apt name too. The same report quotes a Cape Town sociologist, Prof. H.W.van der Merwe as testifying to the Cillie commission 'that there were many indications of young riot policemen having come from areas where race prejudice ran high. This came through, he said, in the language they used when dealing with Black and Coloured people'.

So much for the contribution of the police, seen mainly through Black eyes. What about the actions and stance of the Blacks themselves? The extraordinary thing is that we have been witnessing what is overwhelmingly a children's revolt. Average age of participants - let us say 18. Of course criminal elements (the so-called *tsotsis*, themselves usually little more than children) have become involved; perhaps older people (but not much older, one suspects) have assisted with the organisation of Student Representative Councils. But it is the young school students who have throughout called the tune. They started, as we all know, by protesting against Afrikaans as a compulsory medium of classes. When the police turned that protest into a riot, the protest widened to one against the whole system of Bantu education, expressed by burning down their own schools. Then it widened again into a protest against the whole system of apartheid and Bantu administration, expressed by burning down administration offices. It then took in some special ramifications of this administration, which is largely financed by the sale of liquor in the townships. So bottle stores and beer halls were the next targets for this

very discriminating campaign of arson. Then the movement took a Puritan turn, which strikes me as both admirable and ominous; and the young people started putting the squeeze on the shebeen queens too, and campaigning against drunkenness in general, as an enslaving habit, unsuitable to this time of crisis and of mourning for the children slain by the police. They are at the moment trying to enforce a more or less dry Christmas. And finally, realising the importance of the economic weapon, they have tried to enforce a number of three day general strikes. In this they have had some successes, and rather more failures, for they have naturally met with much more resistance from their elders, especially the migrant workers, whose very livelihoods have been at stake. Their violence in all this? Peanuts, compared with that of the government and police.

But their determination, especially in Soweto, remains as strong as ever. In Soweto they have for the past few months been concentrating on a school boycott. In that large area no end of year exams were taken. The authorities made special arrangements for them to be taken at the beginning of 1977. The students say that these arrangements will come to nothing, unless the purpose for which they are boycotting the schools is recognised and honoured. What they are demanding is the release of their colleagues who have been detained. The authorities are doing their best not to hear this demand. Brig. Visser is shortly to meet a delegation of parents to discuss the situation, and ways of defusing it. He and they will get nowhere unless certain solipsist kragdaddy ears are unstopped. There is no likelihood that they will be.

And what are White South Africans, other than the police and the government doing all this time? Why, they are buying guns, and the government is doing nothing to restrain this panic folly. One unexpected voice was recently raised against it on South African radio – that of Mrs Joyce Waring, wife of a retired and never very prominent nationalist cabinet minister. She is a South African Martha Mitchell; but this time she saw clearly and spoke very forcefully. It won't have the slightest effect. I doubt if her talk was broadcast in Afrikaans. The situation of Whites against Blacks, arms against men, is inexorably unfolding itself.

Other fringe vignettes from the White scene:

1) Dr Jacobs, a United Party politician, declares against majority rule in principle, on the grounds that "in the animal kingdom you don't find that there is majority rule by rabbits just because they happen to be in the majority". Dr Jacobs is clearly ignorant of all those African folk tales which tell of the shrewdness of Mr Hare as against the stupidity of Messrs Lion, Leopard

and Hyena.

2) 'A Krugersdorp councillor asked a meeting of the council what progress had been made in removing unnecessary discrimination between Blacks and Whites in the town. He pointed out that a committee had been appointed two years ago to deal with the matter. He was told that progress had been slow, but there had been adjustments in discriminatory practices and more would be done next year'. The committee was presumably appointed shortly after Mr Pik Botha's famous speech at the United Nations, pledging the South African government to move away from racial discrimination, and Mr Vorster's even more famous 'Give us six months' speech. All humbug, as this quotation suggests.

3) On the other hand, there are eminent opposition politicians of greater finesse and more sense than Dr Jacobs, and from the heart of the establishment one even gets this voice of sanity, admittedly an English voice to judge by the name. Dr K.B. Hartshorne, director of education planning of the department of Bantu education (the department chiefly to blame for the whole critical situation), said in a speech: "Do we care enough to admit that we have made mistakes, mainly because of our national sin of deciding what is good for other people?" Speaking about education for Blacks, he said it deserved the "highest national priority", and that it had been "neglected in terms of resources made available to it". But the voice of sanity comes too late, and in any case is going to receive scant attention in the quarters where it matters most, in the quarters of Dr Treurnicht, for example, or the Great Panjandrum himself. Pharaoh Vorster admitting he has made mistakes, and agreeing about that national sin? Never.

For the alarming, the fatal truth is that the Nationalist government of South Africa, and the electorate which keeps it in power, which is to say the great majority of the Boer/Afrikaaner people, does not have a *policy* to deal with this situation. All they have is a diseased group psychology, which being coupled with a strange intellectual mixture of naive self-deception and cunning, has produced over the years a fairly consistent pattern of action, which its authors have graced with the name of political principles and policies, called variously apartheid, separate development, and now plural democracy. But this is not really a practical policy. It never has been. It is merely an uncriticised psychology in action. What are its features?

Basically, it is an unhealthy group self-love. I suspect *all* nationalism tends to be this. I know that Boer nationalism is this. Its unhealthiness shows in its obsessive character – illustrated by the quotation from Dawie, one of its more urbane protagonists,

given above – and in the negative attitude it induces towards outsiders. Its ‘positive’ expression is group arrogance; a conviction that others do not have to be consulted, that we know what is best for them; that since in ‘separate development’ we offer them the chance of realising and expressing their own group self-love (this is in fact the basic delusion or self-deception) any refusal to work within the framework of separate development, as constructed to the last detail by us, can only result from ill-will, criminality, and communist corruption. Its negative expression, often its driving motivation, is a smouldering resentment against outsiders who have threatened the group in the past, and are still felt to do so (this is still mainly the British, and often English-speaking South Africans), a resentment that easily turns to hatred; and an ever present fear of outsiders who are likely to threaten the group now and in the future – that is against the Africans and the Coloured and Indians. This fear also is always on the verge of turning into hatred. From such a psychology, assiduously fostered for the last forty of fifty years no cool and rational policy may be expected. It is doomed to self-destruction.

Thus Boer nationalism has two basic objectives which can, at least for the sake of argument, be allowed to be rational. One is the preservation of the identity of the *volk*, the other is the avoidance of and resistance to communism. This of course has degenerated into a neurosis (see Col. Swanepoel *et al.*), but all the same let us say, for the time being, that detestation of communism is a position open to a reasonable man. But what does their diseased group psychology drive the Boer Nationalists to? Actions that spell the doom of the *volk* and the almost certain triumph of, if not communism, at least some kind of Marxist/African socialism which no Boer could tell apart from Russian or Chinese communism. The denial of any sort of legitimacy to Black aspirations for liberation, evidenced in the systematic persecution, not only of the old Congress parties, ANC and PAC, but also of the newer movements, SASO and BPC,⁷ obviously drives the younger Blacks into the arms of the men of the left. One would have thought the history of Mozambique and Angola would have made that clear. And Mr Vorster’s obstinate refusal to countenance a national convention of all races and groups to discuss a better constitution for South Africa, like his obstinate refusal in Namibia to talk to SWAPO, means that a future which cannot be determined by negotiation will have to be determined by bloody

⁷African National Congress, Pan-African Congress (both banned since about 1960); South African Students Organisation, Black People’s Convention.

confrontation. He thinks he can win that confrontation, because he has all the arms, and his internal opponents have none. In this he is surely as mistaken as Hitler was, in the last resort.

But a final word for the European and American reader. Where did this destructive psychology come from? Not all of it, not perhaps most of it, from the Voortrekkers and Paul Kruger, the official ancestral spirits. The modern Boers are heirs, in addition to them, of Cecil Rhodes and Chamberlain and the less attractive elements of British Imperialism too. And these are still features of the capitalist imperialism of America. And lastly, to complete the genetic mix, there is clearly an inheritance from German national socialism. From there comes the bogus theorising, the mad logic ('logical' and 'principles' are favourite words), the unrestrained and highminded brutality. To this the other, non-Boer White South Africans contribute, in the main, love of money and a rather mindless hedonistic materialism – which differs scarcely at all from the attitude to life dominant in the 'Western democracies'. So we should not be in any doubt about it; in White South Africa, for all its appalling eccentricities, we Europeans and Americans see a mirror of ourselves. And in the doom that is shortly going to overtake White South Africa we should see, if we have any wisdom at all, a judgment on ourselves.

Marxist Science and Christian Theology

Brian Wicker

Francis Barker's refreshing contribution to the *New Blackfriars* debate on Marxism¹ leads me to pursue my own thoughts a little further. Barker and Eagleton² have both accused me of idealism: it is part of my purpose to show that this accusation is false. On the contrary, if Marxism can claim to be scientific, so too (I maintain) can Christian theology. Indeed, Marxism will only become completely scientific, i.e. have shed all residual elements of deforming ideology when, ceasing to need to incorporate within itself a systematic misrepresentation of Christianity, it can be said to have become identical with it. But that is a matter for the distant future.

¹September, 1976

²October, 1975