

## PACIFY CONSCIENCE

Even the "homelands", utterly inadequate though they are to the real needs of the situation, are an attempt to pacify the national conscience aroused by liberal thinkers. The disappearance of the word "baasskap" from the political vocabulary may be hypocrisy, but hypocrisy is the homage which vice pays to virtue.

The writer remembers, some twenty-five years ago, Nationalist speakers in the Senate protesting vigorously against the purchase of pedigree poultry and cattle for African agricultural colleges. We hear no more of these cock and bull stories today. Bad in principle as our "ethnic" universities are, they have been erected by the sons of men who opposed even secondary education for Africans. Many more battles remain to be won, most notably the battle for fair wage levels and for better education, but

the work of liberalism has not been fruitless, and its present discouragements are no cause for craven-hearted despair. Be it noted that economic and educational reform do not have to wait for the realisation of complete political equality, though they may well pave the way for it. That so many thinkers in Churches and the Universities have in this and other fields moved from friendly interest on to passionate conviction is also part of the triumph of liberal thinkers, who have influenced their friends as well as their enemies.

The writer recently had the task of going through documents of the years 1830 to 1910 referring to the Africans and their areas. The best of them are quaint and some are even repellent in the light of the beliefs of 1972. The distance between Sir George Grey and the student programmes now before us is the measure of what liberalism has achieved during its long night of effort. □

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# TERRORISM

by Marie Dyer

**White South Africans think they are experts on terrorism. They have been told so often that they are threatened by it every hour of every day that they are convinced, even though most of them have never seen a trace of it. (Cape Town people may have seen the blackened ruins of St. Thomas Hall, but that is something else again). Consequently when the world was convulsed by the Black September murders, there was a note of smugness in the South African reaction. 'This will show the world how right we have been about terrorists all along' was somehow the feeling. And the outraged bewilderment in the country at the increased grants distributed by the W.C.C. has been correspondingly greater.**

The truth is in fact that White South Africans are about as confused as they can be about terrorism and its implications. Their attitude to terrorism is the same as the medieval attitude to witchcraft — it is enough to be accused of it to stand condemned of it; and to be held responsible for any deed committed by anyone else similarly accused. The terrorism which shocks most of the world is the kind that deals in violent acts of blackmail practised on civilians, for motives of politics or greed: the hijackings, kidnappings, murders, letter- and parcel-bombs which threaten and poison ordinary people's activities, ordinary daily life. With this kind of activity the guerrilla raiders and infiltrators on our borders have not had anything to do.

## IDENTIFY

It is easy to see why White South Africans are so eager to identify any kind of revolutionary guerrilla activity with the horrors of terrorism. Irregular warfare is largely the method of the weak against the strong, the poor against the rich. South Africans who find ethical merit in their wealth and strength are morally comforted by the thought

that there is some inherent evil in a home-made landmine which is not shared by a tank. But in reality, although all war and violence are hateful, there is no justification for condemning the guerrilla sniper or grenade-thrower while tactfully withholding judgement on the pilot of the helicopter who sprays him with machine-gun bullets or napalm. There is no supreme moral virtue, either, in any given status quo- (although the equation; revolution *equals* guerrillas *equals* terrorists *equals* evil would seem to accord it). South Africans would understand this well if say, a band of hard-pressed democratic rebels took revolutionary arms against a Communist dictatorship; but it is not likely that this would clear up any of their verbal confusions. Dictatorships who do not want their subjects to think or criticise are adept at the manipulation of 'push-button' words — words whose very mention is enough to induce vague but passionate feelings of patriotic hatred in almost everyone. The Communists are usually the most skilful at this — one thinks of words like 'capitalist', 'bourgeois', 'Trotskyite', 'revisionist', etc. But 'terrorist' in this country is surely one of the most successful of all. □