
NEW TITLES

History

BLOOD RIVER: The Passionate Saga of South Africa's Afrikaners and of Life in their Embattled Land
by Barbara Villet
Everest House, 1982
255 pp. \$16.95

Neither her earlier visits to the country nor marriage to a white South African fully prepared journalist Villet for her 1980 confrontation in Johannesburg with a young Dutch Reformed minister. His "black eyes glittering," he informed the American writer that the Declaration of Independence was one of the most "corrupt documents ever written." It was blasphemy, he held, not to think that God had made "some men for mastery and others for servitude." Villet's history traces the Afrikaner's world view to the creed of John Calvin, laid down in 1534, and brought to the Cape of Good Hope by three shiploads of Dutch colonists in 1652. Seeing themselves as the Children of Israel, the first of roughly 6,000 Afrikaners began, in 1836, their northward trek to escape British dominion and to establish their own republic. Two years later, 500 Afrikaners defeated 15,000 ostrich-plumed Zulus at Blood River, confirming their sense of a special covenant with God. Autonomy was short-lived: From their defeat in the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) until they gained a majority in the South African Parliament almost fifty years later, they chafed under English rule. Constructing an elaborate system of apartheid during the 1950s, the Afrikaners thought they had fulfilled their God-given mission to rule the land. But growing tensions, signalled by the Sharpeville and Soweto riots of the 1960s and '70s, have forced them into a political dilemma that old dogma will not resolve.

EVE AND THE NEW JERUSALEM: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century
by Barbara Taylor
Pantheon, 1983
394 pp. \$9.95

"Every family is a center of absolute despotism," from whose center spreads "a contagion of selfishness and love of domination," wrote the 19th-century English journalist William Thompson, an enthusiastic convert to the socialist vision of Robert Owen (1771-1858). Unlike later Marxian socialists, followers of Owen (a successful Manchester industrialist before he became a fierce oppo-