

to the national government. So concerned were our diplomats and their advisers . . . with the imperfections of the political system in China after 20 years of war, and the tales of corruption in high places, that they lost sight of our tremendous stake in a noncommunist China.

For one who has never had any military training or experience, Acheson is remarkably self-confident as a strategist. He recalls that General Lucius Clay and his political adviser, Ambassador Robert Murphy, wanted to break the Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948 with an armed convoy. "To say, as Murphy has done, that the decision to use the 'airlift was a surrender of our hard-won rights in Berlin' seems to me silly," Acheson writes. It was equally silly, he argues, to interpret his speech to the National Press Club on January 12, 1950, as a signal to the Communists that they could attack South Korea without fear of intervention by the United States. In that speech he said the "defensive perimeter" of the United States ran south from Japan through the Ryukyus to the Philippines, thus excluding South Korea from our protection. Yet he describes the communist attack in June, 1950, as "an open, undisguised challenge to our internationally accepted position as the protector of South Korea . . . under the very guns of our defensive perimeter," etc.

Acheson charges that MacArthur's reports from Korea were evidence of schizophrenia, one of the worst forms of insanity. He says the messages reflected alternating "manic" and "depressive" states. MacArthur's Inchon landing, he writes, would be "regarded today as one of the classic military victories of history had it not been the prelude to the greatest defeat suffered by American arms since the Battle of Manassas and an international disaster of the first water." And for this Acheson blames MacArthur, not Washington's orders forbidding him to bomb the Yalu river bridges or to strike at Chinese communist

forces in their Manchurian sanctuary. MacArthur said his forces were put under "an enormous handicap, without precedent in military history." Acheson defends his share of responsibility for these restrictions, which were necessary, he argues, to avoid the danger of general war with Red China and the Soviet Union. His only regret is that he waited so long to urge President Truman to sack MacArthur. Acheson's implication that responsible military leaders did not agree with MacArthur is, of course, false. General Mark Clark, the last commander in the Korean War, said that if he had been in MacArthur's place he would have "screamed to the high heavens for authority to bomb the bases, airfields, and other installations in Manchuria and China from which these aggressors derived their source of strength and power."

Acheson's book no doubt will convince his grandchildren that he was a combination Metternich, Castlereagh, and Talleyrand, as he fancied when the Austrians entertained him in the Ballhausplatz, where the Congress of Vienna met. And because of what passes for history in our colleges today, the grandchildren probably will never know better.

Reviewed by CHESLY MANLY

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### *For a Black Studies Course*

**My People, My Africa**, by Credo Vusa'mazulu Mutwa, *New York: The John Day Company, 1969. 257 pp. \$6.95.*

ONE OF THE MOST interesting features of this remarkable work by a Zulu witch-doctor is the author's defense of the South African government's policy of apartheid and his scorn for those white liberals "who talk loudly about equal rights in public, but in private do nothing whatever to make life easier even for their own Bantu servants." Inequality and apartheid, he ar-

gues, are not the same.

Apartheid is a law of nature. We do not see different species of birds and animals mingling together indiscriminately, but each remaining with its own kind, its own customs and instincts. Nor do we see them arguing that one species is superior to another. This argument seldom arises among human beings unless two different races, nations or creeds become mingled together in the same place. Are the Afrikaners to be blamed for having made this discovery?

What the world fails to realize is that apartheid is what the Bantu wants—from the Transkei up to Nigeria and Ghana. Apartheid is what we want and need—and what we do not want is discrimination. . . . The only Bantu who do not want this are those poor creatures who are so de-tribalized that they no longer know how or what they are or what is good for them.

To a contemporary American it doubtless seems both odd and ironic that an African black man should thus expound the principle of "separate but equal," but Mutwa believes that it has been association with the white man's civilization and culture, and especially with the white man's religion, that has brought about the moral and spiritual degeneration of the Bantu peoples.

Many Bantu have turned Christian, but Christianity can never make them happy. Christianity does not suit the Bantu at all. . . . Fortunately in the case of most Christian Bantu, the veneer of Christianity is very thin. . . . To many it has brought only dissatisfaction with tribal life, and a desire to be accepted by the white men as one of themselves—something that will never happen. It has brought prostitution, illegitimate children by the thousand, and venereal disease, because it preaches against polygamy. . . . But the worst

thing of all that it has brought is doubt, even atheism. . . . [The converts] saw that white men practiced anything but what they preached, and they were told by some that God made us out of dust in his own image, while others told them we are all descended from monkeys. And now we see the white man turn his back on the religion he taught us so fervently. . . .

The Bantu are beginning to hate Christianity—they associate it more than anything with the political deceptions that have always been played on them. In any riot it is the mission schools which are always the first to be burnt down. But what is to be put in its place? Many, many of these Bantu are empty, bleak Godless zombies, ripe for conversion to any subversive creed. Man without God in his heart is lost! Christianity is turning us into a race of atheists.

The only alternative, as Mutwa sees it, to revolutionary violence, civil war, and immeasurable bloodshed is a reversion to the ancient tribal pieties, traditions, and social organization, free from white contamination. For this reason he is a warm advocate of the Bantustans, those semiautonomous enclaves in which the government is resettling the various Bantu tribes, although he is critical of some aspects of the plans for them.

These are bitter words, and doubtless have grieved the Right Reverend Bishop Trevor Huddleston and other earnest Christian opponents of apartheid. But it should be noted that Mutwa himself is a former Christian. He is descended on the maternal side from a line of witchdoctors—his great grandfather, Silwane Shezi, was in attendance on the Zulu chief Dingaan when Piet Reteif and his party of *voortrekkers* were treacherously murdered at Dingaan's command; but Mutwa's father was a Catholic catechist and the son's given name is taken from the Nicene creed (*Credo in unum Deum!*). Mutwa

received a European education in the Catholic schools; he must have been an assiduous and intelligent pupil, since his book reveals a considerable insight into European history and thought. He also claims a wide acquaintance with European literature, including Homer, Aristotle, Vergil, Voltaire, and Sir Walter Scott. One thing about the white man's culture, though, has remained utterly incomprehensible—his music, especially violin music. Mutwa finds the noises that white men make on "those funny little chin guitars" to be frightening, indeed maddening; yet he recognizes that white listeners "seem to understand this weird scraping and screeching that sounds as if a thousand witches were being tortured." On the other hand Mutwa acknowledges that many white persons (presumably those unhabituated to rock-'n-roll) find the Bantu tribal music, with its shouting, stamping and hand-clapping, barbaric. From this he concludes that "what is right for one race is not necessarily right for another," a truth that most Americans, black and white, seem in danger of forgetting.

It was on a visit to his mother in Zululand in 1958 that Mutwa was persuaded to renounce Christianity and to undergo some ritual of purification. Then began his instruction in the lore and arts of a tribal witchdoctor at the hands of his grandfather, Ziko Shezi, another famous *induna* and a veteran of the Zulu War. In the meantime Mutwa had fallen in love with a young Basuto woman, whom he hoped to marry. She was one of those killed in the great riot at Sharpeville in 1960 when the South African police fired into an unruly Bantu mob. Over her open coffin he cut a vein in his left hand and let ten drops of his blood fall into "one of the gaping bullet wounds that defiled her dark brown slender body." This ritual, it seems, is called "a Chief's Great Blood Oath," and with it Mutwa swore to "tell the world the truth about the Bantu people and so save many of my countrymen the agony of the bereavement we

felt." He would do this "come imprisonment, torture or death, and even if the fires of Hell or the cold of eternal darkness stood in my way." (There is no record of Mutwa's ever having been tortured or imprisoned for any long period, though he speaks of having been locked up on occasion for forgetting his pass book.)

Mutwa's two earlier books, *Indaba, My Children*, and *Africa Is My Witness*, which have provided most of the material for this one, were written in the Zulu vernacular, but the English style of *My People, My Africa* suggests a strong possibility of a white collaborator. That any Zulu witchdoctor should write *any* book in any language, let alone a book that revealed, or purported to reveal, the secrets of his ancient and mysterious profession, would have seemed only a short time ago a fantastic improbability; but it is Mutwa's belief that a great many, if not most, of the troubles between black and white in Africa have been due to the ignorance and misunderstanding by members of either race of the psychology and customs of the other. It is easy nowadays, Mutwa believes, for a literate Bantu to remedy his ignorance of white ways—all he need do is observe his employers and patronize the second-hand bookshops; but to persuade a white man that Bantu beliefs and practices may be something more than mere lies or pure superstition is a more difficult matter.

The book begins with the creation myths still told by the old men and women to open mouthed boys and girls seated round the village night fires "in the dark forests and on the aloe-scented plains of Africa," tales of the Mother Goddess, of her "First People" and her "Second People" of the origins of various African races, Pygmies, Hottentots, Bushmen, and so on. The Bantu, it seems, believe in a soul and conceive of it in the form of two worms, one good, one evil, and therefore constantly in conflict. When the two are in balance the body the soul inhabits is well, when they are not it is sick. A soul may have had many abodes—grass, a tree, an

animal—before taking up its dwelling place in a man. When the man dies it goes into a bird and then into a star. God, *the* God of the Bantu, is beyond good and evil and is indifferent to man, but most of the lesser deities are malevolent or mischievous and must be appeased. Then follows a complex of legends, transmitted orally from one generation to the next over thousands of years and having, as Mutwa not implausibly insists, at least as much historical validity as the written annals of literate peoples.

One of the most fascinating of these legends concerns the pink-skinned people that Mutwa calls the Ma-Iti and identifies with the Phoenicians, though they seem in some ways to have resembled Minoans, Pelasgians, or even Greeks. The Zimbabwe ruins in Rhodesia do bear unmistakable testimony to the white man's presence in Southern Africa in very ancient times. The architectural pattern indicated by the ruins includes an acropolis, or inner citadel, a temple, and an elaborate system of outer fortifications that could have been designed only by a military genius. This must have been the site of Zima-Mbje, capital of the Ma-Iti. Whoever the Ma-Iti were, and wherever they came from, they were first seen, according to legend, some centuries before Christ, advancing up the Zambesi in their many-oared single-masted ships of Mediterranean design. They had metal weapons and were highly versed in the arts of war and soon subjugated the indigenous tribes and built a vast slave trading and commercial empire. They introduced new crops and a terraced form of agriculture, and their vast plantations were worked by thousands of black slaves. They became enormously rich, addicted to every form of luxury, and so followed the familiar pattern of political and social decadence. Eventually, their empire was overthrown by Bantu tribesmen led by a folk hero called Lumukanda. Their magnificent city was destroyed and its inhabitants slaughtered without mercy. Artifacts of the Ma-

Iti, such as bronze helmets and sword hilts, bits of armor, gold and silver coins, and so on have been preserved over the centuries by generations of witchdoctors and are still used, so Mutwa tells us, in magic rituals. Other evidences of the presence of the Ma-Iti are to be seen in the famous rock paintings, notably the "White Lady of the Brandberg," in South West Africa, about which there has been so much speculation and controversy. Any Bantu witchdoctor, it seems, could have cleared up the mystery about this picture had the white experts deigned to ask him. The Abbé Breuil was right, Mutwa says, in declaring the central figure to be that of "a white person of Caucasoid or Semitic origin," but wrong in supposing it to be female. Instead, it represents "a strikingly handsome young white man" who is confidently identified by our author as the early Ma-Iti Emperor Karesu II. The rock paintings, however, are not the work of the Ma-Iti; most of them were made by Bushmen. So far from being one of the most primitive tribes, as they are commonly considered, the Bushmen are, we are told, one of the most talented and advanced.

They were the first to have a proper calendar. . . . They . . . kept track of the seasons, and with their great knowledge of all other natural phenomena they were (and still are) better long-term weather forecasters than anything the white man has at his disposal even today. . . . Their knowledge of herbal medicine, poisons and antidotes still baffles white scientists. The durable quality of the materials in their cave paintings puts modern industrial paint to shame. Some of their pictures have survived the elements for thousands of years while the white man is still trying to find a paint that will last, exposed to the weather, for more than five or ten years.

Mutwa's interpretations of the rock paintings gain some additional authority, perhaps, from the fact that he is himself an artist of sorts. In February 1969 at the

Mona Lisa Art Gallery in Johannesburg he exhibited four strange allegorical paintings, somewhat reminiscent of the surrealist fantasies of Salvador Dali, which attracted wide attention.

There is nevertheless a hint of disingenuousness about Mutwa and his book, and this is sometimes confirmed where it is possible to check his narratives against known facts. For example in his effort to justify the murder of the Retief party, on the ground that one of them had violated a tribal tabu, he carefully neglects to mention that by previous arrangement with Dingaan the *voortrekkers* were unarmed. Nor is there a mention of the subsequent massacre of their helpless wives, children, and Hottentot servants, the scene of which is today called Winnen, or the place of weeping. Again his account of the trouble over the construction of the Kariba dam of the Zambesi is only partly correct. From the days of the great southward migration of the Mambo, Nguni, and Xhosa, the river gorge had been a burial ground for all the tribes and thus a holy place. Mutwa tells us that when the Tonga refused to evacuate the dam site they were driven out by gunfire and many of them killed. In Zambia the Tonga resisted with firearms and were fired on by the constabulary. In Rhodesia the necessity of the flooding was explained to the Tonga; they were given time to remove the remains of their ancestors and left quietly. Mutwa's curious assertion that certain "guardians of Bantu history," meaning, presumably, the witchdoctors, were considering the "elimination" of the Abbé Breuil because he had come so close to guessing the secret of the Brandberg painting hardly squares with the oft-reiterated dictum that blacks and whites need to know all about each other's customs, beliefs, and traditions so as to avoid giving offense.

Nor should Mutwa's animadversions against Christianity be taken at full value, though it is now admitted and regretted that the early missionaries did not spend some of the effort used in trying to break

the power of the witchdoctors in trying to understand the religious psychology of the heathen blacks. Still, if it had not been for the missionaries and their schools, Mutwa would never have been able to write this book. And as for white hypocrisy, one might ask by way of riposte how it is that Mutwa, the apostle of tribalism, up to now has found reasons for preferring to live in the "asphalt jungle" of Johannesburg rather than in the idyllic bush with his tribesfolk. Yet he insists that all he wants is "to live again in a typical Zulu kraal, at peace with the world, with a Bantu wife to bear me stalwart sons and daughters to whom I can teach the tribal law and in whom I can instill respect and reverence for our tribal heritage."

The real value of the book is in its repudiation of fallacies widely shared in Europe and America about race and politics in the South African Republic, its protest against "the way in which ignorant people all over the world have blackened the present government worse than the bottom of a witch's pot." Mutwa may or may not know whereof he speaks when he asserts that at the beginning of the Boer War the Bantu tribes wanted to fight with the Afrikaners against the British, but he is certainly right in saying the Nationalist governments of Dr. Malan and Dr. Verwoerd and their successors have won the respect of the Bantu in a way that the British-oriented government of General Smuts could not. He also recognizes that the separation of the races is the only practicable way of averting future violence and possibly revolutionary chaos, and that differences of color are only the outward signs of profound psychological and cultural incompatibilities. Or in the words of a Nationalist cabinet minister, "If the Bantu were green and we were green, the difference would still be there."

Reviewed by ALLEN T. BLOUNT