

For it was Christianity, the author points out, that brought to collectivist tribal thinking the new fact of individual worth and importance. There could hardly have been a more revolutionary concept. Formerly the tribe was all, and within the tribe, the family. Here was no meanly conceived tight little family unit either, but a big, rich, rambling sort of family, whose wealth was communal and whose honour the responsibility of every individual to maintain. The missionary spoke of the value of each single soul in the eyes of its Creator and Redeemer; "Ye are of more value than many sparrows".

Evangelical protestants in particular, with their insistence upon the personal nature of salvation and the availability of a direct contact between a man and his Maker gave a new dimension of importance to the individual. Roman Catholic authoritarianism was perhaps rather less disturbing, but as Dr. Vilakazi says, Roman Catholicism threw up less leadership among the people than did the more individualistic protestant churches. Here, then, is a doctrine that has turned the tribal world upside down. Children, with the tools of elementary learning in their hands, have become the teachers of their elders; widows inherit property, rejecting the levirate to become kraal-heads; chiefs, so long the guardians of tradition, have been ousted from their authority by the man who can teach, or preach, or heal; marriage has become romantic and personal and no longer the bond between families.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE AUTHOR notes, there are, between the two poles of traditionalist and Christian, many who have given up the attempt to resolve the matter at all. A few consciously reject the new faith; many more, themselves tribally orientated, yet yearn for the comfort and ease of modern life. Here are the migratory labourers, the floating masses of the poorly educated and those only lightly brushed by Christian individualism; here are tsotsis and gangsters, and decent folk steady in subservience, and those again whose thoughtless way through life goes to the throb of the guitar or the wail of the penny whistle. The church, too, has its floating masses. Defeated by the high official morality of the Christians, cynical over dual standards between white and black, sickened by white hypocrisy, the middlemen of the churches have branched and branched again into the multitudinous sects of Zion and the new, all-African Jerusalem. Among their ranks we catch a glimpse of the blue and green and white of the prophet's robes, proclaiming a new revelation of independence, a new, direct path of atonement between the black man and his God.

Mankind likes both to have its cake and to eat it. Here in the year 1963 the government of the Republic of South Africa reaffirms its commitment to a policy of enlightenment and Christianisation, yet wishes to carry out this laudable ideal within the framework of collective tribalism. Dr. Vilakazi's book reminds us that the fruit of the forbidden tree—the fruit of Choice—may be either eaten or put on one side. Once picked, the fruit can never again be hung back on the tree. ●

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Fundamental Flaws

Merle Babrow

Politics and Law in South Africa by Julius Lewin
(Merlin Press)

THE MAIN THEME of this slim, R1.85 volume of reprinted essays is that there is no revolution round the corner in South Africa. What combination of circumstances must be present before a successful revolution can take place? Mr. Lewin (who lectures in "Native Law" at Witwatersrand University) accepts four classic conditions laid down by Crane Brinton in his *Anatomy of Revolution*.

Revolutions are not started by the really poor and oppressed. They occur in countries that are on the upgrade economically and originate in the discontent of a fairly prosperous and rising class of people, at a point where they find their further progress hampered and checked. These two conditions are satisfied in South Africa. An expanding economy has led to the creation of a large African working and a smaller middle class in the towns; while the severe legal restrictions on their further progress and the humiliating treatment to which they are subjected have caused growing resentment and frustration amongst them.

But, before this discontented and powerful class can perform its traditional revolutionary role, the Government which it seeks to overthrow must be weak and its administration inefficient. This condition is not satisfied in South Africa, nor is the final and most crucial one: 'no government has ever fallen before revolutionists until it has lost control over its armed forces . . . or until the revolutionists have a predominance of

Poem

*Still a song shall arise
In my heart! out of this pit
Of ash and dust they trampled it
A flame shall arise
Like leaves on tree, tip on tip
To burn on every lip.
Yam tuber too late for prize
Or price will, buried piece eal,
At fall of flood rise again whole,
Turn out a hundred fold.
But enough, oh enough! For how can pestle
Sound in mortar a song
When Babylon of old
As yet unbroken into odd tongue
Poured on a bush flaming gold
Derision and dung?*

JOHN PEPPER CLARK

From *Poems* (Mbari)