

Book

Family history traces roots of Afrikaaners

White Tribe Dreaming
Marc de Villiers
 MacMillan of Canada

review by Gary Dhillon

"Hardly anyone believes in apartheid anymore," says Marc de Villiers. By anyone he refers in particular to the whites in South Africa. But, he adds, there is a moral bankruptcy present because there is no ideology to replace it. This view is surprising, but he expresses it as an eighth generation Afrikaaner and recent author of *White Tribe*

Dreaming: Apartheid's Bitter Roots.

White Tribe Dreaming traces the history of the Afrikaaners from their initial arrival on the Cape of Good Hope in the seventeenth century to their northward expansion and settlement through two colonial wars with Britain and the establishment of the apartheid state. The historical narrative is made personal by the way de Villiers centers it around an account of his own ancestors. Although the tone is humorous at times, the 26 chapter account serves to establish certain ideas. These, that the Afrikaaners are a tribe with an historically defined identity, are made emphatically clear through much repetition.

The first 26 chapters, however, seem to be a prelude to the final postscript. The light tone changes to one of frustration as the question he raises exemplifies: "Why should the West not mobilize massive resources, promise huge amounts of aid to keep the poor-change economy healing and its social relations honest, to make South Africa into an example of the best of Western thinking, instead of the worst?"

De Villiers' frustration is perhaps a result of his politics. In a country where the politics are ostensibly polarized, de Villiers is a liberal who believes in peaceful compromise. This is an inherited attitude since de Villiers' father Rene de Villiers was a prominent South African liberal at a time when few Afrikaaners

were tolerant of such views.

Like his father, de Villiers attended the London School of Economics where, he says, he started to become aware of South Africa's problems. This was because he was studying with people of various races, which had not been possible for him in South Africa.

De Villiers returned to South Africa after leaving the LSE, and worked for a time as a reporter in Capetown. Canada is now de Villiers' adopted country and he is currently the editor of *Toronto Life* magazine.

The future of South Africa would be better, de Villiers believes, if Western nations working in cooperation with the South African government worked toward gradually dismantling apartheid over a number of years with fixed goals in mind. He agrees with sanctions in theory but not in practice: "They make things worse, because they're not significant enough." He offers this as a suggestion, but he is quite aware that events are not following the pattern of his hopes.



What lies in South Africa's future?

MEXICO IN MAY
 Special Blocked Space APR 30 - MAY 14
 AIRFARE/ACCOMMODATION

\$757.00 PLUS TAX
 (BASED ON QUAD. OCCUPANCY)

NTRA TRAVEL EDMONTON TRAVEL AGENCY CO. LTD.

HUB MALL, U. of A. 433-2494

It must be Spring!
 Celebrate — with these
 hit tunes

\$7.95
each

■ INXS
Kick

■ Sisters of Mercy
Floodland

■ Robyn Hitchcock
Globe of Frogs

■ George Harrison
Cloud nine

■ Foreigner
Inside Information

■ Jane Siberry
The Walking

■ All Selections Available on Cassette ■ Limited Quantities

9200 - 112 Street ■ HUB MALL ■ 432-5024
 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday 9:30 - 5:30, Thursday 9:30 - 9:00

The Home of the Hits