

# AUSTRALIAN OUTLOOK

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## ARTICLES

Resources, Political Pressures and The International Legal Order

*Andrew Farran*

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*R. J. Wickes*

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*R. W. Robin*

South Korean Defence Capability

*Michael Underdown*

Power Sharing Versus Partition in South Africa

*Klaus Baron von der Ropp*

The Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa

*Bruce Haigh*

International Peacekeeping: The U.N. Interim Force In Lebanon

*Ramesh Thakur*

New Zealand and the Baltic States: Principle Versus Pragmatism in Foreign Policy

*David McCraw*

Security Treaty Between Australia, New Zealand and the United States

*R. L. Harry*

## BOOK REVIEWS

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Editor David Goldsworthy  
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- Resources, Political Pressures and The International Legal Order* Andrew Farran 119
- Australia, Commodities and The Third World* R. J. Wickes 126
- The Role of Foreign Missions in an Independent Papua New Guinea* R. W. Robin 138
- South Korean Defence Capability* Michael Underdown 152
- Power Sharing Versus Partition in South Africa* Klaus Baron von der Ropp 158
- The Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa* Bruce Haigh 169
- International Peacekeeping: The U.N. Interim Force In Lebanon* Ramesh Thakus 181
- New Zealand and the Baltic States: Principle Versus Pragmatism in Foreign Policy* David McCraw 191
- Security Treaty Between Australia, New Zealand and the United States* R. L. Harry 201

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## POWER SHARING VERSUS PARTITION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Klaus Baron von der Ropp\*

Reading the international press on Southern Africa, and specifically South Africa, one gets the impression that it reports according to the motto 'dramatic today, forgotten tomorrow'. The question to be asked is whether the Western powers do not follow a similar policy. They seem not to act but just to react, and to have no concept of a constructive South Africa policy. In view of the dangers involved in this conflict such an attitude is hard to understand. Only half a year ago, in January-February 1981, the world was shown that in South and Southern Africa more than just a regional conflict is at stake: after the South African attack on an ANC office in Matola/Maputo, the USSR augmented its naval presence in Beira and Maputo. This 'gesture of solidarity' by the USSR towards Mozambique was in fact the logical consequence of the friendship treaty linking the two countries. Another country bound to Moscow through a treaty of friendship, the People's Republic of Angola, is more or less regularly the target of attacks by the South African armed forces fighting the Namibian liberation movement, SWAPO.

Taking into account South Africa's extreme importance to Japan and Western Europe, and to a lesser degree North America, from both an economic and a strategic point of view, an interview given in 1977 by Egon Bahr, a leading German Social Democrat, should be remembered. In it the architect of the West German policy of *detente* towards East Germany, Eastern Europe and the USSR warned that if things came to the worst in the Republic, the South African conflict might turn into a new global war.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in South Africa a situation is being developed that, in the not too distant future, could easily go beyond the control of even the US.

### *Western Approaches to the South African Conflict*

Until the mid-seventies the traditional Western South Africa policy aimed more or less at stabilising a liberalised version of the *status quo*. It thus overlooked the interests of South Africa's blacks (about 20 million people, or 70 per cent of the country's total population). As is well known, in 1976-7 black South African schoolchildren made it clear that the days of *baasskap* (white supremacy) were numbered. Only then did most Western countries realise that it was not in their interest to continue to support a political order which was little more than institutionalised racism, and which would sooner or later collapse. The West furthermore began to fear that anyone who stood at the side of Pretoria abandoned the rest of Africa to the political opponent, i.e. the Soviet Union.

It was acknowledged at the time that South Africa made important contributions towards finding solutions for the problems posed by Zimbabwe/Rhodesia and Namibia/South West Africa. But the question was raised whether the South African regime was in a position to solve its own problems in the little time which remained. Correctly it was judged in the Western capitals that to pose this question was probably to answer it in the negative.

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1. *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt*, 10 July 1977. See in this context the scenario developed in David Goldsworthy, 'South Africa', in Mohammed Ayoob (ed.), *Conflict and Intervention in the Third World* (Croom Helm, London, 1980), pp. 235ff.

## POWER SHARING VERSUS PARTITION

### (i) The Policy of the Carter Administration

As a consequence, the US and its main allies (some of them not without hesitation) took a radically new line, summed up in Andrew Young's call for 'one-man-one-vote in one state' as the new political order for South Africa.

However welcome such statements may have been in black South Africa<sup>2</sup> and the other parts of Africa, the new approach, as was to be expected, failed completely to impress white South Africa. Demands such as those made by Andrew Young and Vice-President Walter Mondale definitely do not represent a step in the direction of a solution to South Africa's dilemma. The very opposite is the case. The white Africans see such demands as an invitation to commit collective suicide. Their natural response is to retreat into the laager; or in the phrase of a leading German journalist, Gunther Gillesen, to continue their 'attempt to emigrate from history'. Although a revolution from above is absolutely imperative, the white Africans under pressure would be prepared at best to accept a policy of very limited gradual change, and would be more likely to follow a policy of what Heribert Adam called 'modernising racial domination'. And they would do so even at the risk of causing a great catastrophe. Assuming that there is no intervention on the part of one of the superpowers, the white South Africans would be able to hold out for a relatively long period of time with such a policy. The Western world has sold them all the armaments they need to fight a very bloody war against the neighbouring states and the huge Fifth Column at home.

### (ii) Essentials of a Constructive Policy

Alan Paton, a long-time liberal and ardent opponent of South Africa's political system, warned in an interview with the liberal West German weekly *Die Zeit* that if the growing number of militant black South Africans and the outside world continued to stick to the 'one-man-one-vote in one state' formula, then the country at the Cape of Good Hope would cease to exist. In his view an 'integrated' society, i.e. a society which lacked very strong safeguards for minorities, would only be achieved at the price of millions of dead. And Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, the only moderate black South African leader who still has a strong following, argued along similar lines in a speech to the National Council of Churches in New York: 'I know more than most the readiness of whites to scorch the earth in the eleventh hour and to die in defence of the indefensible'.<sup>3</sup> Unlike his militant critics at home and abroad, Buthelezi knows, for instance, that the terror of the Afrikaaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) will undoubtedly match that of Gusch Emunim, to defend what it thinks to be the white man's legitimate interests.

Against this background it is quite surprising how glibly leading representatives of the Carter Administration and quite a number of leading West European politicians overlooked the fact that there exists a white South African nation of about 4.5 million people. Like the people of European origin in Australia, Canada, the US, New Zealand and Argentina, the white South Africans are not Europeans living in a foreign continent but an autonomous nation; a nation that developed at the Cape over more than three centuries. Thus, unlike in Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Kenya and Algeria, the problem in South Africa is not a colonial one. Even the most liberal representatives of this white African nation, such as Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, the leader of the small but forceful and committed liberal opposition party (the Progressive Federal Party or PFP), will argue that they are ready to negotiate with black South Africa everything

2. See e.g. Steve Biko, 'American Policy towards Azania', in Aelred Stubbs (ed.), *Steve Biko—I Write What I Like* (Heinemann, London, 1978), pp. 138–42.

3. 'Christian Perspectives of the Black Liberation Struggle in South Africa', *South African Outlook* (Rondebosch), September 1979, p. 137.



## Klaus Baron von der Ropp

but the right to existence of their own nation. The absolute resolve of the white Africans to maintain their identity as an African nation can only be compared with the Israelis' allegiance to the Jewish state.

With Chester A. Crocker as the new Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in Washington, there is reason to hope that the South Africa policy of the US and its allies will make a change to the positive. Unlike most of his predecessors, Crocker has read his African history books and knows both the history of black South Africa's opposition to an abhorrent order and the history of the white African's iron determination to defend his interests. Reading Crocker's recent reflections on the internal South African scene, one gets the impression that he might be looking for the last fall-back positions of both main parties to the conflict, and thus be trying to find a common denominator in order to solve one of the world's most dangerous conflicts.<sup>4</sup>

### *South Africa Between the Need for Revolution from Above and the Probability of Revolution from Below*

Even in 1978-9, when Prime Minister P. W. Botha was tirelessly announcing reforms for the benefit of black and brown South Africans ('adapt or die'), there was probably never a concrete concept for a new political order in South Africa. One must agree with Heribert Adam's observation that 'rather than encapsulating itself in a beleaguered fortress, the Afrikaner elite is searching clumsily for possible breakthroughs in any direction'.<sup>5</sup> The results of this reform process, heralded with a huge propaganda campaign in 1979, are, in the political field, extremely modest.

#### **(i) The Reserves: Cradles of the Great Revolution**

For example, the Hennie van de Walt Commission, which was dealing with the geographical and economic consolidation of the reserves ('Bantustans', 'Homelands', 'Black National States'), has so far not published its apparently pretty radical plans. In this context an emergency report, published early last year by the Black Sash, a very dedicated organisation for aiding blacks, deserves attention. It showed that the reserves, whether they are 'independent' (Transkei, BophutaTswana, Venda) or not yet 'independent' (such as Ciskei, Lebowa, Gazunkulu, KwaZulu), are little more than cheap labour reservoirs for white South Africa. In fact this is even acknowledged in government publications.<sup>6</sup> In the Black Sash report, blacks give accounts of how they can considerably increase their income by contravening pass laws to work illegally in white South Africa, even if, as a consequence, they go to jail for several months each year. Another typical aspect of the social and economic situation in the reserves is the existence of 'resettlement camps' to which white South Africa sends 'unproductive' or 'no more productive' black workers.<sup>7</sup> Here no political agitation is needed to make young men illegally cross the borders into Botswana, Mozambique and Swaziland and join Umkhonto we Sizwe or Poqo, the guerrilla armies of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) respectively.

4. Chester A. Crocker, 'South Africa: Strategy for Change', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 59 No. 2 (Winter 1980/81), pp. 323-51.

5. Heribert Adam, 'Survival Politics: In Search of a New Ideology', in Heribert Adam and Hermann Giliomee, *Ethnic Power Mobilised: Can South Africa Change?* (Yale U. P., New Haven, 1979), p. 143.

6. See the BENSO report in *Development Studies in Southern Africa* (Pretoria, July 1980).

7. See e.g. Gerry Mare, *African Population Relocation in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1980).

## **POWER SHARING VERSUS PARTITION**

### **(ii) The Failure of the Schlebusch Commission**

The results of the work of the Schlebusch Commission entrusted with working out a new constitutional dispensation for the South African heartland, so-called white South Africa, are at best meagre. The Commission recommended the establishment of a President's Council and a Black Advisory Council. The latter never came into existence because even the Quislings 'governing' in the reserves, not to mention the president of Inkatha, Gatsha Buthelezi, refused to serve on it. The President's Council, for its part, consists of government-appointed representatives of the whites (about 17 per cent of the total population), the coloureds (about 10 per cent), the Indians (about 3 per cent) and the Chinese (about 0.03 per cent!). Black Africans are not represented. Yet it is the constitutional position of the blacks in the South African rump state that is the Republic's key political problem. The fact that blacks were not invited to join the work of this Council made many highly respected and qualified members of South Africa's brown communities boycott its work. Accordingly most of the coloureds and Indians serving on it today are to be looked upon as stooges.

Yet this new situation might be important insofar as, replacing the Schlebusch Commission, its constitutional committee from now on will advise the Government on constitutional matters. And it would not be surprising if, in not too distant a future, it were to recommend that a limited number of coloured and Indian South Africans be elected on a separate roll to the national Parliament. There is quite a possibility that such a proposal would be welcomed by both the Botha Government and, after many bitter and intensive debates, the two brown communities. For whatever many of its younger and increasingly militant spokesmen may propagate ('Solidarity of Brown and Black Power'), in the final analysis the mass of the brown Africans will still be closer to the whites than to the blacks.

### **(iii) Some Developments in Black South Africa**

Nothing showed more clearly the gulf between the thinking of white and black South Africans than their respective reactions to Pretoria's above-mentioned attack on the ANC office in Matola/Maputo, Mozambique. All political parties and all papers of any political relevance in white South Africa treated this action as one of legitimate self-defence. But black South Africans, whether moderate or militant, regarded it as a naked act of aggression against a movement which they considered to be, at the very least, a strong factor in their struggle for liberation. So in a memorial service in Regina Mundi, Soweto, thousands of blacks remembered the dead ANC members as heroes in the struggle against racist oppression.

Nobody can say which of the nationalistic black movements has most support in today's South Africa: the (banned) ANC, Inkatha, the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo), the (banned) Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), or the (banned) PAC. But one is struck by the openness with which black South Africans these days express their sympathies for the ANC and to a much lesser extent the PAC. This becomes clear, for example, in black suburbs at the funerals of people who have fought for the cause of black freedom. And even ministers of the Sendingskerk of the Dutch Reformed Church play an outstanding role here. At the funeral of ANC activist Lilian Ngoyi, who had been banned for more than fifteen years, many ANC flags were to be seen, and her coffin was covered with a black, green, and golden flag. At the graveside a message was read from Nelson Mandela, who for the past seventeen years has been serving a life sentence for high treason on Robben Island. The funeral of three ANC supporters shot by the police following a raid and hostage-taking at a bank in Silverton, Pretoria, followed a similar course. In the funeral procession the cry of 'they were no criminals, they are our heroes'

## Klaus Baron von der Ropp

could often be heard. And there cannot be any doubt that last year's attacks by the ANC on Sasol I and II, the strategically very important coal gasification plants in Sasolburg and Secunda, were seen by most black South Africans as the expression of the oppressed's iron determination to fight the oppressor.

The same is true of the numerous strikes at black (and coloured) schools and universities. As Judge Petrus Cillie said in his official report on the 1976–7 uprisings, 'the officials believed that there were agitators behind all the rebelliousness. . . they did not realise that the scholars were so dissatisfied they could easily become riotous'. Even if, in a relatively near future, the system of Bantu education (and also the specific education for coloureds) were to be abolished, and if as a consequence blacks (and coloureds) were to get the same education that whites get today, in all probability 'law and order' would still not come back to their schools and universities. For after the transfer of power in neighbouring Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe, black students will not stop their protests as long as the monument of Oom (Paulus) Krüger on Church Square in Pretoria has not been replaced by that of Nelson Mandela.

Recently it became known that Pretoria today uses army units, as well as the police, for raids into the black townships. Besides looking for guerrillas they search for militant blacks responsible for the growing number of illegal strikes. It appears that organised black opposition to apartheid now largely centres in the trade union movement—an unintended result of the recent liberalisation of the labour legislation. So a revolutionary order for Azania might well be born one day out of the newly-created unions. Quite a number of strikes have been at least partly politically motivated. Among them the following ones in 1979–80 were especially relevant politically: the stay-away of the textile workers of the Frame Trust (Natal); the strike at Volkswagen (Uitenhage); the strike at the Table Bay Cold Storage Company which aimed to secure the management's recognition of an unregistered workers' committee; the strike at the Ford Company in Port Elizabeth which aimed at the re-employment of the leader of the militant Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation, Thozamile Botha, who later was banned, fled the country and joined the ANC; and finally, the strike of the members of the independent Black Municipality Workers' Union in Johannesburg, another strike aiming to secure management's recognition of an unregistered union. The political significance of all these actions is undoubtedly very high. However, there remain two points that must not be overlooked. There is no solidarity at all between white and black workers. And where there is solidarity between black workers on one side and coloured and Indian workers on the other side, it is often fragile.

The strike of the members of the Media Workers Association of South Africa (MWASA), despite its very few participants, had a special importance in that MWASA's members were all employed by relatively liberal papers (*Post*, *Rand Daily Mail*, *The Star*). In the words of their leader Zwelakhe Sisulu (later banned), these unionists were fighting not only for higher salaries but for management's acceptance of their role as 'revolutionary propagandists'.<sup>8</sup>

### (iv) On the Polarisation between Black and White Africans

Just how deep the rift is between the two sides, and thus how difficult it will be to have a constructive exchange of views, is perhaps best illustrated by the recent history of the *Rand Daily Mail*. This Johannesburg daily has always been committed to liberal ideals and fights the present order more vehemently than any other white-owned newspaper. And yet it decided a number of years ago (of its own free will!) to print separate editions for its black and white readers. Occasionally, the two editions of the *Rand Daily Mail*

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8. Quoted in Denis Beckett, 'The Mwasa Strike', *Frontline* (Johannesburg), December 1980, p. 4.



## POWER SHARING VERSUS PARTITION

have entirely different contents. This happened for instance at the beginning of April 1979 in connection with the hanging of Solomon Mahlangu, a member of the ANC, who had been sentenced to death, under a constitutionally faultless procedure, for committing two politically-motivated murders. The hanged man was simply a common criminal as far as the whites were concerned, but for the blacks, he was a symbol of freedom. The same impression was created one year later on the occasion of the burial of the three men shot by police after the raid on the bank in Silverton.

And there are many more examples of polarisation in a country where since the incident at the ANC office in Matola/Maputo, there is again absolutely no fruitful communication between black and white. Even in the Black Sash only one per cent of the members are black. Symptomatic too is the proposal discussed early in 1980 by black South African Christians (Anglicans, Methodists, Catholics, i.e., all from integrated churches) to found their own 'confessing church'. Of course, as the choice of the name indicates, they had in mind the struggle of the church in Nazi Germany.

### (v) Black Views of South Africa's Political Future

It is only natural that the blacks should have countered the *kragdadigheid* (intransigence) and self-righteousness of the whites with increasing militancy, indeed, with the first phase of a civil war. Gatshu Buthelezi, president of the powerful Inkatha movement, may be the only 'realist' remaining among true leaders of the South African blacks today, as he still seeks a constitutional compromise for a new South Africa. Buthelezi heads a commission that for the province of Natal is looking for an institutionalised system of sharing political power (consociational democracy). The members of the Buthelezi Commission hope that this new order, once found, will serve as an example for the other provinces of the Republic. Buthelezi realises that black South Africa can only be liberated once the white African minority has been given a concrete perspective for its own future. So Buthelezi again and again warns his very many militant critics at home and abroad that whoever does not take this into account will achieve little more than to bring South Africa closer to the abyss. Yet very many black South Africans today call for the unconditional surrender of the still extremely powerful government in Pretoria. They identify with the inscription on Steve Biko's tombstone: 'One Azania, one nation'. It is to be expected that all members and sympathisers of ANC, BCM/ PAC and Azapo will agree with Nthato Motlana, the chairman of the Soweto Committee of Ten, who talking on constitutional alternatives recently remarked: 'And still others talk of the antiquated idea of a qualified franchise. . . The consociation argument has also been raised recently, and various cranks come up with all sorts of plans to redesign the divisions so that blacks get a squarer deal than the 13 per cent that the government policy allows for, but these things are all irrelevant and not worth talking about'.<sup>9</sup>

There cannot be the slightest doubt that no white South African government, however 'reactionary' or 'liberal' it may be, can accept unconditional surrender as a solution of the South African dilemma. And it should not be forgotten that the white South African has got all the means he needs to defend his basic interest, that is, to stay, as the Australian, the New Zealander and the Canadian does, in the country of his birth. The outside world and black South Africa must realise that there is a widespread fear among white (and brown) Africans that once a radical change of political power has taken place they will be liquidated, or at best driven into the sea. The fact that a growing number of militant blacks speak of the white South Africans as 'settlers' or 'boers' shows that there is a very good reason for this fear. So Nthato Motlana's attitude is not the way to approach, much less convince, the white African minority, which despite everything, still rules sovereignly.

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9. Quoted in 'Perceptions of Change: Separate Dilemmas and White Rights', *ibid.*, May 1980, p. 22.

## Klaus Baron von der Ropp

In terms of power politics, this sort of approach is simply unrealistic.

Possibly these powerful militant black movements take so uncompromising a view only as a first bargaining position. If this is not the case, then the experience of going through all the sufferings of a civil war of a very new quality will make the other black leaders follow Gatsha Buthelezi in thinking about compromises.

In the foreseeable future, there will be no solution for South Africa's political problems if the new constitutional order does not offer copper-bottomed guarantees of existence to the white and brown African minorities.

### (vi) Changes in the Thinking of White South Africans?

After the bloody riots in 1976-7, a number of prominent members of the governing National Party, which is virtually all-powerful in white South Africa today, had cause to look with the greatest possible concern at the future of their country. Since that time, more and more voices have been heard from within the strongholds of Afrikanerdom, such as the Dutch Reformed Church, the Universities of Stellenbosch and Potchefstroom and even Rand Afrikaans University of Johannesburg, as well as in important Afrikaans newspapers (*Beeld*, *Rapport* and *Die Transvaler*), calling into question the very principles underlying the policy of apartheid. These Afrikaners, who represent so far only a tiny minority within the élite of Afrikanerdom, have lost their almost religious belief in the rightness of the path followed for the past thirty years. Here parallels are seen with the disastrous fate of Nazi Germany. So one today even hears calls for the denunciation of such once-admired Afrikaner leaders as Hendrik F. Verwoerd.

It was the crushing defeat of Pretoria-supported Bishop Abel Muzorewa in Zimbabwe at the beginning of 1980, rather than the overwhelming electoral victory of Robert Mugabe's party, which greatly strengthened this self-criticism. Thus it was that in March 1980 *Beeld*, *Rapport* and *Die Transvaler* all called upon the Government in Pretoria to discuss the future of the country with the 'genuine' leaders of the black and brown South Africans and to take decisions with them.<sup>10</sup> A year later the very able, very courageous editor of *Beeld*, Ton Vosloo, warned white South Africans against living in a dream-world and believing that the *status quo* would prevail indefinitely. He argued that the lesson of the Geneva talks between South Africa and SWAPO on the future of Namibia in early 1981 was that one day there would have to be negotiations between Pretoria and the banned ANC on the future of South Africa.<sup>11</sup> In this context the articles published by Hennie Coetzee, one of the great old men of Afrikanerdom in *Woord en Daad* (Potchefstroom) on the necessity of a radical change of thinking among, Afrikaners also deserve the closest attention. These Afrikaners, who are not afraid of being socially ostracised as *verraiers* (traitors), are now endorsing a demand which has been repeated day in and day out for years, not only by the black and brown parties, but also by the PFP: instead of the present system, where the minority dictates to the majority, there should be a new political order negotiated collectively by elected representatives of all South African groups.

However, these Afrikaners are fighting a system which has grown up over centuries. Moreover, many of their friends played a not inconsiderable part, especially after 1948, in indoctrinating the mass of white South Africans in the policy of apartheid. And in fact the overwhelming majority of conversations with white South Africans still reminds one of a cartoon which appeared a few years ago in the Johannesburg *Star*: it depicted the earth in space and around it was circling a second moon inscribed 'Suid-Afrika'. The average white Africans thinking often seems to be far closer to that of *Die Afrikaner*, the organ

10. See e.g. *Beeld*, 4 March 1980, and *Rapport*, 30 March 1980.

11. *Beeld*, 9 January 1981.

## POWER SHARING VERSUS PARTITION

of the openly racist Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP), than to that of Ton Vosloo and other Afrikaner intellectuals. Here it should be added that it would be a blunder to believe the average English-speaking white South African to be politically more open than the average Afrikaner. In 1981 'Boer' and 'Brit' are closer to each other, politically speaking, than at any time before. There are more and more English-speakers who vote for the National Party.

Finally, it must be said that as long as P. W. Botha, a hardly innovative professional politician, is in office, there is little hope that Pretoria will play a responsible role in bringing peace to South and Southern Africa. With his peculiar gift for self-delusion, Botha will probably continue to propagate 'grand designs' such as the poorly conceived idea of a 'Constellation of States' which is by no means grand but just a new name for a very old order, namely *groot apartheid*. But hope will rise on the day that the current Minister of National Education, the very highly qualified former chairman of the Broederbond, Gerrit Viljoen, takes over from Botha. He might be the Afrikaner de Gaulle who will initiate the revolution from above, knowing the only alternative to be a revolution from below.

### *Possible Conflict Resolutions*

As was said before, a regional conflict in South Africa would be just as likely to develop into a major international crisis as have those in South-West Asia and the Middle East. The vast raw material wealth and the strategic significance of South Africa both point to the danger of this conflict increasingly assuming an East-versus-West aspect. It is the responsibility of the Western countries, under the leadership of the US, the UK and France, to prevent this from happening, for no other countries have the means to play such a role. It is now a question of acting instead of merely reacting. The negotiating success of Lord Carrington on the Zimbabwe problem, which had been written off as insoluble by virtually everyone, should be the cue for a re-think of policy towards South Africa. The largest possible number of member-states of the OAU should be involved as closely as possible, of course, in this Western peace initiative.

The main policy aim must be to bring the representatives of all South Africa's important political groups to the negotiating table. A conference of this nature will give rise to many grave crises. It goes without saying that the negotiations will frequently break down. The danger is that they will be replaced by a war over South Africa's future. It is thus all the more important for the Western and African mediating states to bring into this all-South-African round of discussions compromise proposals of their own: that is to say, fall-back positions for both parties to the conflict. What might those fall-back positions look like?

A good deal of research has been done on this subject in recent years by South African, West German, American and Dutch scholars. All their works are based to a very large degree on the findings of the German-Dutch-South African study of the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute on the whites' preparedness for change and the black Africans' expectations of change in the social, economic and political fields.<sup>12</sup> In this context, two basic concepts of a new political order are being discussed in South Africa and abroad: consociationalism and radical (geographical) partition.

### **(i) Consociationalism for South Africa?**

Correctly assuming that integration could never work in South Africa and that any form of radical geographical partition would destroy South Africa's highly developed

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12. Theodor Hanf *et al.*, *Suedafrika: Friedlicher Wandel?* (Arnold Bergstraesser Institute, Munich/Mainz, 1978).



## Klaus Baron von der Ropp

economy, the Dutch political scientist Arend Lijphart introduced the theory of a system of an institutionalised sharing of power, in other words consociational democracy, into the South Africa debate.<sup>13</sup> From the German side Theodor Hanf and Heribert Weiland, two of the co-authors of the study by the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute, have made important contributions.<sup>14</sup> Within the Republic Frederik van Zyl Slabbert's PFP, Gatscha Buthelezi's Inkatha and certain academic circles within the National Party, grouped around Petrus G. Koornhof, have all given the idea some consideration.<sup>15</sup>

The advocates of consociationalism propose to restructure the territory of the Republic, including all the reserves, along the lines of a normal federal state. Notwithstanding the unfortunate experiences of Western democratic systems in the rest of Africa, they argue that the separate state governments and the federal government should be elected on the usual Western pattern. All of the factions represented in parliament should also be members of the state and federal executives, provided they command a certain minimum strength (e.g. 15 per cent). However, the participation in government does not put an end to the protection of South Africa's brown and white minorities, since such a constitutional dispensation would stipulate that the executive and legislative bodies must take decisions on the basis of a consensus. Hence minority factions would have a right of veto on virtually all important decisions.

Forms of consociational rule have already proved their value, not only in some West European countries (Switzerland, Netherlands, Austria), but also in the Lebanon. But do the prerequisites for such a constitutional order exist in South Africa? Even many of the advocates of consociationalism have grave doubts. There is for instance no common enemy. Moreover, as explained before, what the blacks call the fight for freedom is seen by the whites as politically-motivated terrorism. For centuries the political climate in South Africa has been one of segregation. The ethnic groups differ considerably in numerical strength. Finally, the meeting of whites and blacks in South Africa is really the coming together of the First and Fourth Worlds. The Pretoria government sees itself as having to face within its own national borders the same North-South conflict which may yet prove insoluble for the Western industrialised countries.

Clearly, the foreign and South African consociationalists must ask themselves whether the people of South Africa really have a social, cultural, economic and political common denominator, for without it, even a consociational democracy will not work. A very informative answer has here been given by the politically and academically esteemed chairman of the PFP, Frederik van Zyl Slabbert: 'The only hope that some narrow basis for consensus could be established and consolidated is if the antagonists have a glimpse into the abyss of violence, economic disaster and all the miseries that go with unrestrained conflict.'<sup>16</sup>

### (ii) Is Geographical Partition a Solution?

Faced with such doubts about the feasibility of a consociational system for South Africa, one turns to Chester A. Crocker and Carter Ebrahim, the deputy chairman of the (Coloured) Labour Party, who have both asked whether a 'negotiated' partition might

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13. See e.g. Lijphart's articles 'Majority Role versus Democracy in Deeply Divided Societies', *Politikon* (Pretoria), No. 2 (1977), pp. 113-26, and 'Federal, Confederal and Consociational Options for the South African Plural Society', in Robert I. Rotberg and John Barratt (eds.), *The Apartheid Regime: Political Power and Racial Domination* (Berkeley, 1980).

14. See e.g. their article 'Konkordanzdemokratie fuer Suedafrika?', *Europa Archiv*, Vol. 33 No. 23 (1978), pp. 755-70.

15. See e.g. Frederik van Zyl Slabbert and David Welsh, *South Africa's Options: Strategies for Sharing Power* (St Martin's Press, New York, 1978), and 'Koornhof: Swiss System Envisaged for South Africa', *Cape Times*, 25 May 1977.

16. Slabbert and Welsh, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

## POWER SHARING VERSUS PARTITION

not be the appropriate answer to South Africa's political problems.<sup>17</sup> It should not be forgotten that it was a highly respected liberal white African, R. F. Alfred Hoernlé, who nearly fifty years ago first asked this question.<sup>18</sup>

We would do well to consider the geographical partitioning of the Ottoman Empire, the former Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy and the Indian sub-continent. Here and there, good hedges do make good neighbours. In South Africa in 1981, even liberals are coming to the conclusion that the vitally necessary 'copper-bottomed guarantees of existence' for the minorities will only be brought into being with the hammering into the ground of border-markers.

Linking up with Hoernlé's contribution, and in the light of the fact that a radical partitioning of South Africa will very likely be the (only) common fall-back position of all of the white South African parties, the following proposal was put forward for discussion in 1976 in the German periodical *Aussenpolitik*, and a year later in the *South African Journal of African Affairs*:<sup>19</sup>

- (a) a logical territorial division of South Africa into two independent states: a northern state (Azania) with an exclusively black African population and southern state (South Africa) with an exclusively white and brown African population. The dividing line would pass through Oranjemund, Kimberley, Bloemfontein and Port Elizabeth, with these towns marking the northern or eastern border of the white/brown state;
- (b) complete integration of the Coloured and Indian South Africans in the southern state;
- (c) borders to be drawn, taking into account historical circumstances and the need for the detailed division to be both fair and justified (the black state would have approximately 70 per cent of the population, more than 50 per cent of the territory and getting on for 75 per cent of the GDP). Also, in drawing the borders, consideration would be given to an equivalence of development potential, seen in terms of raw material and infrastructure. Thus for example, each state would have three major ports;
- (d) very considerable transfers of population which, unlike the segregation policy to date, would affect mainly the white South Africans and those of Indian descent. A total of approximately 4.6 million people would have to be re-settled;
- (e) in order to safeguard its position, the white/brown African state to be brought into the Western defence alliance.

The American Africanist Kenneth Lee Adelman, who himself propagates a version of partition less favourable to blacks, remarked on the *Aussenpolitik* proposal that it was a 'non-starter in political terms'.<sup>20</sup> No doubt the same opinion prevails among the many militant spokesman of black South Africa. For them, as the German journalist Joachim Braun once said, Robben Island is as unrenounceable as the Voortrekker Monument is for the Afrikaners. But as was said before, going through the sufferings of a South African civil war will make both parties to the conflict think about compromises.

The authors of the *Aussenpolitik* proposal were quite surprised by the fact that only a very few white Africans criticised it with as much *kragdadigheid* as did Rudolf Gruber in the pro-big-business journal *South Africa International*: 'apocalyptic in its premises,

17. Crocker, *op. cit.*, p. 348; Carter Ebrahim, 'Prospects for Peaceful Change in the 1980s', *The Black Sash* (Johannesburg), May 1980, pp. 24-5.

18. R. F. Alfred Hoernlé, 'Anatomy of Segregation', *Race Relations* (Johannesburg), Vol. 3 No. 1 (February 1936), pp. 14-21.

19. Juergen Blenck and Klaus Baron von der Ropp, 'Republik Suedafrika: Teilung als Ausweg?', *Aussenpolitik*, Vol. 27 No. 3 (1976), pp. 308-24, and 'Republic of South Africa: Is Partition a Solution?', *South African Journal of African Affairs*, Vol. 7 No. 1 (1977), pp. 21-32. On the international reactions to these papers see Klaus Baron von der Ropp, 'Is Territorial Partition a Strategy for Peaceful Change in South Africa?', *International Affairs Bulletin* (Braamfontein), Vol. 3 No. 1 (June 1979), pp. 36-47. See further Colin Legum (ed.), *Africa Contemporary Record 1977-8* (Africana, London, 1978), pp. B885-6.

20. Kenneth Lee Adelman, *African Realities* (Crane Russak, New York, 1980), p. 164 note 7.

naive in its arguments and Utopian in its conclusions.<sup>21</sup> Quite obviously, the more or less arbitrary tearing in two of a highly industrialised country like South Africa goes against all the laws of economics. But it should also be remembered that almost all white South Africans, English and Afrikaans speakers alike, give the physical existence of their nation priority over any considerations of maintaining South Africa's economy. The fact that Pretoria in the last decades has developed an independent infrastructure in what in *Aussenpolitik* is called the southern state,<sup>22</sup> and the plans published by the pro-government South African Bureau of Racial Affairs on the creation of a 'white Palestine', should be clear indications of what the very last white African fall-back position will be.

Gavin Maasdorp's criticism of the *Aussenpolitik* proposal, on the other hand, makes very worthwhile reading.<sup>23</sup> A scholar at the University of Natal, Maasdorp accepts the principle of dividing South Africa into two independent states and even agrees more or less with the proposed border; but wants to avoid under all circumstances the resettlement of 4.6 million people. The weakness of Maasdorp's argument seems to be that if things go wrong for the whites (and the browns) in the black-ruled northern state, then there is no refuge where the members of the minorities might permanently take shelter and live according to their own identity.

Perhaps Frederik van Zyl Slabbert is right in his critical comment on *Aussenpolitik*'s proposal. He claims that guns would take over the task of doing the dividing up: 'It is conceivable that partition may be a last-resort option in a no-win situation, but quite likely the line will be drawn where the battle has ended and not where it has been thought out in morally and intellectually defensible terms in some scholar's study'.<sup>24</sup> His views are shared by many other observers of the South African scene, among them P. L. Moorcraft, Pierre Mayèr, Heribert Adam and Arend Lijphart.<sup>25</sup>

There is indeed a strong possibility that partition will not be able to prevent war in South Africa. War may even be a precondition so that white and black South Africans become prepared to start discussions on dividing the country. But even then the *Aussenpolitik* proposal, in its original or a modified version, would still be what C. L. Sulzberger called it in his comments in the *New York Times* and the *International Herald Tribune* of 10 August 1977: the alternative to holocaust.

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21. Rudolt Gruber, 'Foreign Reports: Bonn', *South Africa International*, Vol. 10 No. 3 (January 1980), p. 169.

22. See the detailed maps published in Blenck and von der Ropp's two articles, p. 322 and p. 30 respectively.

23. Gavin Maasdorp, 'Forms of Partition', in Rotberg and Barratt, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-46.

24. Slabbert and Welsh, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

25. P. L. Moorcraft, 'Towards the Garrison State', in F. M. Clifford Vaughan (ed.), *International Pressures and Political Change in South Africa* (Oxford U. P., Capetown, 1978), pp. 86-105; Pierre Mayer, 'Scenarios Sud-africains', *Politique Internationale* (Paris), No. 1 (1978), pp. 143-52; Heribert Adam, 'Three Perspectives on the Future of South Africa', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 20 Nos. 1-2 (1979), pp. 122-36; Arend Lijphart, 'Federal, Confederal and Consociational Options', *loc. cit.*