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IS TERRITORIAL PARTITION A STRATEGY FOR PEACEFUL CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA?

Klaus, Baron von der Ropp

For close on 30 years the South African policy of apartheid has been annually the subject of long debates in the UN General Assembly and UN Special Organisations. After 1957 when Ghana became the first Black African country to achieve independence the tone of debate became ever sharper. Following the independence of Angola and Mozambique and the victory in both countries of Marxist regimes emerging from liberation movements, world political interest in Southern African developments has increased rapidly. The unrest which lasted over a year in the black townships of South Africa, the constantly growing polarisation which this caused between the population groupings of the country and the increasing conflicts between the moderate "internal" transitional governments and the socialist-oriented liberation movements in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and South West Africa/Namibia have conjured up in the eyes of the world visions of an imminent, almost compulsorily escalating conflict leading to major warfare in Southern Africa. The centre of such a conflict would be the Republic of South Africa, a state with a uniquely heterogeneous population. In the middle of 1976 some 18.6 million black Africans (70% of the total population) were living there, some 4.3 million white Africans (17% of the population). 2.4 million Africans of mixed race (descendants of the *Khoisan* with strong Euro-Malay strains/10% of the population) and 0.75 million Africans of Indian ethnic origin (3%).

The danger of an escalation in conflict in Southern Africa lies primarily in the fusing of several areas of struggle. The argument between the demands of militant black Africans and the white Africans in South Africa who are essentially out to preserve the status quo carries within itself elements of racial conflict, the North/South confrontation and now even East-West rivalry apart from the problems of ethnic domination. It is simultaneously a race, class — and something which is only too often overlooked a nationality struggle, which is comparable with the former Dual Monarchy (of Austria-Hungary).

This article is the edited version of an address by Dr von der Ropp to the SAHA at Jan Smuts House on Tuesday 3 April 1979.

After Angola

Most recently, after the South Africans' Angola debacle in 1976 and the Cuban/Soviet offensive, Southern Africa has featured even more strongly for the Great Powers in the sphere of foreign policy activities and internal policy arguments. The unanimously agreed mandatory weapons embargo passed by the UN Security Council in November 1977 should in this connection be regarded as only the tip of the iceberg of international compulsory measures against the government in Pretoria; the intensive consultations of the five Western Powers for the settlement of the South West Africa/Namibia conflict should be seen as the most important indication of Western constructive involvement so far.

Publications on political, economic and social change in Southern Africa reflect the increased danger of conflict escalation and the recognition of how different problem complexes overlap. Despite this the debate reveals a certain one-sidedness: the main emphasis of all critical documents and analyses is still always directed at the injustice and untenable nature of the present system of ethnic discrimination and the necessity of replacing this system through increased pressure from within or without. In contrast, the questions of how, or by which other order, the system of white African domination can be replaced and the political and economic tensions brought about by this process of change overcome, receive relatively little attention in this literature.

However, despite this, in the South African debate in the last two or three years some indications as to a strategy for peaceful change have crystallised, one of which — territorial partition — is presented for discussion in this contribution. I am concerned less with presenting this idea as an optimal "solution" for the practical problems of the present, but rather more to work out the premises for a practical realisable solution through critical discussion of the various considerations which are posed for or against such an idea.

The South African Crisis Scenario

The future of South Africa will ultimately be formed through two factors: the nationalism of white South Africans and the nationalism of black South Africans. The overwhelming majority of the white Africans see themselves as an African nation which has been permanently settled in Africa for over three hundred years. South African history of the past 70 years in which the struggle of the Afrikaners against often overwhelming opponents exercised an important influence on the self-understanding of white South Africans, shows how strongly this grouping is permeated by the numerically superior and thus politically dominant Afrikaners. White nationalism of the Afrikaner stamp has historical, cultural and finally also marked religious foundations which hardly permit political compromise or a yielding up of a position of supremacy vis-a-vis black nationalism. There is a basic fear of physical annihilation! The absence of a means for retreat is an important contribution to the absence of readiness to compromise, which is often simplified by foreign observers as obstinacy or interpreted as absolute conservatism.

Although the Government policy of ethnically separate development and the fact that all over Africa ethnic consciousness causes to a certain extent divisiveness and weakening in black nationalism, one should not underestimate the solid strength of a black nationalism aimed at the ending of white domination in South Africa. If, as is to be feared, the conflict between blacks and whites escalates further, the black Africans, at least in a transitional period, will disregard their own ethnically based conflicts of interest and stand together in the struggle against the whites.

The role of racially mixed Africans (or Coloureds) and that of the Africans of Indian origin remains at the moment ambivalent within black nationalism. In the long term both will have to choose that leading group which is most likely to meet their economic and social demands. Up to now it has always appeared as if this would be the whites rather than the blacks.

A black dominated South Africa would at first be a developing country with an acute shortage of dynamic forces for development. Economic and political principles which almost inevitably stem from a one party state of socialist leaning are to be expected; tendencies in this direction are to be found as much in old publications of the Black Opposition as in the statements of today's leading black personalities. Those who have been aware for decades of the continuing close co-operation of the ANC with the South African Communist Party will not reject out of hand the possibility that such a new South Africa will follow a course even closer to the USSR than that followed with some reservation today by the former Portuguese colonies in Africa.

Furthermore, the behaviour of the white and black leadership of South Africa is not inconsiderably influenced by the existing or expected pressure from outside and the ideas of foreign parties involved for a possible solution to the conflict. International discussion, however, is still constantly dominated by the conception of a political, social and economic integration of all groups and regions of South Africa on the basis of a black majority government. Although the concrete ideas of individual politicians in the West do deviate considerably from this view, which threatens the existence of the Africans of Coloured, Indian and European origin and numerous observers recognise the need for a political solution "sui generis", this attitude has still not by any means been suppressed in resolutions of international organisations and in the world press.

Foreign Attitudes towards South Africa

Summary judgments in attitudes outside South Africa — for example, over the ethnically based aims of the White South African regime, the alleged inevitable process towards decolonisation and the relevance of Angola and Mozambique as models for liberation in the future development of Southern Africa, not to mention tactical considerations in the context of East/West and North/South disputes — play an important part. The sharp criticism of South Africa in UN circles, together with the threat of escalating pressure tactics and relatively passive conduct of the Western Powers — while there is at the same time more active support for liberation movements from Communist countries as well as a large proportion of the Third World — contribute in the end to a further polarisation of the parties to conflict inside South Africa.

If one considers these forces of growing polarisation and absence of compromise in their overall context, one is then not far from the conclusion that the conflicts in interest between black and white Africans can only be resolved through a *comprehensive* territorial solution, that is, an opposite solution to that of immediate or step by step integration of all groups.

Proposals for Territorial Partition in South Africa

Long before the coming to power of the National Party in 1948 a comprehensive system of formal and unconventional racial separation had already existed. Under the covering conceptions of "Apartheid", "Separate Development", "Parallel Development" and "Multi-national Development" the principle of separation was developed as far as the achievement of "independence" of the totally unviable Transkei and Bophutatswana (with three or four more "independent" homelands in prospect). The principle of separation always remains in practice subjected to the political and economic supremacy of the Whites, which is also an important reason for the widespread rejection of this policy inside and outside South Africa.

Parallel to the execution of this policy of separation the ques-

tion of a consistent territorial division of South Africa has been repeatedly taken up in the last few decades, with a general basis that only in this way would it be possible to resolve the irreconcilably opposing views and conflict of interests of white and black South Africans. Leading Afrikaner politicians such as General Hertzog and D.F. Malan portrayed such a solution as an ideal, the implementation of which was virtually impossible.¹ Liberal politicians and experts such as the South Africans R.F. Alfred Hoernle and Colin Legum, the Americans Edward A. Tiryakian and Gwen Carter have seriously considered the possibility for a consistent and equitable division of South Africa into two or more successor states.²

With the publication of the treatise "Republik Südafrika: Teilung als Ausweg?" ("Republic of South Africa: Is Partition a Solution?") in the German periodical "Aussenpolitik" an attempt was made in 1976 to establish in concrete form the very vague pointers in the direction of a partition strategy.³ The following proposals were aired for discussion in this article:

- A consistent territorial partition of South Africa into two states: a northern state with an exclusively Black population and southern state with an exclusively White and Brown population. The border line proposal was that of a line through Oranjemund, Kimberley, Bloemfontein and Port Elizabeth with these listed places forming the north and east boundary of the White/Brown state.
- Full integration of "Coloureds" and "Asians" into the white/ brown state.
- The drawing of boundaries taking into consideration historical factors and a detailed established fairness of partition (for example the black state would dispose of 50% of the country with some 70% of the total population and approaching 75% of GNP). In addition to this the drawing of boundaries would have regard for a certain equity of development potential using
- raw materials and infrastructure as a measure for this (for example, both states were to have three large ports each).
- Population movement in a very considerable measure would be permitted, in which contrary to separation policy until now, White and Asian Africans would be most affected. In all, some 4.6 million people were to be resettled.
- The white/brown state would be incorporated into the Western Alliance in order to preserve its existence.

From the reactions⁴ to these proposals some important conclusions for further discussion of strategies for solution of conflict may be drawn. Although hardly a commentator accepted the partition proposal outright, at first sight the intensity and breadth of reaction both inside and outside South Africa were worthy of note. As far as South Africa's future was concerned, it reinforced the generally perceived necessity to go down new and (possibly in the eyes of the world) away from ordinary paths. Secondly, the discussion confirmed that any "solution" of the many sided conflict in South Africa required strategies which were more extensive and dramatic in their effect and could not be conceived of as naked abolition of measures for discrimination or other gradual adaptations. I should briefly draw together here some further conclusions from the discussion:

- The political, social and economic contrasts between Blacks and non-Blacks should be born in mind. Integration for its own sake at the present juncture is not a realistic strategy for solution.
- A territorial settlement with simultaneous guarantees for political sovereignty of the new areas could be the foundation for a real and new partition of political and economic power.
- A comprehensive territorial partition would possibly be more easily accepted internationally than a step by step separation policy on the basis of the existing homelands policy.
- In contrast to the South African Government's policy to date, in which the Whites had hardly any sacrifice to make, an acceptable solution for both black Africans and the international body would necessitate *prima facie* material sacrifice by the Whites.

Doubts about Partition

If one analyses the reactions to this concrete proposal more closely, considerable doubts about such an initiative become apparent however. They are in the first place based on a strong pessimism concerning the readiness of white as well as black South Africans to agree in the present situation to a radical partition respectively to carry it through effectively. As far as the Whites are concerned, their agreement to consolidation of the homelands is already a difficult matter and their resistance to a cession of the Witwatersrand and Durban industrial complexes could be entirely uncompromising. With regard to dynamic developments and the latent ethnic conflict between black Africans, the moderate Blacks are interested in the Whites remaining, while "progressive" black leadership has been on record as not prepared up to now to divide "their country". The bare attempt at partition could by itself solidify the polarisation between the races especially if such a policy were initiated onesidedly by the Whites.

In the light of these and other considerations, almost all those writers who take part in this discussion come to the conclusion that such a strategy is only relevant in the case of a breakdown of all other alternatives. Should the attempts at reform on the part of the South African Government not go ahead quickly enough and not be pressed systematically in the direction of effective political and economic power partition — as is quite possible — or if the Western Powers and — with which we must also reckon the OAU and in its train the UN, regard this inner process of change as insufficient, the South Africa conflict will become ever sharper. In that context an economic boycott would certainly play an important part. Then a total partition in the sense of establishing a refuge for brown and white Africans may be the single remaining way out. But it should be mentioned in this context that G.M.E. Leistner has proposed a far-reaching consolidation of the homelands and the founding of a southern state dominated by the Whites;⁵ the industrial district of Witwatersrand would, according to Leistner, become a condominium commonly administered by all racial groups.

Alternatives to Total Partition

In addition to critical consideration of present government policy and the alternative of total territorial partition there are also at the present time some other strategies under discussion. At the same time it is particularly noteworthy that the alternative most regularly posed at a distance in international discussion — majority rule in a single state on the "one man one vote" system under the leadership of the ANC and/or PAC — has still hardly been examined as far as its political, security and economic consequences are concerned. I do not want to go into these points here, but there are two others, in some respects tied to one another, which have already been developed further in mainly South African and German publications and which are already strongly in the forefront of public discussion both inside South Africa and in some expert and political circles outside.

The model which is based on the teachings of G. Lehmbruch on "Democratic Concordance" and the work of A. Lijphart and K. McRae on "Consociational Democracy", presents one of the most important and most closely followed proposals in South African publications as well as in internal South African political discussion. Theodor Hanf and Heribert Weiland of the Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institute in Freiburg, Germany have played an outstanding part in the further development of this till now still largely unpublished conception of a federation sui generis, or a federation with pronounced confederal traits⁶ It may be that a model of this sort of state order is viable, even though the white/ brown South African population groups on the one hand and the black South Africans on the other lack a common denominator above all in the political, social and cultural fields — normally a 'Conditio sine qua non' of common statehood. Decisive in the viability of such a state will however be that the power instruments of state, not least the police and military, should be divided out constitutionally in such a way among the different population groups that both main contending parties are able to force the other at any given time, through the application of state measures of compulsion to respect the constitutional order.

The second proposal worked out — among others — by Wolfgang H. Thomas of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik in Ebenhausen, Germany stems from an evolutionary development of the policies existing up till now of separate development.⁷ The most important elements of this strategy are the following:

- The reserves, with the exception of the Transkei, are to be regarded after achievement of "independence" not as fully sovereign states separated from South Africa, but as largely autonomous parts of a kind of South African confederation.
- The population groups settled outside the homelands receive in the context of constitutional changes (restricted at first to Whites, Coloureds, and Indians, but including also before long the Blacks living outside the reserves) separate parliamentary organs of self-government, which function at the same time as a means for the election of representatives sent to the Upper House. All central legislative functions would lie with this Upper House. The Cabinet would be the executive organ to which representatives of all important population groups of the country would belong according to an entrenched clause of the constitution.
- In the longer term the possibility exists so to alter the relationship of the reserves towards the rest of South Africa (governed in the model by its different racial groups together) that a genuine confederation of states with equal constitutional rights comes into being.
- A far-reaching economic and geographical consolidation of the reserves would facilitate the carrying out of this strategy. This would not necessarily entail however a resettlement of people.

An Attempt to Assess the Various Strategies

If one puts the above proposals for a solution to the South Africa dilemma together — total partition, consociational democracy, and plural integration — one is able to draw a series of conclusions which could be important for further discussion on South Africa. All three proposals attempt to recognise the efforts of individual population groups to keep their identity (including language, culture, political organisation and living style) through far-reaching decentralisation and political autonomy.

These strategies, excepting total partition, are in accordance with the principle, which is given so much importance in international discussion, of maintenance of national or territorial unity of South Africa. However, one should recognise that both variations of regional autonomy given here are not far short of formal independence. Current government policy seeks even now through an evolutionary process to achieve full "independence" for the reserves, although the withholding of international recognition of these states together with economic and security considerations do not permit a real separation from South Africa. In any case the above mentioned principle of South African territorial integrity would mean that the two successor states resulting from total partition — if at all — would then only be recognised diplomatically by third countries after a larger number of OAU contries as well as the West had been convinced, that no other solution was realisable.

In contrast to total partition, but also to the strategy of "concordance" or "consociational democracy", the proposal for plural integration has the advantage that development can be accomplished step by step. For it can be seen as being consistent with the present government policies. Through this it ought above all to be possible to ensure agreement of the white Africans which is so indispensable for peaceful change, that is to say for all practical pruposes today the National Party. On the other hand there is just in that a great danger: the majority of black Africans and almost all critical foreign observers would regard such a strategy of evolution coming from the present apartheid structure as a sham solution which above all had the goal of safeguarding the interests of the Whites.

In this dilemma relating to an evolutionary development the central role of a National Convention in which all racial groups take part is clear. Even if the individual groups have already clear and prepared positions as to the desired middle and long-term outcome, it is absolutely necessary that all participating groups together seek after a compromise. Such a round of consultations is necessary as an instrument for consensus building, quite apart from the strategy accepted in the end. This assertion seems important in as much as the proposal of the Whites to convene a National Convention is too easily and too often equated with the enforcement of demands for majority rule without, or at any rate not with the full protection of the minority (one-man one-vote in one country).

As far as the dynamic development of events is concerned, there is an important distinction between the three approaches: global partition is really only to be seen as the result of a massive pressure from outside or as the consequence of a longer war. To make all three strategies work, an all embracing division of power between black, white and brown Africans is necessary, and they are all only viable through the participation of all racial grous. They all have however in contrast to pure integration strategy, one advantage, that the range of power-sharing is determined constitutionally in advance and that the power basis of the Whites can not be completely eroded as far as the constitution is concerned. This guarantee is provided in the case of total partition, and also in the strategy of a concordance or consociational democracy, even if the numerically so superior black African population groups later do not behave constitutionally, that is to say a striving after a system of "one man one vote in one country".

A central problem of all strategy for change is the formation of economic development in a way which does justice to the aspirations of the individual ethnic groups and socio-economic classes but at the same time is realisable within the scope of South African resource potential. In the case of total partition this problem would be met in two stages: firstly, through the drawing of boundaries and mass shifting of population, through which both states would be provided with a certain resource potential. If one follows the plan developed in Aussenpolitik, the southern state would have a stronger advantage in the manpower field through its much better educated population, whereas the northern state would have the advantage in its industrial complexes and on this basis would also have to draw in foreign expertise. Once the full separation had been made, the development in both states would probably not be dissimilar to world-wide relations between Western countries and the Third World. In the northern black state the structural problems of the fields of education, community development, modernisation of the agricultural sector, urbanisation etc. would have to be dealt with step by step and with regard to the developing models in Africa and other developing countries. Given the numerically rather strong group of Coloured and Asians the southern state would also have to tackle typical problems of development, in which there would be a dearth of work capacity (labour). If the development dynamic of the southern rump state were to be distinctly stronger than that of the northern state, so it would highlight again the whole North/ South issue. That could mean a considerable threat for stable political relations between the two countries which however, circumstances permitting, might be less than the tensions which flow

from the income and ownership disputes between ethnic groups inside an integrated South Africa.

As final points of comparison there are two important aspects (closely linked with one another), the possibility of international recognition, and the further development in the event of growing conflict escalation. The success of all three strategies depends on the recognition by at least the Western Powers and some OAU states. On the part of these countries there are in the short term considerable doubts about all strategies since they are seen in the first place as an attempt by the Whites to stabilise their relative position of power. Since all three strategies require a far-reaching dismantling of petty apartheid and an effective participation on the part of the Blacks in collective political, economic and social decisions in the areas that concern them so the main objections should disappear with time. Finally, there is the question as to how far these strategies are acceptable for the Blacks, which again depends on comparison with other strategies. Should the conflict in South Africa become more strongly enmeshed in the East/-West conflict, and a step by step evolution process (as seen in the plural integration model) become impossible as a result of growing guerilla activity and other military and economic pressure measures, then total partition could prove the only viable solution.

Finai Remarks

With regard to the sharpening of the South Africa conflict it is evident that time is working against the possibility of a successful mediating role on the part of Western and other countries; time is working against compromises which are not the result of armed struggle. If the Western world falls back into the old fatal indifference about South Africa's domestic problems, then the country at the Cape of Good Hope will definitely set out on the march to tragedy. The Western states, that is above all the five initiators of the SWA/Namibia initiative must together with as large as possible a number of black African countries (such as Ivory Coast, Senegal, Kenya, Cameroons, Zambia), enter into a dialogue with the South Africans dedicated to a permanent solution of the domestic South African conflicts. This dialogue should of course be conducted with the White Goverment in Pretoria, but at the same time with the political heirs of Steve Biko, with Inkatha, with the ANC (rather less the PAC) and the OAU and in individual cases also with those with responsibility in the reseves.

Alternatives to the status quo elaborated in South Africa or abroad should be introduced as a basis for discussion into the Republic's publications and academic circles, in order to give impetus to an internal South African dialogue over the country's

future. It does not require any special world insight to see that both parties to the conflict will follow the role of the Western "contact group" with the greatest of suspicion. This mistrust will only be reduced to tolerable proportions, if the contact group make the following two points absolutely clear in an unambiguous statement of intent: the right of the (black) majority to self determination and the right of the (white and brown) minorities in the Republic to permanent copper-bottomed guarantees of existence. Whoever, possibly for thoroughly comprehensible reasons, omits one of the points will fail as a mediator and with it also unwittingly contribute to the sparking off of a major conflict in and around South Africa.

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