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# A “POLITICAL INITIATIVE” FOR SOUTH AFRICA – A (WEST) GERMAN VIEW

KLAUS BARON VON DER ROPP\*

## ABSTRACT

*This article concentrates on the possibility of a South African initiative by the West. It is stated that previous attempts by Western and Black African states to help black and white South Africans to find solutions provide the world with many possibilities to learn from past failures. It is shown that a handful of German politicians showed a nearly unique sensitivity in dealing with the Republic's problems but that they did not prevail. As a consequence Bonn lost its credibility with both blacks and whites. The fear is expressed that blacks and whites will have to be traumatised before they will be prepared to make a deal.*

## 1. THE SOUTH AFRICA DEBATE IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

The spreading unrest that, sooner or later, is bound to plunge parts of the Republic of South Africa into anarchy has – in the Federal Republic of Germany as well – lent a new dimension to the discussion on ways and means of overcoming apartheid.

Up to this stage it was primarily the voices from the left and left-wing liberal camps that urged the imposition of economic sanctions and other levers to be used against the Pretoria government of the still firmly ruling white Afrikaners. The adherents of this widespread view believed – and still believe – that this would result in a reversal of political power, i.e. that this was an effective way of forcing the adoption of a system of one-man-one-vote in a unitary state. Their argument is that, spearheaded by the UDF and the ANC, indisputably the strongest political groupings in black South Africa, this would lead to the evolution of a non-racial democratic order. Conservative circles in the Federal Republic of Germany, for whom conceptual thinking has never exactly been a forte, adopted a different approach. The prevailing view there was that the government of President Pieter Willem Botha would seize the unique opportunity provided by Washington's constructive engagement policy to negotiate a viable and lasting compromise with groupings of moderate black and brown South Africans – groupings whose significance Germany's conservatives tend to overestimate. But West Germany's conservatives have virtually never managed to outline the structures of such a new order. For lack of any precise ideas, they have advocated a federation *sui generis*.

Pretoria's responsibility for the failure of Chester A. Crocker's knowledgeable search for “compromise and accommodation”, the constantly recurring unrest in the Eastern and Western Cape and the East Rand and Pretoria's evident inability to restore order in many black townships despite the deployment of SADF units prompted a rethinking process among many conservatives. Though they might still believe in the feasibility of a federation *sui generis* in South Africa, they are now nevertheless more inclined to advocate the imposition of sanctions to accelerate the dismantling of apartheid.

Even so, it was the Federal Republic of Germany, along with Portugal and Britain, who, within the European Community, was responsible in the autumn of 1985 and of 1986 for the fact that the EC did not follow the example of the US Congress and impose sweeping sanctions. Instead, it imposed selective sanctions. It would seem

\* Klaus Baron von der Ropp is in charge of the Bonn liaison office of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik/ Ebenhausen, a government-sponsored think tank for the West German parliament and the federal ministries.



equally important that, as averred by Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Bonn does not want to content itself with ways and means of exerting pressure. These means are not of a punitive nature but are meant to induce Pretoria to abandon the racial policy it has pursued up to now. What is being advocated is a "political initiative" (PI) by the major Western industrialised countries (Federal Government 1986:893). The objective of such an initiative, which has not yet been precisely spelled out, can only be an effort on the part of the West to unite the relevant political and other parties of all South Africans and to help them in their effort to solve their highly complex social, economic and, above all, political problems. It is certain that third party countries such as the African Frontline States and perhaps also the Organisation of African Unity will have to be involved in this. The idea is not to hold a conference along the lines of the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conference held at Lancaster House in 1979. This is because the West regards South Africa as a sovereign nation and not as a "semi-colonial country owned by the imperialist consortium of its main investment and trading partners," as has often been maintained in black African quarters. But a parallel can be drawn to the Camp David conference in the late summer of 1978 when the US Administration attempted to launch a peace process between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

## **2. LESSONS TO BE LEARNT FROM PAST FAILURES**

In the Federal Republic of Germany, it has been above all the CDU Member of Parliament Karl-Heinz Hornhues – one of the very few West German MPs thoroughly familiar with southern Africa – who has promoted such an initiative. Among those who endorsed his proposal were the influential US Senators Richard Lugar and Nancy Kassenbaum (1986:3) along with Henry Kissinger (1986:1). The views of the German-born former US secretary of state are still held in high regard among those who have a hand in formulating Bonn's foreign and security policy. The French government is said to have been disinterested in the proposal; and the British government, which is of particular importance in this context, has reportedly termed it "premature". The reaction from Pretoria confirms the British assessment.

Among the Western countries, Britain has by far the greatest expertise in matters concerning the Republic of South Africa, including the domestic situation, and there is thus much to substantiate the correctness of the British evaluation. Even so, it is essential that the Hornhues-initiative should be pursued further because the past three or so years have once more clearly demonstrated two things: developments in South Africa and in the rest of southern Africa could at any moment move at a breakneck pace, while secondly, the West has so far proved unable to intellectually master the South African conflict and is therefore hardly in a position to solve it through a constructive policy. Yet the West will be called upon in the not too distant future to come up with an imaginative and bold policy to be subsequently implemented in a Camp David type of conference.

So far, guidelines for a new policy have been provided primarily by the failures of previous policies. This is particularly clearly demonstrated by the pitiful failure of the Namibia initiative of the Western Contact Group set up at the beginning of 1977. Participants in the Group were the USA, the Federal Republic of Germany, Britain, France and Canada. In the view of its initiators, above all Washington's former UN Ambassador Andrew Young and Bonn's Foreign Minister Genscher (Ropp 1984:290-293; 1986a:295-303), the Group was also meant to usher in a suitable South Africa initiative.

Anybody who can summon the courage to advocate a South African initiative by the West despite the fact that a pile of wreckage is all that remains of the by now more than

10-year-old Namibia initiative will first have to analyse the reasons for and the consequences of the failure of that initiative.

Regardless whether or not Pretoria was ever prepared – and it is open to doubt that it was – to permit the free elections called for by UN Security Council Res. 435 (1978), thus courting a landslide victory for SWAPO, the failure of the Namibia initiative must be attributed primarily to the ignorance of its initiators in Washington and Bonn of the mentality of the white Africans, be they Afrikaans or English speaking. Britain was apparently unable to prevail over the initiator governments in Washington and Bonn. It also appears that the French government was never particularly optimistic over the prospects of the Namibia initiative and therefore showed little interest in it. As for Canada, that country never played more than a marginal role within the Western Contact Group. Its positions were always in line with those of Bonn and Washington.

In 1977/78, the heyday of the Namibia initiative (Ropp 1982a: 279-282), the Americans and the West Germans felt that dealing with Pretoria would be child's play. They overestimated Pretoria's weakness that had become apparent as a result of "Soweto" in 1976/77 and underestimated the staying power of Afrikanerdom in particular – a staying power demonstrated time and again in history. The main thrust was directed at creating in the previously long neglected SWAPO that modicum of trust without which the liberation movement with its vast following would not reduce its suspicion of the West and collaborate in finding a solution to the conflict. The bid succeeded, but at the cost of substantially alienating Pretoria. Perhaps it would actually have been impossible at the time to gain SWAPO's trust without forfeiting that of Pretoria. But ultimately, the West suffered a double defeat: It lost – probably for good – Pretoria's confidence and was unable to retain SWAPO's nascent trust.

Pretoria rightly concluded that the five Western nations, realising that SWAPO was by far Namibia's largest party, no longer acted as honest brokers but with a bias towards SWAPO. Seen from a German vantage point, there are a number of indications to that effect, only few of which can be listed here: The Contact Group (and with it Bonn) for a long time took virtually no notice of the "internal" parties which, though weak (except for the NP van Suidwes-Afrika), enjoyed Pretoria's backing. This made them a factor to be reckoned with. Yet on his very first visit to Bonn in October 1980, SWAPO's president, Sam Nujoma, was received by Foreign Minister Genscher with a protocol similar to that accorded to a state visitor. In July 1978, all member nations of the Western Contact Group approved a UN Security Council resolution advocating the "reintegration" of Walvis Bay into Namibia – and this despite the fact that this South African enclave had (in terms of Western international law) never been a part of South West Africa, notwithstanding SWAPO's legal interpretation to the contrary. Subsequently, when (during a January 1979 tour of the Front States by the UN's special Namibia envoy, Martti Ahtisaari of Finland) demands were put forward that SWAPO, too, be granted military bases in Namibia's north for the duration of the transition period, the West took this into consideration, notwithstanding the fact that Res. 435 did not provide for such bases. Even more disastrous than all these blunders put together was the fact that top politicians of the Carter Administration and Foreign Minister Genscher (1978a: 797-798; 1978b: 1081-1085; 1978c: 387; 1986: 5) asserted time and again in the UN Security Council as well that the solution arrived at for Namibia (one-man-one-vote – in a unitary state) was a model for South Africa and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

Seen from a German vantage point, it should be noted that Genscher's policy met with very broad approval among the coalition parties of the time, i.e. SPD (Social Democrats) and FDP (Liberals). Thus at the time hardly any West German politician of the governing parties raised the question that no less a personality than the then chancellor, Helmut Schmidt (SPD), used in May 1977 to reply to a remark by US Vice Presi-

dent Walter Mondale to the effect that the West must do everything in its power to force Pretoria to abolish apartheid. The question was: "... and replace it with what?" Genscher and the vast majority of other politicians regarded this question as obsolete. Neither in South Africa nor in Germany was sufficient notice taken of the fact that one of the most astute West German politicians, Egon Bahr (SPD), answered Schmidt's question with utmost perceptiveness. He rejected such model solutions as "one-man-one-vote – in a unitary state" and "radical geographical partition," instead advocating for South Africa "a hitherto unknown model of co-existence with equal rights and special protection for minorities" (1977). Later, the deputy minister for economic cooperation, Volkmar Köhler (Christian Democrat, CDU), expressed himself in a similar vein (on some points) when he said in Johannesburg in September 1982: "... those who want freedom and self-determination for Blacks in South Africa must not only take into account the determination as well as the military and economic strength of the White South Africans, whether English- or Afrikaansspeaking. They must also concede to this White African nation the only thing it does not possess: namely security for its children and grandchildren. Freedom for Black South Africa presupposes the finding of a way to protect, in terms of power politics, the right of existence for the White African nation as well as for the coloureds and Indians there. Those people who do not realise this ... are hardly achieving anything more than simply presenting to South Africa an abyss of awful violence." (Köhler 1982:40 after Ropp 1981).

Four years later, Otto Count Lambsdorff, probably the most striking personality among today's liberals in West Germany, put it more tersely and yet trenchantly. Speaking at a time when many inexperienced German observers saw white South Africa as being already doomed, he said: "It so happens that white security is the key to black freedom." (Lambsdorff 1986 following Ropp 1986b: 54).

But whatever the reason, these politicians did not prevail. Bonn demanded – and still demands – a power transfer in both Windhoek and Pretoria. What it in fact boils down to is the demand that the white Africans capitulate. (This makes it understandable that the relevant research work, too, in which a handful of Germans played a significant part went unheeded when it came to formulating Bonn policy (Geldenhuys 1985:100)). Bonn and Washington thus burdened their Namibia policy with a sort of South African mortgage. This turned them, the prime movers, into the gravediggers of their own policy as early as the second half of the 1970s.

By contrast, the political left (in the Federal Republic of Germany as well) holds that the Namibia initiative did not founder until the October 1978 Namibia conference in Pretoria (Kühne 1983:92). For it was then, the argument goes, that the Western nations failed to impose economic and other sanctions that would have forced Pretoria to implement Res. 435. The fact is that in the preceding period the representatives of the Five time and again created the impression that the imposition of sanctions, should Pretoria prove recalcitrant, was to be expected. But of the top ranking Western negotiators who had gathered in Pretoria in October 1978, only Genscher remained consistent. Britain's David Owen and – out of consideration for British economic interests in South Africa – the American Cyrus Vance were opposed to sanctions. As a result, nothing was done although the four Western Foreign ministers and the French secretary of state left South Africa without having achieved anything. Had the West imposed sanctions at the time, Pretoria would still not have withdrawn from Windhoek. For such a withdrawal would have been tantamount to an invitation to the West to follow up by demanding the Pretoria government's capitulation in South Africa proper as well.

The consequences of the predictable – and indeed predicted – failure (Ropp 1977:437-440) of Western policy in the 1970s are disastrous: Pretoria was totally alienated from the West and is likely to remain unapproachable for a long time. The ANC and

SWAPO, whom Western policy makers tried to wrench away from their close cooperation with the USSR and the GDR, could not fail to realise that, in its dealings with Pretoria, the West was no more than a paper tiger. Anybody who subsequently had contacts with the two freedom movements was told time and again that the movements were once more convinced of the West's complicity with Pretoria. In the light of this situation, there is a fair degree of probability that the parties to the conflict in South Africa will have to be traumatised before the West gets another chance to mediate.

Conceivably, the constructive engagement policy that was drafted by Chester A. Crocker and pursued since the beginning of 1981 would have stood a better chance of success had the West not previously forfeited its credibility. Washington now closely cooperated with London and – at least for a number of years – with Paris as well. But from then on Bonn played no more than a marginal role, as Ottawa had already done for years. This is because Bonn's policy was branded with the failure of the American-West German policy of previous years. Moreover, West Germany's policy towards Africa was paralysed for years following the 1982 change of government. The CDU, the party of the new chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and even more so the CSU, its Bavarian step-sister, have never managed to agree on a common policy line with their liberal coalition partner, the FDP. Bonn was thus often silent in precisely those situations where it had previously spoken up quite loudly. Foreign Minister Genscher, who remained in office following the 1982 change of government, only once expressly reaffirmed his policy to date. This was when he said: "... what is needed is the immediate dismantling of apartheid and the establishment of equal civil rights for all South Africans, including the 'one-man-one-vote' principle. And all those who in the past have proved incorrigible and have remained obstructive to this day are shouldering heavy responsibility for the worrisome developments in the Republic of South Africa" (Genscher 1986:5). Thus bilateral political relations between Pretoria and Bonn remained very strained after 1982.

Crocker's policy also differs markedly from that of his predecessor in matters of style. Vance sometimes had the traits of a carnival barker whereas Crocker favours quiet diplomacy. This is likely to have been a contributing factor in making ANC/UDF, PAC/NF (Azapo), SWAPO, the Front line States and the OAU invariably treat him with mistrust. And in the eyes of the ruling whites he was trying to bring about a "Pax Americana" in southern Africa that went far beyond what Pretoria was prepared to forfeit in terms of political power and influence.

Crocker was – and possibly still is – trying first to solve the conflicts on the periphery of South Africa before tackling the crux of all the problems, i.e. the replacement of apartheid by a new order. Successes of his policy, evidenced by the signing in 1984 of the South African-Angolan troop disengagement accord and the South African-Mozambican anti-subversion pact, were brought to nought by Pretoria.

The address which P. W. Botha (prime minister at the time) delivered to the members of the German Society for Foreign Affairs in Bonn in 1984 (Botha 1984) was largely understood to have been delivered by the architect of a "Pax Pretoriana", the crux of which was to be a modified and modernised type of apartheid. The extent to which the "Pax Pretoriana" differs from Crocker's "Pax Americana" was demonstrated in both South Africa and the Western world by subsequent events, among them: Pretoria's continued cooperation with Renamo; the renewed penetration of Angola by SADF forces; the appointment once again of a non-representative interim government in Windhoek in June 1985; South Africa's role in toppling the regime of Jonathan (Lesotho) at the beginning of 1986; the SADF attacks in 1986 on ANC offices in Gabarone, Lusaka and Harare; Pretoria's cool response, to say the least, to the valuable findings of the KwaNatal Indaba released at the end of 1986 and the often brutal police and



army actions in the black townships wracked by rebellion and anarchy, along with numerous other events. The almost inevitable consequence was that these developments – as evidenced by the 1985 and 1986 debate in the United States on sanctions and disinvestment – overtook Crocker. The white South Africans will never again deal – at least where Washington is concerned – with a top government official with a similarly high degree of understanding for their existential fears and their efforts to retain their identity as a white African nation than Crocker, a liberal, demonstrated from the very beginning. Crocker underestimated both the revolutionary potential of black South Africa and the mulishness of Pretoria.

Incidentally, the latter had already been experienced by Presidents Léopold S. Senghor of Senegal and Félix Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast during their 1974 meeting with Prime Minister B. J. Vorster in Yamoussoukrou, Ivory Coast. At the time, the two West African statesmen are said to have agreed to diplomatic recognition of South Africa along with the Bantustans slated for independence on two conditions: Pretoria was to give the Coloureds and Indians full citizenship rights, thus in the eyes of the West Africans abolishing its racist structures; and the Bantustans were to be generously consolidated both geographically and economically into viable states. Vorster reportedly responded negatively.

It goes without saying that Crocker's failure was a boon to the political left in North America and Western Europe. By 1987 it had not (yet?) demanded that the West declare war on Pretoria, as Kenneth D. Kaunda of Zambia had done years earlier. But even so, the left is prepared to use any other means in its bid to establish majority rule in South Africa, which means putting the ANC into power.

The only thing that surprised German observers of the South Africa mission of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group (EPG) was the fact that this initiative was not generally characterised as stillborn. Actually, it is unlikely that Britain ever believed in its success and it was probably purely for reasons of Commonwealth policy that it participated. The fact is that the EPG was in many respects as naive as the former South Africa policies of some Western nations, for the Group's objective, too, was to induce the white Africans to transfer political power to the black majority or, to be exact, to ANC/UDF. As in the case of Bonn's and Washington's policy in the late 1970s (Kühne 1985:24), most of the EPG negotiators probably believed that the solution that was found for Rhodesia/Zimbabwe in 1979/80 could be applied to South Africa as well.

This in any event is suggested by one of the very few passages of the EPG report (The Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons 1986:41) devoted to the protection of minorities in a future South Africa. The passage reads: "While future constitutional arrangements are not a matter for us, we wholly accept that these should provide adequate and appropriate safeguards and guarantees for minorities. But, of course, everything in the nature of a general and permanent 'group veto' would be totally unacceptable to the black people." The EPG apparently failed to recognise two things: The problem of a new political order for South Africa is not only of a moral nature but also involves power politics. Even if constantly repeated, platitudes lead nowhere. Both economically and militarily, white South Africa has it in its power to create chaos and it will use this power to the point of infamy rather than accept the role of a politically impotent minority. This is precisely the situation of white Zimbabweans, two-thirds of whom have left the country since the beginning of 1980. The fact that about two per cent of the whites who left have meanwhile returned to Zimbabwe is rather irrelevant.

All in all, it should be noted that, with the exception of the Inkatha movement, the main parties to the conflict, i.e. above all ANC/UDF and Pretoria, are at present either not

willing or not able to compromise. Moreover, the experience they have so far had with Western negotiators makes it appear inadvisable for those concerned to avail themselves of their not always "good offices". For a long time to come, the West will have to stay in the wings as the South African conflict escalates both internally and externally. Only once the human and material sacrifices reach intolerable proportions will the parties to the conflict agree to talk with each other. The prediction which G. M. Buthelezi made in Grahamstown as far back as 1978 is threatening to come true: "Constitutional developments in southern Africa is going to be a by-product of bullets and power."

In the light of such a scenario and considering the West's failure so far, it would be unrealistic to hope that its action could at an early stage lead to summoning a Camp David type conference. Such a conference that would include Pretoria, ANC/UDF, Inkatha, PAC/NF and perhaps representatives of trade unions and business associations along with important clergymen would stand a chance of success only if it set itself two goals from the very beginning: firstly, the total dismantling of any kind of racial discrimination and thus the liberation of black South Africans from the yoke of apartheid, and secondly copper-bottom guarantees of existence for the white and brown African minorities in the new South Africa. Lambsdorff (1986) followed Buthelezi's (1979) line when he wrote that white South Africa would rather die in defence of the indefensible than forgo a watertight protection of minorities and doom itself in a system of one-man-one-vote in one state.

It is quite conceivable that the West German government, which was confirmed in office in the January 1987 federal election, will yield to pressure from the coalition partner CSU under Franz-Josef Strauss and abolish parts of its current policy towards southern Africa. It is hard to imagine that Lambsdorff's criticism of Bonn's South Africa policy published by Robert von Lucius (1986) will fail to result in consequences. A new policy will have to take into account the above mentioned views by Helmut Schmidt, Egon Bahr, Volkmar Köhler and Otto Count Lambsdorff along with the ideas of Alois Mertes, the late state minister at the Bonn Foreign Office.

Bonn will have to deal with the question as to whether South Africans of all racial groupings can solve their problems through a system of power sharing (consociationalism) or through a partition of the country. What will be indispensable in formulating a new policy will be an updated version of the study by Theodor Hanf, Heribert Weiland, Gerda Vierdag and Lawrence Schlemmer. Years ago (1978), they presented a very significant work on the expectations of change of blacks and the preparedness of change of whites in the social, economic and political fields.

### **3. CONSOCIATIONAL DEMOCRACY A SOLUTION?**

Similar to Kissinger's ideas (1986), those of German conservatives usually amount to a search for a system of institutionalised power sharing among the major population groups. There is a widespread hope that apartheid in all its forms (in other words, inclusive of "groot apartheid") could thus be overcome without jeopardising the right of existence of the white and the brown people. Inkatha's political programme and the results of the KwaNatal Indaba are seen as major elements of such a political order. The Inkatha programme and the results of the KwaNatal Indaba are regarded as possible models for other regions of South Africa (Dieter, Bossen and Schlemmer 1986). The Konrad Adenauer Foundation, which is close to the CDU, is already heavily committed to the promotion of research work on a post-apartheid society.

Thus the more conservative circles in West Germany welcome the fact that Pretoria – as became evident, among other things, at the August 1986 national congress of the governing National Party in Durban – is trying to evolve a political system that would

permit the representatives of all racial segments of the population to participate in state power on all levels.

But in conservative circles, too, there are those who raise the question that Theodor Hanf and Heribert Weiland (1978) posed years ago: Is Pretoria prepared to go beyond a system of mere sham consociationalism? In other words can, to express it in the language of the NP, a system of "gesonde magsdeling" meet the legitimate demands of the black and brown South Africans? Outside observers of South Africa interpret the NP plans roughly as follows: The tricameral system for whites, coloureds and Indian-descent South Africans that has been in existence for a few years and that the majority of brown South Africans reject is to remain essentially unchanged. This means, among other things, that – as evidenced in mid-1986 at the parliamentary voting on two additional security laws – the three chambers need not necessarily reach their decisions by consensus. For should it prove impossible to achieve consensus the issue is decided by the Presidents Council, where the whites are in the majority. Hence, the final say still rests with the whites. So far as the cabinet is concerned, the two brown groupings with their ministers without portfolio and deputy ministers are to all intents and purposes not represented. What it amounts to is power sharing without losing control, as Hermann Giliomee put it. Where the blacks are concerned, the recently created organs of communal self-administration are being retained even in those instances where the revolutionary storm of the past three years has wrecked them. As in the case of those belonging to the two brown groupings, a system of "own affairs" will be evolved for the "citizens" of the still dependent Bantustans. In all likelihood, the currently existing legislative and executive structures in KwaZulu, Lebowa, Gazankulu, etc. will be transferred to the new system. A council for blacks will be set up parallel to the tri-cameral system. And, finally, the odd black South African will be made a member of the central government.

It has come as no surprise even to very conservative analysts that no major black politician has so far been prepared to collaborate. Only puppets will be willing to accept the role conceded to them by the whites. Thus the question is whether the governing NP will be prepared to adopt the PFP concepts of sharing of power which the NP only recently termed "ongesond". Incidentally, after a German-South African colloquium the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (1985) (which is close to the FDP) made PFP concepts, and the comments on them by three German experts, available to a broad public in a compendium volume. It is doubtful, however, whether many German liberals are capable of grasping the message of their South African fellow liberals. There is too little expertise on South Africa in Germany. What is more important is probably the fact that the liberal Foundation cooperates very closely with Van Zyl Slabbert's new Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (IDASA).

The highly significant works by the Dutch political scientist Arend Lijphart (1977; 1986) have been thoroughly perused in the Federal Republic of Germany. Surprisingly, however, it is very rarely realised that none of the prerequisites for a consociational democracy, so convincingly outlined by Lijphart, exists in South Africa. There are probably two main reasons for the inability to grasp this. On the one hand, only very few Germans know how immeasurably deep and probably unbridgeable the cultural gap between black and white is in South Africa. Thus, for instance, hardly anybody knows that – to mention but a few examples – during the past decade of its existence even the liberal Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg) deliberately printed and sold different editions for its black and white readerships in which views on political issues were often at odds with each other. It is also largely unknown that it was black (and brown) Catholics, Methodists, Anglicans and Christians of other "integrated" churches who (at Hammanskraal at the beginning of 1980) for the first time mooted the establishment of a supra-confessional "belydende kerk". Another widespread misconception is

that a significant number of white members of integrated churches endorse the KAIROS Document. And, finally, hardly anybody in Germany is familiar with the evidently irreconcilable tension between black and white even at Catholic seminaries and monasteries. There are simply many sectors of social life in South Africa where there is no common denominator for black and white. On the other hand, there is the widespread view that a compromise solution other than power sharing is unthinkable. Hardly anybody considers a partition of the country, which is almost unanimously seen as impracticable. But this is considered feasible as a post-catastrophe solution (Sonnenhol 1983).

In the Federal Republic of Germany, insufficient attention (Adam 1986) is paid to the fact that there are two incompatible political cultures in South Africa. For itself (!), white South Africa wants to retain the existing pluralistic, Western style democratic system. By contrast, ANC/UDF (and within them not only elements close to PAC or the South African Communist Party), PAC/NF and Inkatha share the wish to turn South Africa/Azania into a one-party state. The order envisaged for such a state would be modelled on the lines that have evolved in almost all countries north of the Limpopo over the past quarter of a century. At best, this means that a quite authoritarian system would evolve (similar to the one now existing in Kenya and later probably also in Zimbabwe) that would allow isolated liberties.

One thing should be seen as indisputable: In such a system there can be no question whatsoever of copper-bottom guarantees of existence for the white and brown minorities. Hence, better solutions must be found.

#### **4. CONSOCIATIONALISM/MAJORITY RULE PLUS PARTITION A SOLUTION?**

In all likelihood, white South Africa will for a long time to come have the economic and military power instruments with which to prevent its eradication. But what ways are there of effectively cementing the copper-bottom guarantees of existence that are indispensable for a peaceful solution of the conflict? Lambsdorff (1986 following Blenck/Ropp 1976 and Ropp 1985) speaks of the necessity of creating a white/brown "toevlugsoord", using the Afrikaans term. Lambsdorff is aware of the fact – not least due to his intensive discussions with the former PFP leader, Van Zyl Slabbert – that this approach was also occasionally advocated by Alfred Hoernle (1936), Allister Sparks (1983) and, according to Tertius Myburgh, by Gavin Relly (1986) as well.

In all likelihood, no other German politician has followed the relevant German-South African discussion (Ropp 1979; Geldenhuys 1985:90-93) as knowledgeably and closely as Lambsdorff. His initial response to the fundamental essay (Blenck/Ropp 1976) in the liberal magazine "Aussenpolitik" was very sceptical. Like many other commentators, among them many from the CDU/CSU camp, he rightly objected that a radical partition of the country would most severely damage the nation's economy – if for no other reason because of the attendant necessity to resettle some five million people within South Africa. But the latest events in that country have led to often dramatic reassessments among politicians and, to a no lesser degree, among businessmen of the perspectives of South African developments. Naturally, the withdrawal of Barclays Bank has provided food for thought and caused concern among many Germans interested in South Africa. Under these circumstances, the unthinkable becomes thinkable!

The plan put forward in "Aussenpolitik" (complete with detailed maps) envisages the following:

1. A consistent territorial partition of South Africa into two states: a northern state



- with an exclusively black population and a southern state with an exclusively white and brown population. The border line proposal was that of a line through Oranje-mund, Kimberley, Bloemfontein and Port Elizabeth with these listed places forming the north and east boundary of the white/brown state.
2. Full integration of "Coloureds" and "Asians" into the white/brown state.
  3. 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 74% 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).
  4. 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.
  5. The white/brown state would be incorporated into the Western Alliance in order to preserve its existence.

The authors of the plan have always known that its realisation would be obstructed by the exigencies of economic commonsense. The black state would be unable to forgo white knowhow in business and administration. And the white/brown state would be short of housing, jobs, etc. for many of the resettled white and Indian-descent South Africans. But the authors have also been aware that the infrastructural preconditions for such a partition that would serve as a final white fallback position were created in the Western Cape as far back as the Hendrik Verwoerd era.

In the light of all this, there can be no doubt as to the correctness of the criticism of the Blenck/Ropp proposals voiced by Van Zyl Slabbert and David Welsh (1979:169): "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 . . ." Even so, the partition idea could prove helpful as an element of a relatively peaceful solution: As a result of the inescapable exigencies of demographic development Pretoria will sooner or later find itself with a black South African government. And, in the light of what has been said earlier, this will not be a system of power sharing but one of majority rule. Western diplomacy must try to prevent the white South Africans, who for very good reason fear such a development, from attempting to stop it by force. Denis Beckett (1981) was right when he described the disastrous consequences of a civil war fought out to the bitter end, saying: "Eventually, without doubt, a black government would come to power, but this in itself would hardly be 'successful' if the cost was the total devastation of the nation, which is what the cost would be."

The existence of a common "toevlugsoord" (sanctuary) in the Western Cape for the vast number of white and brown South Africans who can see no future for themselves in a remaining South Africa ruled by blacks could well be instrumental in preventing such a development.

Due account has been taken of the fact that the creation of such a "toevlugsoord" in itself is no solution to the South Africa conflict. This is because the struggle for dominance in a future Azania between ANC/UDF, Inkatha, PAC/NF and perhaps additional black parties will continue. There is nothing in sight that would prevent such a development. But the existence of the "toevlugsoord" will eliminate the most dangerous factor in the conflict, i.e. the existential fear of the white Africans.

One of the particularly difficult and at the same time absolutely essential elements of any solution through partition is the guarantee of the inviolability of the border be-

tween the northern and the southern states. Any attempt to achieve this by inviting the southern state to join the Western Alliance (Ropp 1982b:16) would be tantamount to opting for the worst of the various possibilities, for this would only too readily provide the Warsaw Pact with a pretext to invite other states of southern Africa to join the Eastern pact system. And this would finalise the transfer of the East-West conflict with all the enormous risks it entails to southern Africa. Western policy and diplomacy would be incomparably more successful if it succeeded in inducing all countries of southern Africa to recognise the borders of the region as being absolutely inviolate. The road to that point is a thorny one for all nations concerned. Yet it must be trodden! The ultimate consequence of more Western and African failures in southern Africa can only be total destruction.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

All efforts to induce the Federal Republic of Germany to pursue a more active and constructive South Africa policy meet with two seemingly insurmountable obstacles. There is a lack of sustained interest in developments in South Africa; in other words, the catchphrase "dramatic today, forgotten tomorrow" still applies. As a result, the expertise to be found even among top politicians is not exactly impressive. And the fact that the Federal Republic of Germany is once more due for a seat on the UN Security Council (1987/88) is unlikely to remedy the situation.

This makes it the more important to make the best use of what contacts exist. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation (which is closest to the SPD) pointed the way years ago. Only a critical dialogue with Pretoria, the NP, the ANC – which maintains a liaison office in Bonn – UDF, Inkatha, PAC, NF, clergymen and representatives of trade unions and business associations will enable responsible Germans to intellectually master the South Africa conflict and subsequently help solve it through a policy of reconciliation combined with toughness. Only then will a political initiative aimed at solving the conflict make any sense.

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