

Towards a new state in south Africa

Will there be a new state established in south Africa?

Abstract.

The realization of self-determination law of nations is connected with the problems related to ambiguous definition of nation as a specific human community. The process of globalization impinge on the processes that lead to the changes in spatial-political world structure in terms of a new state or autonomous units establishment. After the system of apartheid in South Africa was dismantled, radical political groups further the establishment of an autonomous state or autonomous territory for the African nation. The paper seeks to analyse the problem of African self-determination in the context of political development in South Africa.

Self-determination law in the context of globalization.

Self-determination law of nation has been considered a topical issue in the world political thinking since the end of the First World War. In case of a nation without spatial-political visibility, its forms of realization are highly different: starting with getting a sovereignty, separating from the original state and annexating to the neighbouring country, through upholding a territorial autonomy within the original state, and finishing with the maintenance of existing status.

The realization of self-determination law of nations is connected with the problems related to ambiguous definition of nation as a specific human community. E. Hobsbawn (2000) quotes that self-determination law is to be acknowledged only to those nations which are considered culturally and economically viable. On the contrary L. van Mises (1983, in Šíma 2001) claims that no nation nor its part should not be kept in the political association against its will. In both approaches the problem of defining a nation is always topical. The latter author says that a self-determination law is valid not only for the nations but also for each territory large enough to be an autonomous district.

The development in the world is always generating new, specific situations that even in the age of globalization elicit considerations concerning further fragmentation of spacial-political world structure. It is connected with a struggle of such spacial-political arrangement that would ensure a long-term stability in the problem regions. Such construction might be very complicated, and despite a declared provisional measure relatively stable (f. ex. in Kosovo, Western Sahara, Palestine etc.). A part of political representation of Africans endeavouring to establish an independent state or to create an autonomous region in South Africa is a specific example.

The Africans as a nation.

The Africans (sometimes called the Boers) constitute a specific ethnical community in the republic of South Africa. The historical development as well as the

natural environment specifics enabled the Africans to form their own nation. Its formation was bound to two important historical events: Great trek and the Second Britain-Boer War. The formation of African community in the south Africa dates back to the end of the 17th century when the Cape colony of Dutch East-Indian Company supported by French Huguenots was founded.

National consolidation of the Africans was influenced by threat of British Empire expansion. Under its pressure after 1836 there was a migration of Africans to interior called Great Trek Current nationalistic political parties, movements and the traditions of African statehood emanate from this period. In the 50ties of the 19th century, the Africans founded two independent states in south African interior – Orange Free State and South Africa unofficially named Transvaal. The African statehood disappeared after the Second Boer War in 1902. During the war, national identity of the Africans under the influence of common danger, partisan fights and concentration camps (in which the African families were concentrated) was reinforced. It may be said that the loss of statehood gave rise to national identity of the Africans.

The formation of African nation was connected with the use of their own language (*afrikaans*) based on the Dutch language as well as the dominant Calvinistic religion (some waves of Reformed Church). Historical development connected with the long-term threat from not only the British side but also from Black people's side led to the emergence of apartheid. This system officially running from 1948 to 1994 was supported by the Africans. Nowadays, three millions of African inhabitants are living mainly in provinces of North and West Cape, Gauteng, and Free State (former Orange).

Specific feature of African nation formation is emphasised by the fact that there was no such process in the neighbouring states. In Namibia and Zimbabwe where the descendants of European immigrants accounted for 7 % (1 % of all inhabitants) there was no national identity of white inhabitants established. Contrary to south African Africans these communities are not culturally and linguistically integrated to the form of a specific nation emanating from different historical background.

The endeavour to establish an African state in south Africa.

The endeavour of African political leaders to form an own state is tied to long-term traditions of African nationalism. Its roots date back to the time of British danger and its rebirth after the Second World War resulted in the politics of apartheid. The politics of the president P. W. Bothu indicated the rise of national sentiment for an own „white“ African state in south Africa which would have guaranteed the maintance of economic position of Africans and their ethnical identity. For the African state a lot of names were used. The most frequent was *Volkstaat* (national state), other names used were *Boerestaat*, *Orania* or *Afrikanerland*. In the paper only some presented proposals of African statehood (autonomy) are mentioned.

The endeavour to separate races territorially in South Africa dates to the beginning of the last century (in 1913) when 276 reservations for black population were delimited.

They gradually underwent the process of consolidation and thus, the assumption for racial territorial isolation was set. Its basic idea was to make the territories officially called *homelands* (in media the term bantustans was used) independent. In the 60ties of the last century, 10 territorial units consisting of 34 parts were founded. In 1973, the government of South Africa declared a decision to acknowledge the independence of particular homelands provided that each black inhabitant should have been a citizen of one of them. In the period from 1976 to 1981 the independence of Transkei, Bophutatswana, Venda and Ciskei homelands was declared. The same path should have been followed by rest six black reservations. So „a racially pure“ territory with 86 % of the state area should have been created. After dismantling apartheid the homelands were cancelled and incorporated into the territorial structure of South Africa.

First projects on African state establishment viewed as a harbour of white population were created mainly at the end of the 70ties of the last century. It was clear that the apartheid system was unsustainable in the then constellation. The delimitation of „white“ area was diverse. In particular alternatives different parts of South Africa including part of occupied Southwestern Africa (current Namibia) were considered. Nowadays, there are several projects of African independence leaning to the concept of white character of a new state. Many radical conceptions put its centre to Pretoria and its broader hinterland where Africans prevail.

In the 80ties of the last century C. Mulder presented a project on *Orania* which was to be stretching along the axis Pretoria – Bloemfontein – Mosselbaai, so from the centre of Transvaal southeastward to the coast of the Indian ocean. Different proposal situated the African state into the east Orange and Transvaal with a narrow corridor through Natal to the Ruchardsbaai bay. C. W. F. Boshoff introduced a project of *Boerestaat* establishment including the territories of current Namibia and Cape. P. F. Bruwer presented his alternative covering most of Transvaal, whole Orange, and north Natal (territory of Vryheid providing the approach to the sea).

***Volkstaat* project after dismantling the apartheid regime.**

In the period of democratization of W. de Klerke's reforms, the supporters enacting Africans' territory supported a number of political parties and movements led to the abolishment of the apartheid. Their projects headed towards an independent African state or an autonomous region establishment. The concept of Africans' homeland was bound to historical sentiment of renewing the traditions of Great Trek and returning of the *voortreTERS*' spirit. These memories led towards the African autonomy in the territory of former African states – thus, in the area of south African provinces of Transvaal and Orange or in the parts of their territory (albeit the borders were not delimited precisely).

The struggle of some African politicians to enforce an independent development resulted in the liaison with black right-wing political groupings which upheld the maintaince of independent bantustans in Bophutatswana, Ciskei and Vendy, as well as the creation of an independent state for the Zulu nation in the Natalu territory. In 1992, an Engaged South African Group was given birth. The Africans movements were able to

incorporate a special article into the constitution that assumed a foundation of Council of *Volkstaat* (*Volkstaatraad*) that was to clarify the question of a homeland for Africans.

The Council consisting of twenty members made a proposal for creating an autonomous region for the Africans (*Hoogland - Gebied*) with an area of around 38 000 km² in the Pretoria hinterland and a majority of white population. Its borders were to be opened for African immigration, and at the same time the non-African population was allowed to stay under the condition of previous ten years permanent stay in the area.

After the apartheid was abolished in 1994, the objectives of the Africans were connected with a radical nationalism that was enforced not only by the political parties and movements, but also by the paramilitant groups, the most important of which was the African movement of Resistance. In 1994, its foreman K. Massyn declared that – with the free Vote – the Africans lost their homeland for which their ancestors had paid with their lives in the British concentration camps. Therefore, his movement focused on the declaration of a white (African) state in the territory of South Africa. The African Movement of Resistance had been banned later. Similar aims are shared by a number of various paramilitant groupings (The Way of the African People, The Movement for Our Future).

The Conservative Party led by F. Hartzenberg was a proponent of the African independence. During its meeting held in Pretoria in March 1993, a symbolic *Volkstaat* with vast areas of Transvaal and Orange had been declared. Up to now, the party manages to maintain white character and even the former protagonists of the Apartheid *regimé* are count as members. Even before, a project of *Afrikanerland* stretching from Transvaal to the Indian ocean, which should have been a part of the „South African Commonwealth of Nations“, had been laid down by this party.

In 1993, the struggle for political support security for the African autonomy (independence) led to the establishment of the African National Front (AVF, Conservative party was among its members) that integrated the nationalistic streams. The front sought to find an international support for its separatistic goals. On its basis, in June, 1994 the Working Committee of National Republic (*Volksrepubliekwerkkomitee*) was enacted and delimited the territory of the African homeland by seven regions in the of Cape, Transvaal and Orange regions. However, the African National Front did not have a long lasting due to political differences and broke down soon.

The moderate Free Front headed by general C. Viljoen was also active in the formation of a „bantustan“ with an autonomous position for Africans or an independent *Volkstaat*. His demands had been laid down during the negotiations on democratization of South Africa in 1993. The leader of the African National Congress N. R. Mandela managed to uphold the unity of state and the possibility of a regional autonomy for the Africans was acknowledged as well.

***Volkstaat* Project in Cape**

In July 1998, the Free Front leader, general C. Viljoen introduced a plan to create an African *Volkstaat* in the northern part of Cape alongside the river of Orange. There is approximately half a million of Africans living in this area of 145 000 km² and forming the majority of the population. This state was to be a compact territory in the east-west direction with access to the Atlantic ocean. His declaration was grounded on the belief that the Africans are nowadays a suppressed minority which is not able to evolve its abilities and thus, it is condemned to doom.

More complicated project stems from the idea of Pretoria and its hinterland (around the towns of Rustenburg, Klerksdorp, Middelburg and Bethal) as a centre of the African State which was to comprise another separated territories. Their intended status was a confederation connection. In this context, white suburbs of Johannesburg, Cape Town or Durban are mentioned. It is questionable whether the African state would have been a functional entity in such configuration. At the same time, the openness of the present South African government for this kind of solution is in doubt.

Concerning the present political situation in the country, the most probable is to form the African homeland in Northern Cape. The map presented by Free Front located the area on the borderline of the Northern and Western Cape territory, and it stretched to the province Free State (former Orange) in the east. It is a less populated region without big cities, spreading out in the natural formation Karoo of semi-desert character. As the eastern boundary is the Orange river, the plan assumes the building of a number of dams, hydro plants (three are already going order) and the irrigation systems. The plan also presumes further reserves in the exploitation of ground waters.

The formation of *Volkstaat* as a national homeland of the Africans is connected with their migration to this territory. Optimistic prognoses speak of a intense agriculture and settlement for 2 to 3 million people. It is a sort of a „return“ into a newly established homeland from the South African diaspora following the traditions of the Great Trek and *voortrekers*. This was the reason why some authors sought inspirations even in the works focusing on the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. the *Orania* settlement, located between Cape and Orange, which was purchased by a private company in 1991 (Bebnik 2004). A template of a functional african settlement should be Attempts of forming the base for an african territory by founding private farms were usual also in other parts of South african territory.

Separatistic policy of the African Parties. Reasons and perspectives.

The African Parties having separatistic goals in their programme broaden their activities in all provinces of the state. The Conservative Party as well as the Free Front have the greatest political support in this context. However, they play only a marginal role on the entire political scene. The most radical nationalists claim 14 % of South Africa area (Emmert 2002). Although the majority of the white population currently doesn't support the programme nor the rhetoric of the ultra-right nationalistic groupings, they are considered a necessary counter-balance to the government policy. At the same time more and more Africans are signing the petitions for forming a *Volkstaat*.

These tendencies emerge from the fact that African community felt the danger from black majority. It may be pointed at the danger of African culture doom based on the Reformed Protestant Church (*the Calvins*) and on the African language. It is doubtless that the rate of white population is decreasing whereas the natural birth rate of the black community is increasing. Some of the nationalistic radicals believe that the situation will dramatically change after the AIDS pandemic breaks out and the Africans regain their lost positions.

The status of white population is getting worse due to the rising criminality that has penetrated into originally white city-quarters. That led to the migration of white population into suburban regions where fortified ghettos were built. Except that, a fear of the same screenplay of the neighbouring Zimbabwe state has spread out.

The creation as well as enforcement of the *Volkstaat* project may be viewed as a result of African community frustration as they lost the sentiment of security in the form of a dominant position in the state. It subsequently led to worries about loss of identity and prosperity. Some African politics come out with the thesis that the Africans are the only 'white aboriginal tribe' in the Subsaharan Africa and therefore have a right to form an own state or autonomous province in the South Africa.

A number of questions arise in this context. Is the realization of *Volkstaat* merely on a „green field“ inconceivable? What part of the African nation would be willing to colonise the almost semi-desert territory? Would the settlers be the 'white' farmers fearing of the scenes of horror in Zimbabwe being repeated? What would the initial investment costs of cultivating this area be and who would bear them? What status would the African population claim in this territory? What stand would the South-African government take to this project?

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