

Colin Bundy: Govan Mbeki. A Jacana Pocket Biography. Auckland Park 2012.  
[am Schluß: Digest aus Govan Mbeki: The Transkei Tragedy. A study in the Bantu Authorities Act (Part 4). in: Liberation (Sept. 1956-April 1957)]

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Colin Bundy scheint für eine/diese (kurze) Biographie der richtige Autor zu sein – zum Einen viele Interviews mit Mbeki über längeren Zeitraum geführt, zum anderen selbst über die Rolle der ländlichen Bevölkerung in Ökonomie und Politik geforscht/geschrieben

Govan Mbeki (8. Juli 1910-30. August 2001)

Father of Thabo, eldest son

S8

- keen student of history
  - lessons for African nationalist struggle
  - author and journalist, who wrote about politics and economics for over 60 years
- „was profoundly aware of just how great were the challenges brought to South Africa in the final decade of his long life” – wenn auch, siehe weiter unten, vieles, ja im Grunde die gesamte zweite Stufe der Revolution ausgeblieben ist...
- (85f: “Govan by no means the classic image of a revolutionary ... He is not an agitator but someone who quietly – there is not better way of putting it – manages to convince his opponent by argument. If you met him somewhere during a meeting of a congress he always gave the impression that he was very timid, but in fact he has immense political passions and a will of iron.”

ANC

most prominent opponent of the National Party (NP), its negotiating counterpart and its political successor. Zwar 1912 gegründet, aber key shift form 1940s onwards – dialectical relationship with the NP

Kurze Geschichte des ANC (8f)

Die ersten Premierminister, D.F. Malan and Hans Strijdom, haben ANC mehrheitlich ignoriert, even when it first won a mass base in 1952 with a campaign rejecting the “unjust laws” of apartheid. H.F. Verwoerd banned the movement in 1960 (Sharpsville), locked up its leaders and criminalized every action. B.J. Vorster and P.W. Botha, through the 1970s and 1980s, demonized the exiled body and its army, infiltrated its ranks and bombed its bases. By doing so, they ensured its iconic status in township streets, in classrooms and lecture halls, in hearts and minds. The surging internal resistance spearheaded in the 1980s by the United Democratic Front (UDF) was increasingly explicit in its adherence to an idealized ANC, so that F.W. de Klerk finally decided that it was safer to legalise the movement. He believed that the collapse of Soviet power also weakened the ANC so that it might be outflanked in a negotiated settlement.

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ANC zwar zentral für Mbeki – but he never was an apparatchik or uncritical loyalist: far from it

his belief in the political importance of rural people cut little ice in an overwhelmingly urban  
Seine Co-Autorenschaft von “Operation Mayibuye” war auch eine Quelle von Kontroversen  
Kontroversen auch mit Mandela, einige, auf Robben Island – ideologisch und strategische jedoch immer: “profound commitment” to the organization

- 25 Kindheit und Jugend am Land

25ff Healdtown und Fort Hare

1927 zog seine Familie dorthin – Methodist school, gegründet 1855, 1917 eine high school kam dazu (wo auch Mandela, Sobukwe, Mhlaba, Mokitini waren) – wie alle anderen African boarding schools war das weit entfernt von urban areas

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langsame Politisierung: “discoverys of what it meant to be black in a white man’s world.” Healdtown – wie auch andere Missionsschulen – hatte Schüler von all over Africa. “They pooled information so that the country could be mapped anew. Students learned from each other a topography of racial oppression, shading in local details of injustice, tracing the contours of domination, and poring over possible routes of resistance.”

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Govan begleitete seinen Cousin (Gewerkschafter), übersetzte Reden von Englisch in Xhosa, reiste auch nach Johannesburg (Halbschwester)  
“face to face with some of the harshest aspects of ghetto life. He saw police raid the yards of City and Suburban for illicit stills and scour the location for pass law offenders.”

31f

diese Sätze über Fort Hare (wiederkehrend in anderen Texten/Büchern, die Rolle dieser Uni herausstreichend): For half a century, the South African Native College (...) was the only university for black South Africans.

32: made the small town of Alice the centre of black education in the Eastern Cape – bis sie von Verwoerd bedeutungslos gemacht wurde...”the cradle of assertive African nationalism from the mid-1930s to the late 1950s. It shaped Govan profoundly, intellectually and politically – in zweifacher Weise (siehe weiter unten):

33

(studierte auch Latein)

Campaign gegen Vorherrschaft von Englisch und dem Ziel aus ihnen bessere “Black Englishmen” zu machen – siehe Anfänge des ANC, Foto der Gründer (Briefmarke)  
(S. 37: new Africanism: less submissive than their parents’ generation and structurally distinct from it. (weil u.a. bessere Ausbildung) 38: “They experimented with new modes of cultural expression, social practice and political self-reliance – and they did so precisely at a moment, in the mid-1930s, when they felt threatened – suchten nach liberalen, anderen Wegen als “missionary moralizing” – seeking a new identity than merely to be black Englishmen; S. 38f: “This was not a simple reversion to ‘custom’ or ‘tradition’, but attempts to rework African cultural forms and values in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century ways.” Albert Luthuli richtete in diesem Kontext Zulu Language and Cultural Society at Adams College ein, not from a wish to ‘return to the primitive’ but ‘to preserve what is valuable in our heritage while discarding the inappropriate and outmoded.” (Ähnlich wie Z.K. Matthews and Paul Mosaka proposed an African Academy for “the serious study of Native problems” as well as as produce books an African music and legal systems.

Entstehung der All African Convention (AAC), 1935

1936: Mbeki wird Mitglied im ANC (protestierte etwa im Sinne von oben, against segregated entrance at the Alice post office (success) usw.)

1. systematische Beschäftigung mit Kommunismus, Lenin, Marx etc. – las nicht nur, sondern verteilt sie auch...
2. hatte in Johannesburg auch (für ihn beeindruckenden) Kontakt zu Edwin Thabo Mofutsanyana, leading member of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) (ihm zu Ehren auch der Name Thabo, an seinen ältesten Sohn), trat der Partei aber nicht bei – hängt zusammen mit der Rolle, die er ländlicher Bevölkerung zuwies: “That was my approach. Let’s go and organize in the Transkei, let’s go and organize in Zululand, so that they come to Jo’burg they are already reached – we are able to guide them to take certain actions”

3. ANC-Mitglied
4. S. 41: "Latin poetry and the Little Lenin Library. Wordsworth on Westminster Bridge and Mqhayi on his hill-top. Secretary of the rugby club and in the same year a new member of the ANC. These were just some of the elements that constited Govan's experience of Fort Hare."

Mbeki – nach Fort Hare – nach Clarkbury, 18 Monate, dann widmete er sich mehr dem Journalismus, Polit-Organisation und Aktivismus...

S. 47 (ff)

Mbeki als Kommentator und Denker (1938-48)

erste Publikation: Transkei in the Making (38)

social and economic conditions of the Transkei

wies Argumente, wonach Afrikaner resistant gegen Wandel wären, entschieden zurück, wies auf die schwierige ökonomischen Umstände hin (ein lebenslanges Thema): (48): "economic difficulties confronting African peasants, the political economy of the Reserves, a critique of chiefs and headmen ('in the Bunga's cosy chairs at Mtata... the represents nobody but themselves'), and the importance of education."

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Echoes of Marxism: "The 'rigours and vices' of a capitalist society should not be deliberately imported into the Transkei so as create 'that most iniquitous system which will enable a chosen few to be possessors of all the means of production.'"

S55f: "The fundamental problem of the African people is economic."

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Mbeki nicht Mitglied der youth League: "Sein Denken anders als jenes derer. – sein Denken, nach Eigenangaben, ein Marxistisches, ihres ein rein Nationalistisches – der oben beschriebene neue Afrikanismus fand Eingang in die CYL

56

Zwei Argumentationsstränge laufen durch das Schreiben von Mbeki, immer und immer wieder: analysis of the Reserve economics and advocacy of trade union organization.

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"The fundamental difficulty, he warned, 'is the anomaly of White capital and Coloured labour in South Africa... We repeat that so long ad the Native Reserves are regarded as a reservoir of cheap labour, so long will overstocking continue.' Mbeki linked the drive for culling to cattle to the emergence of a collaborating 'traditional' elite as a new class. The culling proclamation allowed chiefs, headmen and councilors to accumulate cattle. This was 'a vicious conversion of the good old communal ownership of property... into a handy weapon for the Government to divide and rule'"

Mbeki identifizierte 4 "economics groups": urban workers, farm workers, reserve-based peasants and a 'floating population' of migrant workers (without land, who must supplement peasant income with wages – wie ein Frosch, manchmal an Wasser, manchmal an Land...- a large reserve labour army, whose existence would depress African wages generally."

S58

The villages would serve the same function as a garage for a car: 'to repair and overhaul the worker so that will be a fit tool in the service of those who must exploit his power to work.'

aufgrund dieser Umstände betonte er die Wichtigkeit von 1. Gewerkschaften – first weapon of defence available to workers was the organization of trade unions – "To protect their own interests, the WORKERS, irrespective of race and colour must form TRADE UNIONS:"

2. Gemeinschaftsbesitz (Gemeindetraktoren etc.): pool of own resources

60

3. (Aus-)Bildung zentrale Stelle in Mbekis Auseinandersetzungen:

**“In education the African care is being taken that he is given only such education as will fit him for a position which is forever subservient.”**”

all seine Texte, Theorie, in enger Verbindung, zu organisatorisch-aktivistischer Arbeit

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versuchte den politischen slumber of the Transkei auf zu brechen.

1. **überzeugt, dies (auch) mit seinen Texten (power of printed word and the agitational press) machen zu können**
2. **he chooses to work within existing local organizations rather than trying to create new Congress branches.**
3. **Dies verknüpfen mit nationalen Bewegungen, angeführt vom ANC**  
**2 zu 3 start with local issues, build a corps of “loyal and politically conscious members; and then gradually link them up with the national strategy – this was the essence of Mbeki’s strategy, then and subsequently.**

Bundy vergleicht Mbekis Strategie “measuring, selling, persuading and .. speaking to people” mit Gramsci’s Definition of an organic intellectual – nicht nur pure Eloquenz, “but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, “permanent persuader” – Speaking to the people also meant listening to the people.

the pen was always a favoured weapon

72 (ff)

TOWNSHIPS POLITICS, Ladysmith and Port Elizabeth, 1952-1960

Umzug nach – zuerst Ladysmith – dann nach Port Elizabeth, mehr und mehr im Untergrund arbeitend/agierend, nicht mehr in “respektablen” Organisationen.... trat dann, 1953, der neu gegründeten kommunistischen Partei bei, die alte wurde 1950 gebannt, in dieser Zeit schrieb er auch “The peasants revolt”

New Age – nachdem der Guardian gebannt wurde,

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Port Elizabeth was the cradle of organized politics in South Africa; from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1930s an African middle class used the political space made available by a relatively liberal city administration. Central to their approach was the demand that ‘civilised’ Africans be extended full civil rights. But this mode of elite-led negotiating and supplication was shouldered aside in the 1940s by a more robust, more militant mass-based politics. (vgl. wieder Anfänge des ANC)

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New Brighton – main African Township (bei Port Elisabeth) – älteste Section war Red Location, ganz schlechte Infrastruktur – 1946 ca. 34.000 Leute, schon in den 1940s eine Serie von Protesten, around bread-and-butter issues: food, transport prices, rent increases and the imposition of lodger’s permit – auch verknüpft mit ersten Trade Unions Strikes

1952, die Defiance Campaign was more successful in Port Elizabeth than anywhere else – v.a. weil es hier bereits Protestkultur gab (anti-pass campaign von 1944, rent boycotts, dock-worker strike etc.

aufgrund von repressiven Staatapparat mehr und mehr in den Untergrund – zwischen 1956-60 perfektionierten sie Untergrundarbeit – M(andela)-Plan: Zellenstruktur um zu kommunizieren, von Kleinst-Zellen zu Kleinst-Zellen hin zu größeren...

auch kommunistischen Partei im Untergrund organisiert – study-groups for workers, Mbeki wollte darüber hinaus – hat ein Studienprogramm entwickelt, booklet of 50 pages rund um

Geschichte, Ziele und policies des ANC in Xhosa, Marxismus in Xhosa (verglichen das mit Chinesischen Marxismus – auch Adaption (walking on two legs...) – gab es sonst nirgends... - Grundlage für geheime Lese- und Ausbildungszirkel  
a rewarding work (weil Schnellballeffekt), wie er selbst sagte: (83): “Because from those small classes we got people who became trained ... And they would go out in turn to do what you are doing with them”

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Mbekis Arbeit bei New Age (hielt das Ganze am Laufen: schrieb, fotografierte, organisierte das Büro, kümmerte sich um Verteilung etc.)  
viele, viele Artikel...

1951: Bantu Authorities Act war das Rückgrat der A-Ideologie eines “separate development”: locale Autoritäten, “in order to restore the standing and authority of local chiefs and minimize popular participation in decision making.”

Zwischen Sept. 56-April 57 erschien seine Serie/Analyse der implications of the Bantu Authorities Act in “**Liberation**” in vier Teilen unter dem Titel “**The Transkei Tragedy**”

91:

“He hammered away at themes that he had raised for 20 years: that the fundamental economic problem of the Transkei was the shortage of land; that the poverty created by landless suited the needs of the mines and other employers; that long-term labour migrancy took a cruel toll on family life and social cohesion; and that chiefs (now restyled as Bantu Authorities) must carry out a land policy which peasants had already strongly opposed.”

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he warned: as the fate of the Pharaohs, the Hitlers, the Mussolonis’ showed, history is on the side of the people, Verwoerd sollte sich nicht zu früh darüber freuen, dass die Bhunga den Bantu Authorities Act und dessen “schemes” akzeptiert habe: “The Bunga had no mandate to speak, and it did not speak, on behalf of the people. The last word lies with the people, and they have not spoken yet.”

in Part III, Original: And if history has any lessons to teach about what happened to those who thought like the Nationalists – the Pharaohs, the Hitlers, the Mussolinis – then history is on the side of the people.”

93ff

#### THE PEASANTS’ REVOLT

nur 23 Seiten (von 148) beschäftigen sich mit dem Kern damit

once again about the Bunga: The Chiefs are Chiefs because the government has ordained that they may be so.

auch enthalten, Analyse der Mpondo revolt 1960

97

betont dass der ANC should focus on mobilisation of both city and rural dwellers (siehe Mao, walking on two legs) – an argument he has putting forward since 1930s – within the Mpondo revolt the proof

S98: Kurzer Abriss darüber wie – unter welchen Umständen – the Peasants’ Revolt geschrieben wurde (wurde schließlich zu Ruth First nach London gesendet).

104ff

#### VON SHARPVILLE TO RIVONIA

Mbeki spielte zentrale Rolle in the decision to turn to armed struggle, founder of Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), hatte eine Sabotage Cell in Port Elizabeth, chaired as well the ANC’s first exiled conference, went underground und schließlich bei der Rivonia Razzia (Lilliesleaf farm, property bought by the CP) gefangen genommen...

((107: ein Satz aus Mbekis Prison Diary, über die Zukunft von Gefangenen und Wärtern:

“In the long run it is difficult to see how both can escape being turned into beasts.”))

110/111

shift – rather than a single decision – to armed struggle, buffeted by circumstances  
first explosion 1961 in Port Elizabeth, jedoch (noch, bzw. im Grunde immer) ziemlich unprofessionell,

Govan personified the overlap between the three structures (ANC, MK und CP)

“Mandela was in prison; Sisulu under house arrest; and Tambo was in London. Govan was now de facto the senior ANC leader at large – was v.a. und nicht zuletzt in der Zeit nach Sharpsville (Aufrüstung des Polizei- und Überwachungsstaates...) ziemlich herausfordernd war.

Rivonia: war sich des Risikos bewußt (let it be the very, very last meeting that take place in Rivonia)

115

“Rivonia was a disaster. It decapitated the underground leadership, and, in the months that followed, the state was able to close in, too, on local remnants of MK and ANC cells.

Prozess: most important document “Operation Mayibuye”. Written by Slovo und Mbeki (war während des Prozesses nicht bekannt) – eines der umstrittensten Papiere des Befreiungskampf

Slovo, Mhlaba und Mbeki insistierten darauf, dass das Papier approved war, vom MK, ANC und der Partei und in dieser Form zu Tambo geschickt wurde – Mandela, Sisulu und Kathrada, dass es draft war, and remained under consultation, inside and outside the country. (116)

The Time for small thinking is over because history leaves us no choice. (kommt sehr oft vor, dass diese ANC-Helden mit “Geschichte” argumentieren...)

119

wie viele nutzte auch Mbeki den Prozess um Probleme, Missstände zu analysieren: “The teacher and journalist was on home ground, and delivered a measured and pointed critique of white supremacy.”

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auch bekannt: “I do not accept that there is any moral guilt attached to my actions.” (u.a. deswegen he not plead guilty)

122 (ff)

Robben Island, Cold Comfort

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“It takes a lot to forgive these things though one may not forget.”

3 Aspekte werden hervorgehoben:

1. Mbekis Erscheinen bei anderen politischen Prozessen (Absenz von Robben Island)
2. Politische und persönliche Spannungen innerhalb der Rivonia leadership
3. Educational Programmes run by the ANC

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ad 2: Reibungen sind detailliert beschrieben in einem Report an Exil-ANCler\_innen, zwischen 69-75, “at times reaching extreme tension and bitterness, at times abating in response to efforts to solve it”.

mehrere Streitthemen:

1. ANC soll sich – wie Mandela und Sisulu meinten – in apartheid structures, z.B. wie Bantustan oder andere Parteien (Coloured, Indian Council ) einbringen

2. Mandelas Status': leadership on the island collective oder war Mandela primus inter pares
3. Relationship ANC and Communist Party

ab 1977 wieder versöhnlicher zwischen Mbeki und Mandela, zu einer Zeit wo junge "nachrückten" "influx of younger, angry and militant prisoners – the Soweto generation, or klipgooiers – and also affected by the ideological challenge of Black Consciousness... and finally by the intake of captured MK guerillas from the late 1970s."

132f

führte zu Punkt 3, ab 1982

z.B. study of the Freedom Charta, die Gründe für armed struggle

Mbeki meinte, für den ersten turn würde es 3 Jahre brauchen

"A second syllabus on 'the development of society' provided for a outline of Marxist theory and economics.

Prison als Universität, training ground for young leaders

sollte jedoch vor Verklärung und Romantisierung in Acht nehmen

war freilich auch ein Selbstschutzmechanismus um im Gefängnis nicht zu verblöden, S. 134:

"prison can put your brain to death."

Mbeki und Neville Alexander – beide graduate – waren Zentren der "Universität"

139(ff)

Mbeki hat noch 1985 gegen seine Freilassung, gebunden an Konditionen, votiert, 1987 kam er dann frei (Mandela hat darauf gedrungen die beiden ältesten – Sisulu und Mbeki – frei zu lassen. Ohne das Mbeki davon wußte.)

wurde allerdings gebannt

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By 1990, the state remained militarily powerful but had lost legitimacy. The liberation movement was politically powerful, but militarily ineffectual

1991 ANC's National Conference held in Durban, Govan Mbeki decision was not to stand for election to the National Executive Committee. He turned his energies, instead, to writing; seit 1988 arbeitete er an dem, was dann, 1992, als "The Struggle for Liberation in South Africa: A Short History" herauskam.

1996: Sunset at Midday (1963-1993)

unternahm viele Reisen

148ff

Mbeki als writer, teacher and as revolutionary

150

Mbeki was not primarily a theorist. Yet there is a striking formulation in the Liberation series, styling the relationship of the Reserves to modern South Africa as one of "introverted colonialism".

Bantustan war für ihn neo-colonial solution, requiring a collaborating class. The prophetic force of the (Peasants Revolt) is really incredible... he provides a detailed analysis of how the class structure in the Transkei could contribute to such collaboration." (Ruth First)

154

**"he believed that ending national oppression was a necessary first step, but that real liberation required the end of capitalist exploitation. In the polemics on Robben Island, Govan** a leader of the 'Communists' in their debates with the 'nationalists'. As his surviving prison writings indicate, what was at stake was the transfer of power 'from the bourgeoisie and its henchmen, into the hands of ... dominated classes.'"

Bundy versucht sich an Ciraj Rasool Warnung zu halten nicht "national histories in which leaders have been made to speak as national subjects" zu konstruieren und mit Jonathan Hyslop: there is a strong tendency to serve up "official narrative of the liberation struggle, centered on the ANC and its leadership".

155f: "So I want to resist the temptation to vest Mbeki's radicalism with retrospective coherence and continuity, or to see it as moving ineluctably to the desired outcome; and instead to identify some of its contradictions.

1. Rolle der CP – letztlich nationale Frage wichtiger als class struggle. (155) **"With the election of the ANC in 1994, 'two stages theory' relegated working-class interests to an indefinite future, a second socialist stage postponed *sine die*. There was an inescapable dilemma for orthodox Communists in this outcome; and Mbeki was impaled on it."**
2. (157f)u.a. : **If the ANC were 'to set up a bourgeois democracy after freedom it would be to entrench capitalism to the detriment of the oppressed.' Govans distrust of a bourgeois democracy had little purchase at the time (of negotiations).**

aus **Govan Mbeki: The Transkei Tragedy. A study in the Bantu Authorities Act (Part 4). in: Liberation (Sept. 1956-April 1957)**

#### PART I

the complicated tribal structure in the Transkei, the fruit of past British intrigues, which Dr. Verwoerd proposes further to bedevil with his Bantu Authorities Act. We must now turn to consider the bankrupt peasant economy, upon which this administrative structure has been superimposed, in order the better to understand the implications of Verwoerd's plot.

1913: Native Land and Trust Act: Ende der „African tribespeople“ – into individual peasant-smallholders on the European model. – no freehold tenure anymore – similar to feudal serf afterwards

#### Part II

The fundamental economic problem of the Transkei, as other Reserves, is not difficult to state, or once stated, to solve. The land area is far too small and infertile to support the population. Therefore, in order to end the terrible poverty, malnutrition, famines, suffering and misery of the Reserves, it is allocate much more land for African peasants. But his statement of the problem, and its obvious solution is by no means agreeable to the rulers of South Africa, and never has been. The wealthy farmers have no intention of parting with the land that was taken by conquest long ago. And, in fact, a condition of poverty and near-starvation in the Reserves is welcomed by the mining-magnates, the farmers and other employers of African labour, who regard hunger and destitution as their main allies and recruiting agents for a bigger and cheaper supply of labour-power.

(...) At any given time about 80 per cent of the able bodied men between 18 and 44 years of age are away from home working on the white man's mines, farms and industries.

Only if we constantly remember this terrible truth and seek its reasons and implications can we begin to understand the Transkei.

(...) The latest in this series of 'schemes' to solve the desperate needs of a land-hungry people without giving them land, is Dr. Verwoerd's Bantu Authorities Act.

The truth of the matter is that the new plan does not set out to create opportunities for ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT of the African. (...) The best contribution they have made has been to make (sic! ..manufacturing?) cheap coffins for the trading stations to sell at exorbitant prices to bury the victims of map-fostered FAMINES IN THE RESERVES.



... What is the management going to manage since there is no labour, no capital, no land? It is a day-dream that is not worth a minute's consideration.

MASS DISMISSALS AT THE END OF THE YEAR AND MASS-REEMPLOYMENT OF THE SAME WORKERS ON BEGINNERS WAGES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT YEARS – these and other methods are employed in varying degrees to keep the wages down and to pile up profits to the skies.

On this basis and no other, industries may be established in the reserves.

#### Part III

about the Bantu itself, about the exploitation of workers in the mines:

„To achieve this the mine management has exploited man's vanity for power, however illusory such power. Undergründ, a white ‚baas‘ supervises a number of African ‚baasboys‘ who goad the workers to produce. The Nationalists are adopting similar tactics to implement their Bantu Authorities plan. They want the chiefs to play the role of ‚Baas boys‘“ so that they break up resistance to oppression amongst their people. (...) ...they are directed to compel their people to accept all the oppressive and degrading slave laws which are based on the theory of the white man's racial superiority.

(er vergleicht die Bantus mit dem Judenrat)

#### Part IV (Titel: The last word)

Schluß der Serie (mit Part IV):

The Bhunga had no mandate to speak, and it did not speak, on behalf of the people. The last word lies with the people and they have not spoken yet.“