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## PROFILE

*"The law under which we are charged is a law made exclusively for the white man, and the officers administering the law are white men. We do not see how justice can be done in these circumstances."*

Implicit in this statement is the total rejection of the white man's law and his justice in South Africa and the categorical reassertion that no court of law can administer an unjust law justly.

Before the court was *Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe*, 38 year old leader of the Pan Africanist Congress, charged with subverting the security of the State. With brilliant oratory he exposed the system of so-called benevolent paternalism which is only a cover for slave labour and forced contract labour perpetuated by white South Africa. He refused to plead under their laws. He refused to be drawn into their game played according to their rules and did not even bother to rebut the charges levelled against him. He charged that they had made a mockery of law, had negated fundamental justice. He accepted the consequences of his action, merely using the court to propound his political philosophy. He affirmed that not only was it right, but it was the duty of a people to revolt against tyranny.

Among his enemies and the politically illiterate, the Sobukwe strategy of concentrating on welding the Africans into a cohesive and significant factor, galvanising them into a force whose dynamism would bring together the parts that go to make the sum total of our South African situation, namely, a non-racial society, was crudely canvassed and interpreted as racialism.



He has consistently maintained that he offers no guarantees to minorities because in the society he envisages, there will be no minorities—"we think and plan in terms of individuals not groups. We fear and hate to transport into the free South Africa of the future, arrogances that go with group sectionalism".

He has refused to be placed in the position where he has to decide arbitrarily as to who is African and who is not. Instead he has placed the onus of deciding on the individual. Those whose only loyalty is to Africa and who regard themselves as Africans will be accepted as Africans. The colour of one's skin is completely irrelevant.

Sobukwe is loved by the African masses—already he has laid the foundations for a legend around him. He is an intellectual who has kept in touch with the people. He understands their yearnings and fears

and has ably interpreted their aspirations. His deliberate decision to abandon a lucrative university job as a lecturer, a position which gave him middle class respectability and security, identified him completely with the struggles of his people. His socialist convictions are the product of deep and searching enquiry into the tragic situation of a society that has allowed exploitation, oppression and the degradation of the human person. He is hated by the white ruling class and racists who see in him a threat to their security and the destruction of their cherished myth of white supremacy. He is feared by the democrat-liberal-progressive whites who have for so long lived in two worlds. He has shown how false their position is. They accept and enjoy the benefits which are the direct result of the system which, with one hand, they claim they are fighting to destroy. They have been in the struggle but never part of it. They have been more in the nature of O'Neil's Hugo Kalmer, the anarchist, who insists: "I love only the proletariat! I will lead them! I will be like a Gott to them! They will be my slaves!" In the Sobukwe thesis, they have to make their position clear. This challenge to total commitment or nothing, constitutes the present-day dilemma of the white democrat who must show that he is prepared to suffer the consequences of his action. Sobukwe showed how ambivalent the position of the white opposition to Verwoerd is.

He challenged them to recognise that the only way to fight the racists in South Africa effectively is to denounce and renounce the whole structure of white South Africa. What purpose was there in pleading before laws which in themselves were guilty. Sobukwe saw no point in knocking his head against a legal system which was designed to find him guilty. Countless African politicians in the past had wasted years by trying to find loopholes in a legal system which was designed to foster racialism; they wasted thousands of pounds—money raised in pennies and sixpences from people already living below the breadline—in this futile attempt to beat South African "justice" at its own game. They demoralised the whole struggle for freedom by directing it into the maze of irrelevant and untenable legalities and thereby, for decades continued to blunt the African's revolutionary zeal.

With his lucidity, his gift for clinical analysis, Sobukwe saw as a prerequisite, the need for the African liberatory movement to wrench the initiative from the ruling class. Up to then, the African

politicians were caught in the vicious circle of just reacting to whatever the government did—in other words, the government chose for us the ground on which we had to fight. The government exploited the South African tendency towards grouping and sectionalism. It would pounce on one section by introducing, say, the Group Areas Act and a howl of rage would rise in the ranks of the liberatory movement. This would occasion a shift of ground, a concentration of forces to fight this "fascist law". Before we even got geared to fight, the government would pounce again, Native Settlement of Disputes Act, Suppression of Communism Act, and there would be absolute chaos in our ranks—some uncoordinated activity unrelated to the demands on our time.

Sobukwe saw that those responsible had fallen into the fatal error of importing and adopting strategems and programmes without first determining whether—no matter how successful these had been elsewhere—they applied to our situation. There had been this failure to diagnose the temper and psychology of our enemy. The Afrikaner—the dominant and—politically—the most significant factor in the South African white camp—fought to establish his position in South Africa. The long drawn-out battles with Dingane, Moshoeshoe and a host of other African patriots, culminating in the Anglo-Boer War, had made him understand that only with his rifle and an unflinching determination to make the supreme sacrifice and die for his cause, could he succeed. To him passive resistance, non-violent agitation, constitutional methods, stay-at-home protests and demonstrations—unless backed by force—meant nothing. In fact his government welcomed such manifestations as they afforded a safety valve—a release of tension from anger and frustration which would become dangerous if channelled to revolutionary ends.

The recent years had witnessed the intensification of political persecutions in South Africa on a scale never before attempted. The mass arrests, the bannings, the banishment orders and the dawn raids on homes, had so harassed the people and the treason trial had dragged on so long that morale was low and the need to inject new life into the body-politic was imperative.

Sobukwe saw the need for the African to regain his lost confidence in himself. By his forceful personality, his unmatched courage, he gave a sense of direction and purpose to the African struggle.

It is an historical fact that we have many unmarked graves of political heroes, martyrs in the struggle for African liberation. Thousands have languished in jails. Thousands have been massacred. Up until Sharpeville, however, the leadership had always managed to escape, chiefly by their ability to retain the best counsel available to fight their case. It was a chronic complaint of the masses that it was unethical of the leadership to urge them to acts of defiance with dire consequences, when they, the leaders, always managed to keep themselves in the clear.

Because Sobukwe has never asked the African people to do what he himself would not undertake, he saw here the need for a new synthesis and in the only way he knew how, he sought to give all of himself in a quest to provide supreme political guidance to his people. He chose to be in the vanguard of whatever action was contemplated.

Langa and Sharpeville constitute a land-mark, a turning point in our struggle. The Positive Action Campaign against the pass laws was launched by the P.A.C. in March, 1960. Its aim was to make the whole machinery of operating the pass laws unworkable. It brought home to the government the fact that for the first time the Africans had taken the initiative from them. The government reacted with characteristic brutality. Seventy-two Africans at Langa and Sharpeville were mowed down by the police in a massacre that revolted international opinion and elicited shocked reaction from the United Nations in the form of a Security Council resolution. The campaign was planned under the very noses of the secret police. Without fanfare or flag waving, Sobukwe perfected the blue-print of this campaign which, whilst it originated and was conceived in Pan Africanist circles, had as its ultimate goal, the total involvement of all the African people and all those who saw in the emergence of the African as an indispensable force, the creation of a new non-racial society in South Africa. For the first time ever, South Africa was shaken out of its complacency, men began to revise their programmes, alter their methods and new alignments emerged. It is still too early to assess and evaluate the full extent of these developments. Whatever the final verdict will be, it is certain that since that day in March, when Sobukwe made his fateful call to the African people, a new political consciousness has been generated among them. There is a new awareness, a sense of latent power never before

utilised or directed to the things that count.

What Sobukwe has gone through during the three years of his imprisonment following the events at Sharpeville and Langa is still a matter of heated controversy.

There have been allegations of police brutality against Sobukwe on a scale never before seen in South African prisons. The South African government has denied these charges, but in an unprecedented move, the authorities threw open the prison doors and allowed a newspaper photographer to take carefully angled photographs showing a smiling Sobukwe. We remember that, not so long ago, in Algeria, men were tortured, atrocities were committed against them, which, at that time, the authorities denied but are now forced to admit in the face of irrefutable evidence. There are in South Africa today, ex-political prisoners who speak of one day of terror—subsequently known among them as the day of the Battle of Pick-handles—when Sobukwe was stripped and beaten near senseless with pick-handles by warders. There are eye-witnesses to the story that even when he was in solitary confinement Sobukwe was brought out each afternoon, made to strip and ordered to do the infamous *tauza dance*. This dance involves kicking one's leg in the air whilst bending at the same time to expose ones under parts. The ostensible reason for this sordid exhibition is to enable warders to see that no cigarettes are hidden in the prisoner's person. In reality it is part of a process of inflicting humiliations and indignities on political prisoners in an attempt to demoralise and degrade them.

The weight of evidence by colleagues who shared two years of imprisonment with him, shows conclusively that Sobukwe has lived under appalling conditions during the three years of his imprisonment. The treatment he underwent was aimed at destroying him mentally and physically. His jailers subjected him to every humiliation which would destroy his self-respect. He has refused to be destroyed.

Sobukwe went to jail as a leader of the Pan Africanist Congress. He comes out an undisputed national leader.

Perhaps it is not too late for those faceless men who kept him prisoner to remember that for whatever they have done to Sobukwe and for whatever they might do to him, they are now accountable to a nation. They face the wrath of a people to whom

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depends for its success on the ability of the guerrilla soldiers to dissolve themselves into the civilian population. They will, naturally, know their fellow soldiers. But they must not talk about past or future operations even to these. Least of all must they talk about the presence of African leaders in their locality. All oppressors, whether Verwoerdist or Nazis, think that they can cripple resistance by beheading it—that is, arresting and killing its leaders. *They must not be helped. That is why discipline and secrecy are of the utmost importance.*

There is, as I realise, a close connection between political and military forms of struggle. The two are, in fact, inseparable. But, in action, there must be a clear distinction between them. In other words, the trained guerrilla soldier very rarely takes active part in such open forms of struggle as protest meetings and so on. He keeps quiet, and obeys the orders of his local commander. His part in the struggle is just as important, in fact, even more important, than open protests. To play it, he must model himself on the successful guerrilla fighters who have won freedom for so many millions of people since 1945. It will be difficult, especially in South Africa. I myself wish that there were no need for guerrilla activity at all, having had my fill of fighting. But there is now no other choice for African Nationalists. They must either fight, in a disciplined way, or go under. It is the same choice that faced European anti-Nazis between 1939 and 1945.

## EDITORIAL—

*(Continued from page 4)*

The veil has been torn aside exposing a police-state reminiscent of Nazi-Germany. It is an old technique in all fascist states to find scape-goats to direct attention from the real issues. South Africa is applying this technique by a "poqo" scare, a monster of the government's own creation. Verwoerd has reached the end of the line — he has played out his best cards as the Resistance Movement mounts its offensive. It is clear that he and his kind are living on borrowed time.

## PROFILE—

*(Continued from page 3)*

Sobukwe personifies the ultimate victory of the African people in their struggle for freedom.

"Although . . . a man can never forget having been afraid—having—one summer's day—been whipped,"\* we know that Sobukwe, the man, will not be conditioned in his attitudes and his judgement by what they have done to him.

A great challenge awaits him—a great responsibility. For our part we are certain that he is, as only he can be, equal to the challenge and the task before him.

\* Jean Pelegri—the olive tree of justice