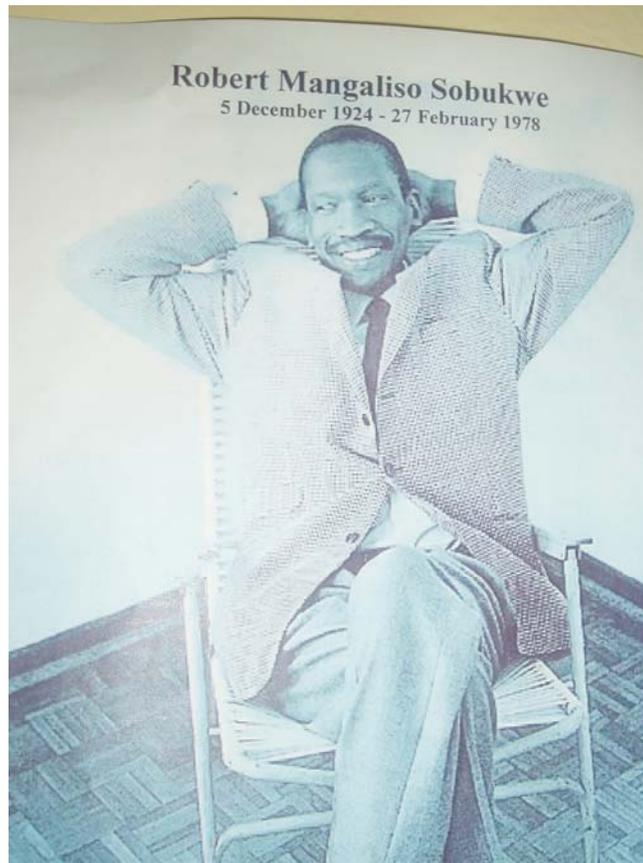


Robert Mangaliso Sobukhwe



Selected speeches of Robert Sobukwe and a mini-biography

Compiled by

Sinethemba Sembene Mandyoli

We Will Win

- [n.d.](#)

[Robert Sobukwe](#)

We Will Win

To all Regions and Branches of the P.A.C.:

Sons and Daughters of the Soil, Remember Africa! Very soon, now, we shall be launching our campaign. The step we are taking is historical, pregnant with untold possibilities. We must, therefore, appreciate our role. We must appreciate our responsibility. The African people have entrusted their whole future to us. And we have sworn that we are leading them, not to death, but to life abundant.

My instructions, therefore, are that our people must be taught NOW and CONTINUOUSLY, THAT IN THIS CAMPAIGN we are going to observe ABSOLUTE NONVIOLENCE.

There are those in our own ranks who will be speaking irresponsible of bloodshed and violence. They must be firmly told what our stand is.

Results of violence: Let us consider for a moment, what violence will achieve. I say quite POSITIVELY, without fear of contradiction, that the only people who will benefit from violence are the government and the police.

Immediately violence breaks out we will be taken up with it and give vent to our pent-up emotions and feel that by throwing a stone at a Saracen or burning, a particular building we are small revolutionaries engaged in revolutionary warfare. But after a few days, when we have buried our dead and made moving grave-side speeches and our emotions have settled again, the police will round up a few people and the rest will go back to the Passes, having forgotten what our goal had been initially. Incidentally, in the process we shall have alienated the masses who will be that we have made cannon fodder of them, for no significant purpose except for spectacular newspaper headlines.

This is not a game. We are not gamble taking our first step in the march to African and the United States of Africa. And we are not leading corpses to the new Africa. We are breathing and dynamic youth of our that youth, NOT TO DEATH, BUT TO LIFE ABUNDANT'. Let us get that clear.

The government, knowing that they stand to gain by an outbreak of violence may most probably stoop down to the level of employing certain African political renegades to throw a stone at the police from a distance. Our Task Force will, therefore, have to move

on either side of every batch and to make sure they deal with saboteurs. Anybody who agitates for violence or starts violence whether he belongs to P.A.C. or not, we will regard as a paid agent of the government. Let the masses know that NOW.

The principal aim of our Campaign is to get ourselves arrested, get our women remaining at home. This means that nobody will be going to work. Industry will come to a standstill and the government will be forced to accept our terms. And once we score that victory, there will be nothing else we will not be able to tackle. But we must know quite clearly, NOW, that our struggle is an unfolding one, one campaign leading on to another in a NEVER-ENDING STREAM - until independence is won.

This is not a game. The white rulers are going to be extremely ruthless. But we must meet their hysterical brutality with calm, iron determination. **We are fighting for the noblest cause on earth, the liberation of mankind.** They are fighting to retrench an outworn, anachronistic vile system of oppression. We represent progress. They represent decadence. We represent the fresh fragrance of flowers in bloom; they represent the rancid smell of decaying vegetation. We have the whole Continent on our side. We have history on our side. WE WILL WIN!

The government will be ruthless. They will probably try to cut us off from one another, censor the press, use their propaganda machinery to malign the leaders, mislead the people and spread falsehood about the Campaign. Let nobody depend on either the press or radio. I, myself, MANGALISO SOBUKWE, or one of the P.A.C. leaders, acting on my behalf, will call off the struggle, after our demands have been fully met.

FORWARD THEN, TO INDEPENDENCE NOW, TOMORROW THE UNITED STATES OF AFRICA!

Address by M.R. Sobukwe on behalf of the Graduating Class at Fort Hare College Delivered at the "Completers' Social"

- [1949](#)

[Robert Sobukwe](#)

Address by M.R. Sobukwe on behalf of the Graduating Class at Fort Hare College Delivered at the "Completers' Social"

21 October 1949

Prof. Dent, Ladies and Gentlemen, I intend to follow in my opening remarks the conventional pattern. And for that reason I will give a very brief review of our doings within the College this year. We saw at the beginning of the year the implementation of the Students' Constitution, whereby six members of the S.R.C. (Students' Representative Council) were elected by secret ballot at a mass-meeting of the students and whereby also certain powers were deluged to the Council. Of that arrangement the worst I can say is that it seems to be working well. We witnessed also at the beginning of the year the promotion of Prof. Dent to the position of Principal of the S.A. N.C. (South African Native College). He was succeeding a man who was highly esteemed, Dr. Kerr. But I do not think we lament the change, for we are concerned not with personalities, but with policies, and there has been no change in this respect. Moreover, however much we may disagree with Prof. Dent on certain issues, we cannot say that he has ever refused students a chance to state their case. And I believe it is due to this fact that there has been no trouble in the College this year. After all, even the minor demonstration we had last term was not a reaction against the administration of the college. The stimulus came from outside.

But that does not mean that all is well in the College. I had occasion last year and also at the beginning of this year to comment on some features of our structure of which I do not approve. It has always been my feeling that if the intention of the trustees of this College is to make it an African College or University, as I have been informed it is, then the department of African Studies must be more highly

and more rapidly developed. Fort Hare must become the centre of African Studies to which students in African Studies should come from all over Africa. We should also have a department of Economics and of Sociology. A nation to be a nation needs specialists in these things.

Again I would like to know exactly what the College understands by "Trusteeship." I understand by "Trusteeship" the preparation of the African ward for eventual management and leadership of the College. But nothing in the policy of the College points in this direction. After the College has been in existence for 30 years the ratio of European to African staff is 4 to 1. And we are told that in ten years time we might become an independent University. Are we to understand that an African University predominantly guided by European thought and strongly influenced by European staff?

I said last year that Fort Hare must be to the African what Stellenbosch is to the Afrikaner. It must be the barometer of African thought. It is interesting to note that the theory of "Apartheid" which is today the dominating ideology of the State was worked out at Stellenbosch by Eiselen and his colleagues. That same Eiselen is Secretary for Native Affairs. But the important thing is that Stellenbosch is not only the expression of Afrikaner thought and feeling but is also the embodiment of their aspiration. So also must Fort Hare express and lead African thought. The College has remained mute on matters deeply affecting the Africans, because, we learn, it feared to annoy the Nationalists' Government. What the College fails to realise is that rightly or wrongly the Nationalists believe that the Fort Hare staff is predominantly U.P. So that whether we remain mute or not the government will continue to be hostile towards us. So much for the College.

Sons and daughters of Africa, harbingers of the new world-order, What can I say to you? As you see, for the first time since the practice was started, we do not have the nurses with us this momentous night - completers' Social. And the reason? The battle is on. To me the struggle at the Hospital is more than a question of discipline in inverted commas. It is a struggle between Africa and Europe, between a twentieth century desire for self-realisation and a feudal conception of authority. I know, of course, that because I express these sentiments I will be accused of indecency and will be branded an agitator. That was the reaction to my speech last year. People do not like to see the even tenor of their lives disturbed. They do not like to be made to feel guilty. They do not like to be told that what they have always believed was right is wrong. And above all they resent encroachment on what they regard as their special province. But I make no apologies. It is meet that we speak the truth before we die.

I said last year that our whole life in South Africa is politics, and that contention was severely criticised. But the truth of that statement has been proved in the course of this year. From the pulpit in the C.U. we have heard responsible preachers deplore the deterioration of race-relations in this country and suggest co-operation as a solution. Dr. Bruce Gardner and Rev. Mokitimi are but two of a large number. Professor Macmillan and a number of speakers in our Wednesday assembly, have condemned this "naughty spirit of Nationalism and non-cooperation" and have told us of the wonderful things that have been done for us, forgetting, of course, that what they say has been done for the

Africans the Africans have achieved for themselves in spite of the South African Government. The point I am trying to make is that was politics, whether we loved it or not. So that we can no longer pretend that there is a proper place and a proper occasion for politics. During the war it was clearly demonstrated that in South Africa at least, politics does' not stop this side of the grave. A number of African soldiers were buried in the same trench as European soldiers. A few days afterwards word came from the high command that the bodies of the Africans should be removed and buried in another trench. "Apartheid" must be maintained even on the road to eternity.

The trouble at the Hospital then, I say, should be viewed as part of a broad struggle and not as an isolated incident. I said last year that we should not fear victimisation. I still say so today. We must fight for freedom -for the right to call our souls our own. And we must pay the price.

The Nurses have paid the price. I am truly grieved that the careers of so many women should have been ruined in this fashion. But the price of freedom is blood, toil, and tears. This consolation I have, however, that Africa never forgets. And these martyrs of freedom, these young and budding women will be remembered and honoured when Africa comes into her own.

A word to those who are remaining behind. You have seen by now what education means to us: the identification of ourselves with the masses. Education to us means service to Africa. In whatever branch of learning you are, you are there for Africa. You have a mission; we all have a mission. A nation to build we have, a God to glorify, a contribution clear to make towards the blessing of mankind. We must be the embodiment of our people's aspirations. And all we are required to do is to show the light and the masses will find the way. Watch our movements keenly and if you see any signs of "broad mindedness" or "reasonableness" in us, or if you hear us talk of practical experience as a modifier of man's views, denounce us as traitors to Africa.

We will watch you too. We have been reminded time and again that fellows who, while at College. were radicals, as soon as they got outside became the spineless stooges and screeching megaphones of "white Herrenvolkism" or else became disgruntled and disillusioned objects of pity. My contention is: those fellows never were radicals. They were anti-White. And, as Marcus Garvey says: "You cannot grow beyond your thoughts. If your thoughts are those of a slave, you will remain a slave. If your thoughts go skin-deep, your mental development will remain skin-deep." Moreover a doctrine of hate can never take people anywhere. It is too exacting. It warps the mind. That is why we preach the doctrine of love, love for Africa. We can never do enough for Africa, nor can we love her enough. The more we do for her, the more we wish to do. And I am sure that I am speaking for the whole of young Africa when I say that we are prepared to work with any man who is fighting for the liberation of Africa WITHIN OUR LIFE-TIME.

To the completers among whom I number myself, my exaltation is: REMEMBER AFRICA! I thought last year that the position was bad. I realise it is worse this year. This is a difficult period to analyse. It is a confused period. Such as only a Mqhayi, or Bereng, or Dickens could describe. We are witnessing today the disintegration of old empires, and

the integration of new communities. We are seeing today the germination of the seeds of decay inherent in Capitalism; we discern the first shoots of the tree of Socialism. In married life we see a reversal to what the Missionaries condemned when they first got here -polygamy. But this time it is not the African who is the culprit, and the third party is not a second wife, but a mistress. We are witnesses today of cold and calculated brutality and bestiality, the desperate attempts of a dying generation to stay in power. We see also a new spirit of determination, a quiet confidence, the determination of a people to be free whatever the cost. We are seeing within our own day the second rape of Africa; a determined effort by imperialist powers to dig their claws still deeper into the flesh of the squirming victim. But this time the imperialism we see is not the naked brutal mercantile imperialism of the 17th and 18th centuries. It is a more subtle one - financial and economic imperialism under the guise of a tempting slogan, "the development of backward areas and peoples." At the same time we see the rise of uncompromising "Nationalism" in India, Malaya, Indonesia, Burma, and Africa! The old order is changing ushering in a new order. The great revolution has started and Africa is the field of operation. Allow me at this juncture to quote a few lines from the Methodist Hymn-book:

Once to every man and Nation
Comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of truth with falsehood
For the good or evil side....
Then to side with truth is noble
When we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit
And 'tis prosperous to be just.
Then it is the brave man chooses
While the coward stands aside,
Til the multitude make virtue
Of the faith they had denied.

The cowards are still standing aside. and the brave have made their choice. We have made our choice. And we have chosen African Nationalism because of its deep human significance; because of its inevitability and necessity to world progress. World civilisation will not be complete until the African has made his full contribution. And even as the dying so-called Roman civilisation received new life from the barbarians, so also will the decaying so-called western civilisation find a new and purer life from Africa.

I wish to make it clear again that we are anti-nobody. We are pro-Africa. We breathe, we dream, we live Africa; because Africa and humanity are inseparable. It is only by doing the same that the minorities in this land, the European, Coloured, and Indian, can secure mental and spiritual freedom. On the liberation of the African depends the liberation of the whole world. The future of the world lies with the oppressed and the Africans are the most oppressed people on earth. Not only in the continent of Africa but also in America and the West Indies. We have been accused of blood-thirstiness because we preach "non-collaboration." I wish to state here tonight that that is the only course open to us. History

has taught us that a group in power has never voluntarily relinquished its position. It has always been forced to do so. And we do not expect miracles to happen in Africa. It is necessary for human progress that African be fully developed and only the African can do so.

We want to build a new Africa, and only we can build it. The opponents of African Nationalism, therefore, are hampering the progress and development not only of Africa, but of the whole world. Talks of co-operation are not new to us. Every time our people have shown signs of uniting against oppression, their "friends" have come along and broken that unity. In the very earliest days it was the Missionary (we owe the bitter feelings between Fingoes and Xhosas to the Christian ideals of the Reverend Shaw). Between 1900 and 1946 it has been the professional Liberal. Today it is again the Missionary who fulfils this role. After maintaining an unbroken and monastic silence for years while Smuts was starving the people out of the Reserves, the Missionaries suddenly discover, when the Africans unite, that the Africans have not had a fair deal., In the same stride, so to speak, they form a "Union wide Association of Heads of Native Institutions" for the purpose of regimenting the thoughts of the students. A Missionary Hospital closes even though the people are dying in its neighbourhood, and there is a dearth of Nurses throughout the country. I am afraid these gentlemen are dealing with a new generation which cannot be bamboozled. "What you are thunders so loudly that what you say cannot be heard."

Let me plead with you, lovers of my Africa, to carry with you into the world the vision of a new Africa, an Africa re-born, an Africa rejuvenated, an Africa re-created, young AFRICA. We are the first glimmers of a new dawn. And if we are persecuted for our views, we should remember, as the African saying goes, that it is darkest before dawn, and that the dying beast kicks most violently when it is giving up the ghost, so-to-speak. The fellows who clamped Nehru into jail are today his servants. And we have it from the Bible that those who crucified Christ will appear before him on the judgment day. We are what we are because the God of Africa made us so. We dare not compromise, nor dare we use moderate language in the course of freedom. As Zik puts it:

"Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell a man moderately to rescue his wife from the arms of a ravisher; tell a mother to extricate gradually her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; but do not ask me to use moderation in a cause like the present."

These things shall be, says the Psalmist: Africa will be free. The wheel of progress revolves relentlessly. And all the nations of the world take their turn at the field-glass of human destiny. Africa will not retreat! Africa will not compromise! Africa will not relent! Africa will not equivocate! And She will be heard! REMEMBER AFRICA!

The P.A.C Case

- [1949](#)

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THE P. A. C. CASE

The Pan Africanist Congress has been launched, and since it is destined to play a most decisive role in the struggle for national liberation, I think it is in the interest not only of South Africa but of the world, that its Policy ,And ultimate goal should be stated authoritatively and unambiguously. I intend to do so in this article.

Let me begin by saying that we are quite aware of the fact that we are faced with an overwhelming combination of forces internally, in the person of the white ruling minority, and externally in the person of the forces of western capitalism and international imperialism.

The domestic forces of oppression have entrenched themselves over the last 300 years. Consequently, they enjoy a monopoly of economic,I political, cultural and military power. Viewed from this angle alone, the position of the ruling minority appears impregnable. But there are weaknesses in this structure.

First of all, the entire economic fabric rests on the indispensable pillars of cheap black labour.

Secondly, the white minority can maintain its continued domination only by perfecting the techniques of control in such a way as to enlist the active co-operation and goodwill of the oppressed.

These techniques include the creation of bodies calculated to maintain and develop the relations of dominating and dominated, as well as to condition the minds of the dominated for the unquestioning acceptance of their role as collaborators in the perpetuation of their own domination.

That is why we embrace the policy of non-collaboration as adumbrated on the nation-building programme of 1949.

But because the South African ruling minority is backed by the forces of international capitalism and imperialism, it becomes necessary for us to develop an international outlook.

However, the lesson of history in the last half-century shows that we can only get the moral support and sympathy of friendly peoples: they can never liberate us.

This means, among other things, that we must develop policies not merely aping this or that country, or merely fashioned to approximate to or to please certain powers or constellations of powers or peoples.

Our policies must flow from the logic of the African situation and from the fundamental long-term interests of the vast African millions.

That is why in international matters, we support Dr. Nkrumah's policy of positive neutrality, holding, with Dr. Azikiwe, that we are "independent in everything and neutral in nothing that concerns the destiny of Africa."

It is our contention that the vast illiterate and semi-literate masses of the Africans are the cornerstone, the key and very life of the struggle for democracy. From this we draw the logical conclusion that the rousing and consolidation of the masses is the primary task of liberation of Africanism holds out the hope of a genuine democracy beyond the stormy sea of struggle.

We have made our stand clear on this point, Our contention is that the Africans are the only people who, because of their material position, can be interested in the complete overhaul of the present structure of society.

We have admitted that there are Europeans who are intellectual converts to the African's cause, but because they benefit materially from the present set-up, they cannot completely identify themselves with that cause.

Thus it is, as South African history so ably illustrates, that whenever Europeans "co-operate" with African movements, they keep on demanding checks and counter-checks, guarantees and the like, with the result that they stultify and retard the movement of the Africans and the reason is, of course, that they are consciously or unconsciously protecting their sectional interests.

The only people who are interested in so-called "fronts" are those who do not believe in permanent co-operation; those who wish to advance a certain line at any given time.

We do not wish to use anybody, nor do we intend to be used by anybody. We want to make the African people conscious of the fact that they have to win their own liberation, rely on themselves to carry on a relentless and determined struggle instead of relying on court cases and negotiations on their behalf by "sympathetic" whites.

Of the Indian minority we say that they are an oppressed national group. But among them has emerged a merchant class which has become tainted with the virus of national arrogance and cultural supremacy.

The leadership of the Indian people, unfortunately, is drawn from this class which, like the "sympathetic" whites, is concerned with protecting its own sectional interests.

The only Indians who can, because of their material position, be interested in the complete overthrow of white domination and the establishment of a genuine African democracy, are the poor "coolies" of the sugar plantations of Natal.

But they have not yet produced the leadership of their own. What we wish of them is that they should reject this opportunist leadership and produce their own leadership. In short, we intend to go it alone. Should an issue arise which objectively requires that we take it up, we will, irrespective of who may also be interested in that issue.

Some quarters have already stated that the Arianists are not interested in mass demonstrations. That is true if the emphasis is placed on demonstrations. But it does not mean that we are not interested in mass action.

We are a mass organisation and we believe that every African should be involved in the struggle for national liberation.

Having said that, I should further point out that we believe in a discipline, planned struggle. Unfortunately, we have noticed throughout the entire post-1949 period, the absence on the part of those who "lead" the African people, of any capacity to learn from past struggles.

There seems to be a tendency among them to shelve unpleasant decisions in favour of those that bring immediate emotional dividends. It best they were ineffective and at the worst they revealed opportunistic tendencies.

We have said in the past and we say so now, that we are not prepared to have our people used for cannon-fodder. When we embark on a campaign it will be the leaders who will be in front. They will not remain behind while the masses rot in gaol.

Politically we stand for government of the Africans for the Africans by the Africans, with everybody who owes his loyalty only to Africa and accepts the democratic rule of an African majority, being regarded as an African.

We guarantee no minority rights because we are fighting precisely that group-exclusiveness which those who plead for minority rights would like to perpetuate.

It is our view that if we have guaranteed individual liberties, we have given the highest guarantee necessary and possible.

I have said before and I still say so now, that I see no reason why, in a free democratic Africa, a predominantly black electorate should not return a white man to Parliament, for colour will count for nothing in a free Africa.

Economically we stand for a planned economy and the most equitable distribution of wealth. I have said that to me at least, the slogan of "equal opportunities" is meaningless if it does not take equality of income as the springboard from which all will take off.

Our problem, as we see it, is to make a planned economy work within the framework of a political democracy. It has not done so in any of the countries that practice it today, but we do not believe that totalitarianism is inherent in a system of planned state economy.

Socially we stand for the full and complete development of the human personality with the active creation of conditions that will encourage the rapid disintegration of group-exclusiveness and the emergence of a united African nation, devoted to the tremendous task of developing the country and creating a distinctive African culture.

Lastly, of course, we who are Pan African in outlook, do not subscribe to the doctrine of South African exceptionalism and are committed to Pan Africanism and a Union of African States which we would like to see as a unitary, centrally controlled organic whole.

Inaugural Convention of the PAC

- [1959](#)

[Robert Sobukwe](#)

Inaugural Convention of the PAC

4-6 April 1959

"Opening Address" by R. M. Sobukwe

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Sons and Daughters of Africa!

Mr. Speaker has already informed you that we had hoped that this inaugural Convention of the Africanists would be opened by Dr. Kamuzu Hastings Banda, failing which, by Mr. Kenneth Kaunda of the Zambia African National Congress in Northern Rhodesia. Both have been unable to attend our convention, for both are now, in the language of the colonialists, "detained" in some concentration camps because they dared to demand the right of self-determination for the indigenous African people of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. The honourable task of opening this conference has, therefore, fallen to me, an Africanist, and I wish to thank the Central Committee for the honour. I am particularly grateful for the opportunity this offers me to treat briefly of certain issues relevant to our struggle which, though adequately treated in the documents that will be considered by this Convention, require to be presented to such a gathering.

I hope, then, Mr. Speaker, in the course of my address, to answer broadly questions pertaining to our stand in contemporary international politics, our relation to the states of Afrika, both independent and dependent, our attitude to the entire nationalist movement in Afrika, our stand on the question of Race in general and the so-called racial question in South Africa. Finally, I hope to outline briefly our ultimate objectives.

INTERNATIONAL SCENE:

We are living today, Sons and Daughters of the Soil, fighters in the cause of African freedom, we are living today in an era that is pregnant with untold possibilities for both good and evil. In the course of the past two years we have seen man breaking assunder,

with dramatic suddenness, the chains that have bound his mind, solving problems which for ages it has been regarded as sacrilege even to attempt to solve. The tremendous, epoch-making scientific achievements in the exploration of space, with man-made satellites orbiting the earth, the new and interesting discoveries in the Geophysical Year, the production of rust-resistant strains of wheat in the field of agriculture, the amazing discoveries in the fields of medicine, chemistry and physics-all these, mean that man is well on the way to establishing absolute control over that environment.

However, in spite of all these rapid advances in the material and physical world, man appears to be either unwilling or unable to solve the problem of social relations between man and man. Because of this failure on the part of man, we see the world split today into two large hostile blocks, the so-called Capitalist and Socialist blocks represented by the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union respectively. These two blocks are engaged in terrible competition, use tough language and tactics, employ brinkmanship stunts which have the whole world heading for a nervous breakdown. They each are armed with terrible weapons of destruction and continue to spend millions of pounds in the production of more and more of these weapons. In spite of all the diplomatic talk of co-existence, these blocks each behave as though they did not believe that co-existence was possible.

AFRIKA'S POSITION.

The question then arises, where does Afrika fit into this picture and where, particularly, do we African nationalists, we Africanists in South Afrika, fit in?

There is no doubt that with the liquidation of Western imperialism and colonialism in Asia, the Capitalist market has shrunk considerably. As a result, Afrika has become the happy-hunting ground of adventuristic capital. There is again a scramble for Afrika and both the Soviet Union and the United States of America are trying to win the loyalty of the African States. Afrika is being wooed with more ardour than she has ever been. There is a lot of flirting going on, of course, some Africans [are] flirting with the Soviet camp, and others with the American camp. In some cases the courtship has reached a stage where the parties are going out together; and they probably hold hands in the dark but nowhere has it yet reached a stage where the parties can kiss in public without blushing.

This wooing occurs at a time when the whole continent of Afrika is in labour, suffering the pangs of a new birth and everybody is looking anxiously and expectantly towards Afrika to see, as our people so aptly put it *ukuthi iyozala nkomoni* (what creature will come forth). We are being wooed internationally at a time when in South Africa the naked forces of savage Herrenvolkism are running riot; when a determined effort is being made to annihilate the African people through systematic starvation; at a time when brutal attempts are being made to retard, dwarf and stunt the mental development of a whole people through organised "miseducation" ; at a time when thousands of our people roam the streets in search of work and are being told by the foreign ruler to go back to a "home" which he has assigned them, whether that means the break up of their families or not; at a time when the distinctive badge of slavery and humiliation, the "dom pass" is being extended from the African male dog to the African female bitch. It is at this time,

when fascist tyranny has reached its zenith in South Afrika, that Afrika's loyalty is being competed for. And the question is, what is our answer?

Our answer, Mr. Speaker and children of the Soil, has been given by the African leaders of the continent. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah has repeatedly stated that in international affairs, Afrika wishes to pursue a policy of positive neutrality, allying herself to neither of the existing blocs but, in the words of Dr. Nnandi Azikiwe of Nigeria, remaining "independent in all things but neutral in none that affect the destiny of Afrika". Mr. Tom Mboya of Kenya has expressed himself more forthrightly, declaring that it is not the intention of African states to change one master (western imperialism) for another (Soviet hegemony).

We endorse the views of the African leaders on this point. But we must point out that we are not blind to the fact that the countries-which pursue a policy of planned state economy-have outstripped, in industrial development, those that follow the path of private enterprise. Today, China is industrially far ahead of India. Unfortunately, however, this rapid industrial development has been accompanied in all cases by a rigid totalitarianism notwithstanding Mao Tse Tung's "Hundred Flowers" announcement.* Africanists reject totalitarianism in any form and accept political democracy as understood in the west. We also reject the economic exploitation of the many for the benefit of a few. We accept as policy the equitable distribution of wealth aiming, as far as I am concerned, to equality of income which to me is the only basis on which the slogan of "equal opportunities" can be founded.

Borrowing then the best from the East and the best from the West we nonetheless retain and maintain our distinctive personality and refuse to be the satraps or stooges of either power block.

RELATION TO STATES IN AFRIKA:

Our relation to the States in Afrika may be stated precisely and briefly by quoting from George Padmore's book, 'Pan Africanism or Communism'.

Discussing the future of Afrika, Padmore observes that "there is a growing feeling among politically conscious Africans throughout the continent that their destiny is one, that what happens in one part of Afrika to Africans must affect Africans living in other parts".

We honour Ghana as the first independent state in modern Afrika which, under the courageous nationalist leadership of Dr. Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party, has actively interested itself in the liberation of the whole continent from White domination, and has held out the vision of a democratic United States of Afrika. We regard it as the sacred duty of every African state to strive ceaselessly and energetically for the creation of a United States of Afrika, stretching from Cape to Cairo, Morocco to Madagascar.

The days of small, independent countries are gone. Today we have, on the one hand, great powerful countries of the world: America and Russia cover huge tracts of land

territorially and number hundreds of millions in population. On the other hand the small weak independent countries of Europe are beginning to realise that for their own survival they have to form military and economic federations, hence NATO and the European market.

Beside the sense of a common historical fate that we share with the other countries of Afrika, it is imperative, for purely practical reasons that the whole of Afrika be united into a single unit, centrally controlled. Only in that way can we solve the immense problems that face the continent.

NATIONAL MOVEMENTS IN AFRIKA:

It is for the reasons stated above that we admire, bless and identify ourselves with the entire nationalist movements in Afrika. They are the core, the basic units, the individual cells of that large organism envisaged, namely, the United States of Afrika: a union of free, sovereign independent democratic states of Afrika.

For the lasting peace of Afrika and the solution of the economic, social and political problems of the continent, there needs must be a democratic principle. This means that White supremacy, under whatever guise it manifests itself, must be destroyed. And that is what the nationalists on the continent are setting out to do. They all are agreed that the African majority must rule. In the African context, it is the overwhelming African majority that will mould and shape the content of democracy. Allow me to quote Dr. Dubois, the father of Pan Africanism: "Most men in the world", writes Dubois, "are coloured. A belief in humanity means a belief in coloured men. The future of the world will, in all reasonable possibility, be what coloured men make it". As for the world, so for Afrika. The future of Africa will be what Africans make it.

THE RACE QUESTION:

And now for the thorny questions of race. I do not wish to give a lengthy and learned dissertation on Race. Suffice it to say that even those scientists who do recognise the existence of separate races, have to admit that there are border line cases which will not fit into any of the three Races of mankind.

All scientists agree that all men can trace their ancestry back to the first Homo Sapiens. that man is distinguished from other mammals and also from earlier types of man by the nature of his intelligence. The structure of the body of man provides evidence to prove the biological unity of the human species. All scientists agree that there is no "race" that is superior to another, and there is no "race" that is inferior to others.

The Africanists take the view that there is only one race to which we all belong, and that is the human race. In our- vocabulary therefore, the word 'race' as applied to man, has no plural form. We do, however, admit the existence of observable physical differences between various groups of people, but these differences are the result of a number of factors. chief among which has been geographical isolation.

In Afrika the myth of race has been propounded and propagated by the imperialists and colonialists from Europe, in order to facilitate and justify their inhuman exploitation of the indigenous people of the land. It is from this myth of race with its attendant claims of cultural superiority that the doctrine of white supremacy stems. Thus it is that an ex-engine driver can think of himself as fully qualified to be the head of the government of an African state, but refuse to believe that a highly educated black doctor, more familiar with Western culture than the White premier is, cannot even run a municipal council. I do not wish to belabour this point. Time is precious. Let me close discussion of this topic by declaring, on behalf of the Africanists, that with UNESCO we hold that "every man is his brother's keeper. For every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main, because he is involved in mankind".

IN SOUTH AFRIKA:

In South Africa we recognise the existence of national groups which are the result of geographical origin within a certain area as well as a shared historical experience of these groups. The Europeans are a foreign minority group which has exclusive control of political, economic, social and military power. It is the dominant group. It is the exploiting group, responsible for the pernicious doctrine of White Supremacy which has resulted in the humiliation and degradation of the indigenous African people. It is this group which has dispossessed the African people of their land and with arrogant conceit has set itself up as the "guardians", the "trustees" of the Africans. It is this group which conceives of the African people as a child nation, composed of Boys and Girls, ranging in age from 120 years to one day. It is this group which, after 300 years, can still state with brazen effrontery that the Native, the Bantu, the Kafir is still backward and savage etc. But they still want to remain "guardians", "trustees", and what have you, of the African people. In short, it is this group which has mismanaged affairs in South Africa just as their kith and kin are mismanaging affairs in Europe. It is from this group that the most rabid race baiters and agitators come. It is members of this group who, whenever they meet in their Parliament, say things which agitate the hearts of millions of peace-loving Africans. This is the group which turns out thousands of experts on that new South African Science-the Native mind.

Then there is the Indian foreign minority group. This group came to this country not as imperialists or colonialists, but as indentured labourers. In the South African set-up of today, this group is an oppressed minority. But there are some members of this group, the merchant class in particular, who have become tainted with the virus of cultural supremacy and national arrogance. This class identifies itself by and large with the oppressor but, significantly, this is the group which provides the political leadership of the Indian people in South Africa. And all that the politics of this class have meant up to now is preservation and defence of the sectional interests of the Indian merchant class. The down-trodden, poor "stinking coolies" of Natal who, alone, as a result of the pressure of material conditions, can identify themselves with the indigenous African majority in the struggle to overthrow White supremacy, have not yet produced their leadership. We hope they will do so soon.

The Africans constitute the indigenous group and form the majority of the population. They are the most ruthlessly exploited and are subjected to humiliation, degradation and insult.

Now it is our contention that true democracy can be established in South Africa and on the continent as a whole, only when White supremacy has been destroyed. And the illiterate and semi-literate African masses constitute the key and centre and content of any struggle for true democracy in South Africa. And the African people can be organised only under the banner of African nationalism in an All-African Organisation where they will by themselves formulate policies and programmes and decide on the methods of struggle without interference from either so-called left-wing or right-wing groups of the minorities who arrogantly appropriate to themselves the right to plan and think for the Africans.

We wish to emphasise that the freedom of the African means the freedom of all in South Africa, the European included, because only the African can guarantee the establishment of a genuine democracy in which all men will be citizens of a common state and will live and be governed as individuals and not as distinctive sectional groups.

OUR ULTIMATE GOALS:

In conclusion, I wish to state that the Africanists do not at all subscribe to the fashionable doctrine of South African exceptionalism. Our contention is that South Africa is an integral part of the indivisible whole that is Afrika. She cannot solve her problems in isolation from and with utter disregard of the rest of the continent.

It is precisely for that reason that we reject both apartheid and so-called multi-racialism as solutions of our socio-economic problems. Apart from the number of reasons and arguments that can be advanced against apartheid, we take our stand on the principle that Afrika is one and desires to be one and nobody, I repeat, nobody has the right to balkanise our land.

Against multi-racialism we have this objection, that the history of South Africa has fostered group prejudices and antagonisms, and if we have to maintain the same group exclusiveness, parading under the term of multi-racialism, we shall be transporting to the new Afrika these very antagonisms and conflicts. Further, multi-racialism is in fact a pandering to European bigotry and arrogance. It is a method of safeguarding white interests, implying as it does, proportional representation irrespective of population figures. In that sense it is a complete negation of democracy. To us the term "multi-racialism" implies that there are such basic insuperable differences between the various national groups here that the best course is to keep them permanently distinctive in a kind of democratic apartheid. That to us is racialism multiplied, which probably is what the term truly connotes.

We aim, politically, at government of the Africans by the Africans, for the Africans, with everybody who owes his only loyalty to Afrika and who is prepared to accept the

democratic rule of an African majority being regarded as an African. We guarantee no minority rights, because we think in terms of individuals, not groups.

Economically we aim at the rapid extension of industrial development in order to alleviate pressure on the land, which is what progress means in terms of modern society. We stand committed to a policy guaranteeing the most equitable distribution of wealth.

Socially we aim at the full development of the human personality and a ruthless uprooting and outlawing of all forms or manifestations of the racial myth. To sum it up we stand for an Africanist Socialist Democracy.

Here is a tree rooted in African soil, nourished with waters from the rivers of Afrika. Come and sit under its shade and become, with us, the leaves of the same branch and the branches of the same tree.

Sons and Daughters of Africa, I declare this inaugural convention of the Africanists open!
IZWE LETHU!!

Footnote:

*According to Peter ' Molotsi, this sentence reflected the bias about China that was evident in the South African press at the time. After the experience of direct dealings with the Chinese, who have given support to the PAC since 1961, PAC leaders abroad revised their judgment. The sentence was deleted when the address was reprinted in March 1965 in The Basic Documents of the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa, issued by Secretary, Publicity and Information, Pan Africanist Congress of S.A. (Lusaka. Zambia).

The State of the Nation

- [1959](#)

[Robert Sobukwe](#)

THE STATE OF THE NATION

2 August 1959

Mr. Speaker Sir, Sons and Daughters of Afrika: Just over three months ago, on the 6th April, we met in the Communal Hall in Orland, Johannesburg, to launch the ship of freedom - the Pan Africanist Congress. On that historic day, the African people declared total war against white domination, not only in South Afrika but throughout the continent. On that day there entered into the maelstrom of South African politics an organization dedicated to the cause of African emancipation and independence; an organization committed to the overthrow of white supremacy and the establishment of an Africanist Socialist Democracy.

OPPRESSED VERSUS OPPRESSOR

It is just over three months that the Pan Africanist Congress has been born, but within that short space of time she has successfully pinpointed the basic assumptions in our struggle, namely that:

1. The illiterate and semi-literate masses of the African people are the key, the core and cornerstone of the struggle for democracy in this country.
2. African nationalism is the only liberatory creed that can weld these masses who are members of heterogeneous tribes in a solid, disciplined and united fighting force; provide them with a loyalty higher than that of the tribe, and give formal expression to their desire to be a nation.
3. The struggle in South Africa is part of the greater struggle throughout the Continent for the restoration by the African people of the effective control of their land. The ultimate goal of our struggle, therefore, is the formation of a United States of Africa.

These pronouncements have struck a responsive chord in the hearts of the Sons and Daughters of the land, and awakened the imagination of the youth of our land while giving hope to the aged who for years have lived in the trough of despair. Indeed, the

aged can now truly say: "Lord now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy will, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

The issues are clear-cut. The Pan Africanist Congress has done away with equivocation and clever talk. The decks are cleared, and in the arena of South African politics there are today only two adversaries: the oppressor and the oppressed, the master and the slave. We are on the eve of a continental showdown between the forces of evil and the forces of righteousness; the champions of oppression and the champions of freedom. Realising this, the oppressor is panic-stricken and is making feverish preparations for a last-ditch stand in defence of white supremacy. On the other hand, the forces of freedom are gathering strength from day to day, disciplining, nerving and steeling themselves for the imminent struggle.

Africa for the Africans:

Once again, as in 1949, the African people are waiting expectantly and eagerly the emergence of a bold and courageous programme from the P. A. C. - an organisation that has its roots among the masses; and whose leadership comes from their loins. Not only has P. A. C. succeeded in raising the eyes of our people above the dust of immediate conflict to the genuine democracy that lies beyond the stormy sea of struggle, but it has also imparted a meaning and a purpose to their struggle. The African people, therefore, are awake! They are waiting; waiting eagerly and expectantly; waiting for the call; the call to battle - to battle for the reconquest of the Continent of Africa which for over 300 years has been the prostitute of the philanderers and rakes of western capitalism. "Mayibuye iAfrika," that is the cry- ringing throughout the Continent. Africa for the Africans! Izwe lethu - i Africa! Those are the words that spell the doom of white supremacy in Africa.

Position in the Continent:

Throughout the continent of Africa the struggle is being relentlessly waged against the historical anachronisms of imperialism, colonialism and white supremacy. Precious African blood is flowing in Algeria where the Sons and Daughters of Africa, under the courageous leadership of Ferhat Abbas of the government of Free Algeria, are paying the supreme sacrifice for the recovery of the destroyed shrines.

Greater and greater efforts are being made by the independent countries of Africa to mould, shape and assert the African personality, and to lay the foundations for a United States of Africa. Just recently the heads of the States of Ghana, Guinea and Liberia met. in conference to discuss methods of furthering the cause of Pan Africanism.

In Tanganyika, Nyerere is fighting for the revision of the multi-racial constitution imposed on the African people by imperialist Britain, and is pressing for the practical application of the democratic principle of "one man one vote." In Uganda, as our Bulletin stated, "British imperialism is locked in mortal combat with African nationalism." In Central Africa tension is high and there is clear evidence that in the struggle between

Kamuzu Banda and Roy Welensky, Banda will emerge triumphant. In fact, the signs are that not only Nyasaland but Northern Rhodesia as well, will secede from the unholy federation of Welensky and Lennox-Boyd.

South Africa:

Throughout Africa, then, the forces of white supremacy are in retreat before the irresistible march of African nationalism. This is the era of African emancipation. Africa holds the stage today. For the first time, positive action is being taken by the world against the inhuman policies of South Africa's white, foreign minority governments. d the countries that have taken the lead in this world-wide boycott of South African goods are the countries of Africa and those governed by people of African descent. And in South Africa, what is the position? dell you all know, that there has been talk from certain quarters of "hitting the nationalists in the stomach." We would have used the word "belly," but responsible, moderate leaders, you see, do not use such ugly words! There was such talk then, and lists were prepared. But immediately one so-called "nationalist concern" made certain sectional trade union concessions, it was no longer a nationalist controlled firm, and its products were no longer nationalist products. The old, meaningless stunts are still being used by certain quarters. But there is the boycott of beerhalls launched by the courageous women of Durban - a movement originating from the masses and controlled by them. Nobody doubts its success. The evidence is there for all to see. If their "friends" do not interfere with the Durban women they Kill undoubtedly achieve their goal - of acquiring for the Africans of Durban the status of human beings. There is also the potato boycott which, while commanding the active support of all Africans because of the atrocious evil perpetrated by white farmers against African convict labourers, has unfortunately been handled by the quarters aforementioned. The result has been that those quarters, which fear the militancy of the African people more than they loathe oppression, are hoping and praying that the boycott will fizzle out before they are compelled to call it off.

What of the Pan Africanist Congress?

We are met here today to commemorate our National Heroes' Day. We are, today, going down the corridor of time and renewing our acquaintance with the heroes of Africa's past - those men and women who nourished the tree of African freedom and independence with their blood; those great Sons and Daughters of Africa who died in order that we may be free in the land of our birth. ode are met here, today, to rededicate our lives to the cause of Africa, to establish contact, beyond the grave, with the great African heroes and to assure them that their struggle was not in vain. We are met here, Sons and Daughters of our beloved land, to drink from the fountain of African achievement, to remember the men and women who begot us, to remind ourselves of where we come from and to restate our goals. We are here to draw inspiration from the heroes of Thaba Bosiu, Isandlwana, aandile's Kop, Keiskammahoek and numerous other battlefields where our forefathers fell before the bullets of the foreign invader. We are here to draw inspiration from the Sons and Daughters of Afrika, to take a trowel in our right hand and a shield and sword in our left, to commence the tremendous task of rebuilding the walls of Africa!

We are gathered here, today, to reiterate our resolve to declare total war against the demigod of white supremacy. We are here to say Africa must be free and will be free by 1963. We are here to serve an ultimatum on the forces of oppression. We are here to make an appeal to African intellectuals and businessmen, African urban and rural proletariat to join forces in a determined, ruthless, and relentless war against white supremacy. We say to waverers and fence-sitters CHOOSE NOW, tomorrow may be too late. Choose now, because very soon we shall be saying with biblical simplicity, that He who is not with Us is against Us!

Pan Africanist Congress Programme:

The decks are cleared! The battle must be joined. Therefore, Sons and Daughters of the Soil, in the name of the National Working Committee, of the Pan Africanist Congress, I announce the STATUS CAMPAIGN - a campaign which once launched, will not be called off, until our goal is achieved. This is an unfolding and expanding campaign, involving the political, economic and social status of the African. It is all-embracing and multi-frontal, but is itself part of our unfolding and expanding, dynamic nation-building programme. Details of the campaign have already been circulated to all regions, with specific instructions that branches be encouraged to discuss the campaign freely and frankly. I shall, therefore, not outline the campaign here, but shall deal instead with the objectives of this campaign.

Mental Revolution:

We have stated in the past, in all our documents, that whatever campaign is launched by any liberatory movement worth the name, must at all times be related to the ultimate objectives and must assist in building the fighting capacity of the masses.

Now for over three hundred years, the white foreign ruling minority has used its power to inculcate in the African a feeling of inferiority. This group has educated the African to accept the status quo of white supremacy and Black inferiority as normal.

It is our task, to exercise this slave mentality, and to impart to the African masses that sense of self-reliance which will make them choose "to starve in freedom rather than have plenty in bondage;" the self-reliance that will make them prefer self-government to the good government preferred by the A. N. C.'s leader.

It must be clearly understood that we are not begging the foreign minorities to treat our people courteously. We are calling on our people to assert their personality. We are reminding our people that they are men and women with children of their own and homes of their own, and that just as much as they resent being called "kwedini" or "mfana" or "moshemane" by us - which is what "boy" means - they must equally resent such terms of address by the foreigner. We are not hoping for a change of heart on the part of the Christian oppressor. We are reminding our people that acceptance of any indignity, any insult, any humiliation, is acceptance of inferiority. They must first think of themselves as men and women before they can demand to be treated as such. The campaign will free

the mind of the African - and once the mind is free, the body will soon be free. Once white supremacy has become mentally untenable to our people, it will become physically untenable too- and will go.

I am absolutely certain that once the STATUS CAMPAIGN is launched, the masses will themselves come forward with suggestions for the extension of the area of assault - and once that happens, the twilight of white supremacy and the dawn of African independence in this part of the continent, will have set in.

Soft Campaign?

Certain quarters have accused us of being concerned more with our status, with being addressed as "Sirs" and "Maam" than with the economic plight of the African people. Our reply is that such accusations can come only from those who think of the African as an economic animal - a thing to be fed - and not as a human being. It is only those who have been herrenvolkenised by their herrenvolk environment, people who have no idea whatsoever of the African personality, who can expect us to be lick-spitties in order to get more crumbs from the oppressors' table.

Others, again, have said that we have chosen a soft campaign without any risks, because we fear to challenge apartheid totally. Let it be clear that we are not fighting just apartheid. We are fighting the whole concept of white supremacy. And we are fully aware of the nature and size of our task. And we will not shirk it. Right from the beginning of the campaign, the leaders will be in front. They will picket the concerns that are to be boycotted. And they will do so under our slogan of "no bail, no defence, no fine." And that slogan will not be changed until we land on the shores of freedom and independence.

Clarion Call:

We therefore call, first of all, on the members of PAC, who are the hard core, the advance guards, that must lead the struggle, and on the African people in general. All of them, without exception must wait for the call. They will be kept informed of every step we take. And when the call comes, we expect them to respond like a disciplined people. There is plenty of suffering ahead. The oppressor will not take this lying down. But we are ready. We will not go back. Come what may. This campaign will be maintained, unfolded and expanded until Masiza's question is answered: "Koda kube nini Nkosi zonk'izizwe zisinyasha phantsi kweenyawo?" (Until when, oh Lord, will all nations trample us under foot?) - until we can answer "No more." We will go on, Sons and Daughters of Africa, until in every person, in every bunk in the compounds, in every hut in the deserted villages, in every valley and on every hilltop, the cry of African freedom and independence is heard. We will continue until we walk the streets of our land as free men and free women, our heads held high. We will go on until the day dawns when every person who is in Africa will be an African, and a man's colour will be as irrelevant as is the shape of his ears. We will go on, steadfastly, relentlessly and determinedly until the cry of "Africa for African, the Africans for humanity and humanity for God" becomes a

reality; until government of the Africans by the Africans for the Africans is a fait accompli.

We will not look back; we will not deviate. And as the heat of oppression mounts we shall become purer and purer, leaving all the dross of racialism and similar evils behind, to emerge as a people mentally and physically disciplined, appreciative of the fact that;

There is only one man in all the world, and his name is All men.

There is only one woman in all the world, And her name is All women!

Sons and Daughters of Africa, we are standing on the threshold of a historic era. We are about to witness momentous events. We are blazing a new trail and we invite you to be, with us, creators of history. Join us in the march to freedom. March with us to independence. To independence now. Tomorrow the United States of Africa. IZWE LETHU!

Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe's banning order, 1974

TO: ROBERT MANGALISO SOBUKWE

6 NALEDI STREET

GALESHEWE

KIMBERLEY

NOTICE IN TERMS OF SECTION 9(1) OF THE SUPPRESSION OF COMMUNISM
ACT, 1950 (ACT 44 OF 1950)

WHEREAS I, JAMES THOMAS KRUGER, Minister of Justice, am satisfied that you engage in activities which are furthering or are calculated to further the achievement of the objects of communism, I hereby, in terms of section 9(1) of the Suppression of Communism Act, 1950, prohibit you for a period commencing on 31 May 1974, and expiring on 31 May 1979, from attending within the Republic of South Africa or the territory of South-West Africa-

(1) any gathering contemplated in paragraph (a) of the said section 9(1); or

(2) any gathering contemplated in paragraph (b) of the said section 9(1), of the nature, class or kind set out below:

- a. Any social gathering, that is to say, any gathering at which the persons present also have social intercourse with one another;
- b. any political gathering, that is to say, any gathering at which any form of State or any principle or policy of the Government of a State is propagated, defended, attacked, criticised or discussed;
- c. any gathering of pupils or students assembled for the purpose of being instructed, trained or addressed by you.

Given under my hand at Pretoria this 14th day of May 1974.

Signed by J.T. Kruger

NOTE:

The Magistrate, Kimberley, has in terms of section 9(1) of the above mentioned Act been empowered to authorise exceptions to the prohibitions contained in this notice.

Sobukwe biography

- [Biography](#)

[Robert Sobukwe](#)

History: Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe

5 December 1924 - 27 February 1978

Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe died in the Kimberley General Hospital between midnight and 01 h00 on February 27 1978, aged 54 years. His wife, Veronica (Zodwa Mathe), was by his side when he died. His four children, Miliswa (23), Dinilizwe (22), Dedaniziziwe (19), and Dalindjebo (18), were in America with their legal guardian, Andrew Young.

Sobukwe was born in Graaf Reinet in 1924, the son of poor Xhosa parents and the youngest of seven children of Hubert Sobukwe and Angelina Gaziys. He was educated at a mission school and obtained a first class matriculation pass. He enrolled at Fort Hare University with the assistance of two small bursaries and financial assistance from the Principal of Healdtown in Fort Beaufort, and while reading for his BA degree, made his first impact on the political scene. He was elected SRC President and Secretary-General of the ANC Youth League. After graduation he obtained a diploma in teaching and became a teacher at Standerton but was dismissed after becoming a passive resister in the defiance campaign of 1952. Soon after he accepted a post at Wits University in the languages department.

He identified with the Africanists within the ANC and in 1957 left the ANC to become Editor of The Africanist. A year later he and others broke away from the ANC and formed the PAC. The Pan African Congress held its first conference in 1959 where he was elected President. The aim of that first congress was to get courteous treatment for Africans in shops.

As the President of the banned Pan African Congress (PAC), he was the first person against whom action was taken in terms of the General Laws Amendment Act and he served a three-year prison sentence for leading the pass law demonstration on 21 March 1960 (Sharpeville Day). He had initiated the campaign by handing his pass to the police in Orlando and inviting arrest. On his release from that sentence - on 3 May 1963 - he was immediately re-arrested and sent to the infamous Robben Island where he spent six years in detention without trial. This law, which empowered the government to continue the detention of anyone found guilty of incitement, became known as the "Sobukwe clause".

He was kept in solitary confinement but permitted certain privileges including books, newspapers and his own clothes. (Between 1963 and his release cost the State some R70 000 to keep him prisoner).

In 1969 he was released from prison but sent to Kimberley to live in a restricted zone comprising the magisterial area, moving into a house in Naledi Street, Galeshewe. He was to stay home at night and in the magisterial district during the day. The reason he had been sent to Kimberley to live was so that he "should not live where he can with reasonable ease resume subversive activities." Another reason given was that there should be an opportunity for him to live and work and lead as normal a life in so far as this was compatible with the safety of the state.

He turned down an offer of a job in the Bantu Administration Department in Kimberley but became articled to an attorney in Galeshewe. As he already had three degrees and various other diplomas he was only required to serve three years of article for his Lib degree. He was refused permission to leave the country in 1970 in order to attend Wisconsin University in the USA where he would have studied for a PhD in African Linguistics.

Professor Christian Barnard, the famous heart surgeon, had operated on him in September 1977 at Groote Schuur for a malignancy on the bronchus (adeno carcinoma), also known as lung cancer. Barnard had requested that the apartheid authorities release him from his banning order to allow him grace to live his last few months with his family but it was refused. It was in fact Chris Barnard who flew out Sobukwe's three children to attend the funeral.

Sobukwe returned to Kimberley on 15 November 1977 but was re-admitted to Groote Schuur on 5 January 1978. He again returned to Kimberley on 29 January when he was described as being seriously ill and was admitted to the Kimberley Hospital on 9 February.

The Kimberley Memorial service for Sobukwe was held at the Odeon Cinema and was organized by the Labour Party. The Bishop of Kimberley and Kuruman, the Right Reverend Graham Chadwick conducted the service.

He was buried in Graaf Reinet on 11 March 1978.

He was an impressive personality who had considerable political influence on South African politics. His philosophy of Black Awareness was one of, if not the, major source of inspiration for the Black Consciousness Movement of Steve Biko. He had met Biko when attending his mother's funeral in Umtata.

Helen Suzman: "Mr Sobukwe would have been an agent for peaceful change if he had been used as a channel for communicating between the Government and the large number of black people who had confidence in him. "