

VERWOERD FEARS THIS MANSOBUKWE OF AZANIA

Yesterday, the President of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, MANGALISO SOBUKWE, began his seventh year in Verwoerd's jails and his fourth year of detention "this side of eternity", on Robben Island.

Sobukwe was originally charged and imprisoned for three years for having led the P.A.C. campaign of positive action against the pass laws on March 21, 1960, the red-letter day of the South African Revolution. He was due for release on May 3, 1963. But the Verwoerd white minority settler government inserted, with bewildering rapidity, a special clause in their fascist law to legalise his detention for as long as he continues to hold his revolutionary views. This clause is renewable annually by way of parliamentary review.

When he piloted the clause through all its stages in the House of Assembly, Balthasar Vorster, Verwoerd's Minister of Justice, alarmed the frightened white settler members of Parliament by telling them that the man they were dealing with had a magnetic personality, good organising ability and a divine sense of mission. Over the years, as his detention comes up for review, the settler parliament has to be given a further dose to justify Sobukwe's continued detention and to soothe their guilty consciences. With due respect, what they have said about our leader is perfectly correct. But we must point out that the possession of these qualities is not a Sobukwe monopoly. Within South Africa, we probably have many individuals who have, to a lesser or greater degree, these very qualities. To our best knowledge, none of them is in detention simply for their dynamism.

The reason, therefore, for Sobukwe's indefinite detention, is that he is leader of the Pan Africanist Congress, whose policies Sobukwe has propounded unambiguously, unequivocally and authoritatively. The basic fact of the political situation in that country, is that in the struggle of the African people for national liberation all avenues of peaceful negotiation have been exhausted, and those of forceful persuasion have been outlawed by the Verwoerd regime. In the circumstances, the use of physical force has become the only choice left to those who do not fear to use or to face it. As we stated in these columns in our number five issue, the Pan Africanist Congress is at the helm of those who are committed to, and have accepted that last challenge as a weapon of struggle for the achievement of its political tasks. This is what the African people have been clamouring for over the centuries. But in the last fifty years, there has been no leader with guts enough to accede to the demands of the people, until the advent of Sobukwe at the helm of the people's struggle. At the beginning of 1960, Sobukwe said that the people were ready to die for their freedom, but were not ready to kill for it yet. Now that time has arrived, in consequence thereof, Sobukwe stands unrivalled and unchallenged as leader of the African people of South Africa, who have fully endorsed the policies, programmes and ultimate objectives of the Pan Africanist Congress, of which Sobukwe is head. That is what Verwoerd fears.

Sobukwe's leadership is forthright and dynamic. It is unwavering. He has told his people to prepare themselves to wage a determined, ruthless, relentless and total war against the demigod of white supremacy. He has warned them of the suffering ahead. He has assured them that he himself will be at the forefront of any campaign that is to be undertaken in the course of liberation, and that he will not ask them to do anything that he is himself unwilling to do. Sobukwe has pointed out to his people that he is aware of the size and nature of the task before us all, and that he will not look back, he will not go back, he will not deviate, come what may. The African people believe him. The white settler regime believes him. That is why the latter has separated the leader from his Party and his people. Verwoerd really fears this man, despite his granite appearance, which is only a protective shell in which he is hiding his jitters. What manner of man is Mangaliso Sobukwe?

SOOTHESAYER

That is a long task. We have tried over the years to tell the world about Sobukwe's political leadership. Perhaps on this occasion we should take a glimpse into his life as a man, and perhaps we should confine ourselves to the years of his sojourn in Verwoerd's captivity. Addressing a close friend who is also the wife of one of his political colleagues, soon after he arrived on Robben Island, he wrote:-

✓ I thank you.....

/he wrote:-.....

Thank you indeed for your letter. It was most welcome. You can never regale us enough with the pans, pins and table gossip. That is our dish ! That is what we want to hear, tales about little tears from little eyes, little hands in faith held out, and large hearts brimming with love".

Mangaliso Sobukwe had looked forward to his release after duly serving three years imprisonment. But that was not to be, and he goes on:

".....we know that you people have mislead us; so have we, you; We have discussed you girls a lot (most favourably I assure you) and we had taken some strong new year resolutions. We were going to help with the kids, the cleaning up, the garden and what have you. We were going to be general handymen. In fact we were going to make ourselves so indispensable that you should never have had occasion to entertain the thought that life had been sweeter with us away. We had really built you up into goddesses, almost running the risk of worshipping the creature and not the Creator". What man indeed does not entertain such ideas when he is away from his loved ones?

RESPECT FOR AFRICAN WOMANHOOD

Sobukwe is a staunch believer in observing proper respect for African womanhood. In one of his letters he says:-

"You girls have received a lot of battering, no wonder you sometimes think the world is upside-down. But then it is only by going through the furnace that metal is purified and drained of dross. You girls know yourselves better now than you have done before. You know the ore of which both you and your husbands are made. We respect African womanhood because we respect you girls. And love that is impregnated with respect is the central pillar of a healthy and happy married life".

OF SUFFERING

The writings of Sobukwe are a study in integrity, ingenuity and warm humour. In a later letter he writes:-

"We had our fair share of the drought, as a result of which I had to surrender my flowers and vegetables to the elements. But the heat has never been unbearable. As you may observe, I am near the sea. I could live right on its very edges and never feel uncomfortable. I love everything about the sea—its small and controlled power, its wide expanse and the lovely thoughts it has suggested to poets".

That indeed is his attitude towards his surroundings on Robben Island. He continues in another vein :-

"Thank you for the extract from JK's book. I need not remind you that I am extremely proud of our history and people. But it is and has always been my policy to be self-critical. We must avoid developing a herrenfolkmentality, and must learn to compare our experiences with those of others and see whether they are unique, and to what extent they are. And you shall find that your lot, both as an individual and as a person, have at one time or another, been the lot of others in the long, bleak and cruel history of the human race. Once you realise that the corridor of history is dotted with movements to carnage; subjugation, sacrifice, suffering and triumphant courage; signage, deviations, progress and repression even, you ask yourself: who am I that I should be spared the sufferings of the human race? If we are grateful for the achievements of the family of man, we must remember the cost as well. Somebody has said, 'The past and the present have to be seen in ever active, ever changing perspective' and that 'tradition only becomes meaningful when it is seen as a starting point. When it becomes an end in itself, it is negative and destroying'. It is for that reason that, although I admire the beauty of language in 'THE SOLITUDE OF ALEXANDER SELSKIRK', I do not think his mood should be ours. One thing we have to avoid, ALWAYS, is self-pity. As members of the human race, we are sons and daughters of God. Remember that always, and keep your head high". He concludes by saying, "I love writing to you, because you provide me with the opportunity to mount the pulpit and become, once again, an imaginative Methodist lay-preacher. And as a Methodist by up-bringing, you know how imaginative these fellows can be !/)

ON CHRISTMAS

/these fellows can be";

ON CHRISTMAS

"I am writing this letter a few days before Christmas", Sobukwe writes. "The day has become one of superficial joy and sentimental christian love, which evaporates like ether, immediately the day is over. I know all that. But I do want you to remember that it is a fact of history that Christ was born of a poor woman of a despised nation. That was his birth, which, except for the singing of the angels, was very inconspicuous. On his way to the cross, at the close of his life, his cross was borne by a BLACK MAN!! I would like you to be ever conscious of that. We are woven into the fabric of history. We helped bear the sins of the human race!!

ON SERVICE

"You do not know, you cannot know, how glad I am, that you are teaching in Zambia. I am not much interested in the salary. What however, I am happy about, is that Zambia should have obtained your services and those of people like you. You are present at the creation of history, little girl. You are participating in the creation of history. And I know I do not have to ask you to give all you can and more. I do not think I am a fanatic. In fact I think I am a very balanced individual. But I love the continent to distraction. I do not think I can ever do enough for our continent. And I know you kids feel the same. That is why I am happy you have the opportunity to serve. You have had your full share of sacrifice and suffering..... One thing I loathe, however, has been the superior attitude adopted by some Africans from South Africa. Understandable, perhaps. The slaves of the patricians in Rome, no doubt, felt superior to the peasants around them, in the same way as the slaves in the kitchen feel superior to the slaves in the fields. You psychologists will know the name and the cause of such psychosis".

EX-PATRIATES

"We learn here from Press and Radio that the Zambian Mineworkers complain that ex-patriates are paid much more than they. The question, of course, is almost purely economic, for, to attract skilled workers, Zambia has to offer them a standard of living higher than that which they enjoy in their own countries. That is good enough for Europeans. But for Africans, I have to side with the Zambians. If our argument is that we are not foreigners anywhere in Africa, then all of you Africans in Zambia are at home. It is as if you had left Natal to work in the Transvaal. And you would not demand, nor would you expect that you should receive higher salaries than those born and domiciled in the Transvaal. I assure you I shall be extremely happy to learn that you people have requested that you receive the same salaries as the Zambians. You are not ex-patriates. Do not behave like ex-patriates. Do not accept the privileges of ex-patriates, if you do not want to be classed with them".

POETRY OF THE SEAS

Mangaliso Sobukwe is a natural charmer. In one of his letters he writes: "Well, young woman, I am really flattered, that an Honours Student in Psychology should find my letters encouraging and strengthening is a compliment I cannot pretend to take in my stride. And I can assure you that seeing the sentences tumble and cascade, stop briefly to catch their breath and then go leaping forward like sure-footed goats tripping lightly across the face of the cliff--which is what your letters are--is a pleasure I do not mind waiting a month for".

I refuse, Madam Afrika

Perhaps we should end this portrayal of the human side of our redoubtable Mangaliso with a political, perhaps economic note. "Incidentally", he writes, "one of my subjects is Economics. I have learnt a lot about how a country's level of income and employment are managed and how this troublesome problem of Balance of Payments arises: and sending monetary gifts out of a country is one of the ways in which its economy is adversely affected, at certain stages, of course. The development programme of Zambia, like that of Ghana (this was before the coup) is tremendous. I lock on with a song in my heart. I shall, therefore, refuse Madam Afrika, to accept any monetary gifts

/from.....

from any of you people there. What I certainly would like from you, is that you send me all the books you can lay your hands on, dealing with the language, folk-lore (i.e. folk tales, proverbs, riddles, songs) of any and every language of Africa—north, east, west—at the moment I can accept only those written in English".

The political clarity and revolutionary militancy of Sobukwe the leader is well-known. We have tried here to present him as a man, bringing out in the process, his dynamic, magnetic and warm personality and imaginativeness which Verwoerd fears so much.

SOUTH
SOUTH AFRICA WEEK IN GERMANY

The South African Student's Union in Germany, the German Student Unions and the Anti-Apartheid Committee of Germany are holding a "SOUTH AFRICA WEEK" in Göttingen during the period May 15, to May 21, 1966. According to information received in the office of "Azania News", all arrangements have now been finalised. We reproduce their programme here-under.

Sunday : May 15, 1966: 10.00 a.m. : Church Service, University Chapel;
 3.00 p.m. : Opening Ceremony, City Hall, Göttingen;
 8.00 p.m. : Lecture, University Great Hall (Jordaan);
 Monday : May 16, 1966: 3.00 p.m. : Book & Photo Exhibition, City Hall;
 8.00 p.m. : Podium discussion, University Great Hall;
 Tuesday : " 17, " 3.00 p.m. : Book & Photo Exhibition, City Hall;
 8.00 p.m. : Lecture, University Great Hall (Ngoobo);
 Wednesday: 18, " 3.00 p.m. : Book & Photo Exhibition, City Hall;
 8.00 p.m. : Concert & Dance, City Hall;
 Thursday : 19, " ALL DAY : Exhibition;
 Evening : Free !
 Friday : 20, " 3.00 p.m. : Book & Photo Exhibition, City Hall;
 8.00 p.m. : Lecture, University Great Hall (Nkosi);
 Saturday : 21, " 11.00 a.m. : Book Sales;
 3.00 p.m. : Short Excursion;
 8.00 p.m. : Film Review (3x) Foyer International;
 Sunday : 22, " Final day for exhibition,
 Plenary Debate, Foyer International,
 CLOSING.

ESTABLISHED BY THE SWORD !

The advent of European imperialism and colonialism to Africa brought in its wake, the phenomenon of white domination, whether visible or invisible, which is characterised by the political oppression, economic exploitation and social degradation of the indigenous African masses. Throughout this historical epoch, the age of white domination, whenever the spokesmen or representatives of white domination have sprouted a conscience, they have referred to the phenomenon as the "spread of western civilisation" or the "extension of Christian trusteeship". THE UNDISGUISED TRUTH IS THAT WHITE DOMINATION HAS GROUNDED DOWN THE STATUS OF MAN AND STOPPED THE NORMAL GROWTH OF THE HUMAN PERSONALITY ON A SCALE UNPRECEDENTED IN HUMAN HISTORY. White domination was established by the sword and is maintained by the sword.

(From the P.A.C. Manifesto)

***We may add that it will only be destroyed by the sword...editor.

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