

SOBUKWE

APPLIES

TO LEAVE

S.A.

R.D.M. JANUARY 21, 1964
Staff Reporter

ROBERT MANGALISE SOBUKWE, the former leader of the banned Pan-Africanist Congress who is now South Africa's only prisoner without a sentence, is applying to the Government for an exit permit to leave the country. He has told his wife to instruct Johannesburg attorneys to make a formal application for a permit.

Mr. Sobukwe announced this on Robben Island—the maximum security prison seven miles from Cape Town which has been his home for the past nine months.

He completed a three-year sentence for incitement, arising out of the 1960 PAC anti-pass campaign, in May last year. Since then he has been kept in prison without any further trial in terms of a special provision of the General Law Amendment Act.

GOOD HEALTH

He is the only person jailed in this way.

I found Mr. Sobukwe in good health.

During the interview, without any prison warders present, he spoke freely and easily. He is well treated and enjoys many privileges.

He occupies a neatly-furnished part of a Coloured school — set inside an enclosure, 150 ft. by 170

ft., surrounded by a barbed-wire fence.

His time is his own. He can get up and go to bed when he pleases. His meals are of better quality than normally supplied to African prisoners. He can spend up to R10 a month buying extra foods and other goods.

OWN CLOTHING

He wears his own clothing and has a medium-wave radio set.

Most of the time is spent reading and studying for the Bachelor of Economics degree which he is doing through the University of London.

"All the prison officials show me every consideration," Mr. Sobukwe told me. "But the fact remains that this is a prison.

"As I see no prospect for my release, I have told my wife to instruct attorneys to apply for an exit permit for myself and my family for their sake. I want to give them the chance of living a full family life.

"Also, I cannot pretend that I relish the idea of being fossilised on Robben Island. I want to use whatever talent I have usefully

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and creatively for the benefit and advancement of mankind.

"I am allowed newspapers and reports linking his name with last year's Poqo movement.

"I was behind bars in Pretoria jail when it happened, and when I was allowed contact with the world a certain number of letters. But as a result, I am in contact with the world while at the same time I am detached from it. This leaves me unsettled and frustrated."

"I am virtually in solitary confinement. The only people I see, apart from a very few visitors, are the warders."

I asked Mr. Sobukwe about again the immediate causes of it the country and the intellectual stirrings, particularly among Afrikaners, will bring about an initial modification of attitudes."

"The fact that those who are opposed to apartheid are taking up an uncompromising attitude means that the issues will be highlighted. Both the economic development in were over. I was not involved in the Poqo movement in any way at all."

On his attitude towards Whites, he said: "I know I have been accused of being anti-White, not only by the Government but by others. But colour does not mean anything to me."

And on the South African situation he said that he thought there were prospects for change in the near future.

Once that is achieved it will be easier to reach a broader agreement."

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