

SOBUKWE SENT TO PRISON FOR THREE YEARS

Part in anti-pass law campaign

JOHANNESBURG, Wednesday.—Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe (35), former president of the banned Pan-Africanist Congress, was sentenced to three years imprisonment by the Johannesburg Regional Court to-day for inciting Africans to support the anti-pass laws campaign.

Kitchener Leballo, former national secretary of the Congress, and three other members of the Executive of the National Working Committee were sentenced to two years imprisonment. Fourteen other former congress leaders were each sentenced to 18 months. Four were acquitted and discharged.

SCUFFLES OUTSIDE COURT

All the accused received their sentences calmly, but there were scuffles outside the court between police and scores of Africans trying to enter the public galleries to hear the sentences. Several Africans, including women, fell to the ground. The Africans dispersed quietly after the sentences were pronounced.

It was the Pan-Africanist Congress that organised anti-pass demonstrations which, in turn, led to the Sharpeville shooting on March 21 in which 67 Africans were killed.

The prosecutor, Mr J. Robinson, had asked for severe sentences, both as a punishment and a deterrent.

Sobukwe asked the court to remember the accused had refused to plead because they felt no moral obligation to obey laws made by the white minority. An unjust law could not be justly applied, he declared.

"UTOPIA OF FREEDOM"

The magistrate, Mr du Plessis, said the Crown had led with evidence that the Congress had "banded under the noses" of Africans a "Utopia of freedom from control, arrest and raids, and of increased wages." Sobukwe had stated "unequivocally" that the Pan-Africanist Congress had as its ultimate object the overthrow of "white domination" in South Africa, and the establishment of a non-racial democracy. The abolition of pass laws was the first step to that goal. There was no doubt that Africans in general were incited.

Sobukwe has been described as one of a new group of intellectuals leading the struggle for African nationalism. A brilliant scholar, he renounced his post as lecturer in African languages at Witwatersrand University here this year to devote himself to the Congress campaign.

"ANTI-NOBODY"

He was elected president of the Pan-Africanist Congress when it was formed in April 1959 as a breakaway body of the large African National Congress, also banned under the recent emergency.

He said when elected: "The congress is not against the whites, we are just against their system. We are anti-nobody. We aim at a Government of Africans, by Africans, for Africans—with everybody who owes his only loyalty to Africa and who is prepared to accept the democratic rule of the African majority being regarded as African."

The father of four children, Sobukwe is a member of the Methodist Church and has preached for it in recent years.—Reuter.

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