

SOBUKWE SAYS WIFE WANTS TO JOIN HIM ON ROBBEN ISLAND

◆ Continued from Page 1.

For the time being Sobukwe is confined to the immediate area around his bungalow and an abutment block which is just beyond this area. The bungalow is the former sickbay of a training school for Coloured warders.

"I have been told that after two weeks, when the Coloured warders will be free to move in," he said.

"I will be provided by the authorities.

Sobukwe smiled: "I have been told it will be good." So far he has been on prison fare—"Mealies—supposed to be a Bantu diet."

What would he do with his time?

"I have not given my mind to it. I intend to study for a B. Com. degree. I will apply and I understand I can get the books I need."

Sobukwe said he had not seen his children for three years. Children were not allowed to visit in prison. There are four of them, ranging from nine to four years old.

He had seen his wife—a nurse

in Johannesburg—the last time just before he was moved from Pretoria to Robben Island on April 18.

"I do not think I will see my family," he said slowly, uncertainly.

Told of a newspaper report that his wife was making arrangements to visit him, he said he had not seen the report. He gave his first real smile, and added: "That is interesting."

He said his wife wanted to join him on the island, but he did not know how the authorities felt. But he would not like her to be confined as he was.

They have a house with four rooms at Mofolo Township, Johannesburg. How were they off financially?

"My wife is earning. I am not rich. I did not have time." (Sobukwe gave up his post as a lecturer at the Witwatersrand University to become president of the now banned P.A.C.)

While he was in prison he was allowed one book and two jour-

nals a month. Friends sent him books.

Sobukwe said he felt out of touch. He had a book on anthropology and one on French. How was his French coming along? Again the smile: "Who do I have to practice with?" (He is a linguist and has Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, English and Afrikaans).

At the end of the visit he was asked whether he would pose for pictures. "I do not mind. I cannot pretend I am enjoying myself, but I do not mind."

Xhosa trial recalled

The banishment of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe to Robben Island has a link with the history of his tribe, the Xhosas.

For the well-known Xhosa chief Links Makana, who fought the British during the 1840's, was the first major African leader to be banished to the island.

Chief Makana, known as a "great witchdoctor," was an opponent of Chief Ngqika, an ally of the British in the war against Chief Ndlambe.

Makana, according to "The World," led Ndlambe's forces into battle, and told them British bullets would be turned into water.

But when the bullets did not, he told his men that there was something missing in his medicine.

The Xhosa army defeated, Makana was taken to Robben Island and remained in solitary confinement for a long time. He did not leave the virtually escape-proof island—except once.

That was when he tried to swim the treacherous five miles to shore. He almost made it, but drowned in the surf at Milnerton beach.

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- **Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand**

Location:- **Johannesburg**

©2010

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

DOCUMENT DETAILS:

Document ID:- **A2618-Cp1-22**

Document Title:- **The Star: Sobukwe says wife wants to join him on Robben Island**

Author:- **The Star**

Document Date:- **2 May 1963**