

Africanist leader says

No guarantee to safeguard any minority

By a Staff Reporter

A TALL, SUAVELY-SPOKEN African Languages assistant at Wits. University has become a new and still largely unknown factor in the flux of African politics.

He is 35-year-old Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, who was yesterday elected chairman of the new Pan-Africanist Congress, the rebel group which has split from the African National Congress on a programme of "undiluted" African nationalism.

Sitting in his office at the university today, he spoke frankly and with conviction about the aims of the movement which he describes as Pan-Africanism and some call "Black Verwoerdism."

"We want a universal adult franchise, one man, one vote, and we cannot guarantee safeguards for any minorities. We recognize individuals, not groups

"I don't see any reason, for example, why Black voters should not return a White to represent them in Parliament in the democratic South Africa we would like to see."

He declared: "All political parties in South Africa, from the Nationalists to the African National Congress, today are simply instruments of White supremacy.

WHY THEY SPLIT

"We split from the A.N.C. because we felt it was being dominated by European and Indian minority groups which do not have the true interests of the African at heart. We may accept help from minorities but they must not lay down our policy."

The only point on which Mr. Sobukwe—Fort Hare-educated son of a poor Native labourer—was reticent, was the strength of his movement's following.

"We are not disclosing that for the time being."

He teaches Zulu at the university and his European students describe him as a "brilliant" lecturer.

HOW HE STARTED

Born in the Cape, he worked his way through mission school to train as a teacher. He says he had his first contact with African nationalist politics when he went to Fort Hare in 1948.

"That was when I first began to realize the whole absurdity of the South African situation. And a little later I began to see that the A.N.C. was no longer representing the true interests of the African people."

Mr. Sobukwe lives at Mofolo Township, Johannesburg, with his wife and four children. He says he realizes that his new post will get him into trouble with the university authorities.

"But if I lose my livelihood because of this then I just can't help that. I cannot give up my beliefs."

And he added: "No I would not call myself an extremist. The only Whites who have anything to fear from us are those who persist in trying to maintain White baasskap."

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