

February 20, 1978.

Ambassador Andrew Young
United States Mission to the
United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Dear Ambassador,

When I telephoned your office on Friday a week ago I was desperately worried about Bob Sobukwe. Veronica had phoned me that morning to ask me to come to Kimberley immediately which in itself was reason for alarm. During the day I contacted doctors in Cape Town and Johannesburg who have been involved in treating Bob and they spoke in blunt terms of a terminal stage having been reached. When my wife and I got to Kimberley on Saturday, our first sight of Bob in hospital frightened us: indeed, when we left after our first visit my wife simply broke into tears.

In retrospect, Bob was, however, just turning the corner at that point and by the evening he was staging a marvellous recovery. What had happened was that his reaction to the chemo-therapy he had been having together with the large amount of anti-biotics he had been taking, was bringing on kidney failure. He is now much better. The doctor in Fisherley told me he did not detect any further evidence of cancer.

Since writing the above, however, I have again been in contact with the Cape Town doctors and it is with a grieving heart that I must tell you that they insist that the cancer is spreading and is incurable. As far as I am aware, Bob and Veronica do not know this; nor do the children. At this stage I am conveying this to you for your private information, so you will have the necessary background when, eventually, the children have to be put in the picture.

I have suggested to the South African Council of Churches that a national day of prayer be held for Bob, (although I have not imparted any of these details).

I am hopeful that this will be done and - who knows? - perhaps something good will ensue.

Milawa happened to phone her mother while I was in Kimberley so she knows Bob has been in hospital. I wrote to her and Dini to give them reassurance.

I shall, naturally, keep you advised.

In writing now, this is the first opportunity I have to thank you properly for the interview you kindly gave me. I thought it read extremely well and contained interesting thoughts. I am all the more appreciative of the interview knowing the enormous pressures on your time these days with the Rhodesia and Namibia developments. Thank you.

All being well, I plan to be in the US in late-April and early-May. I shall be giving some lectures, stretching from New York and Washington DC through to the West Coast.

I hope that I shall have the pleasure of meeting you again while I am there.

My best wishes to you and to your wife. I am sorry to be the bearer of such dreadful news about my brother and my friend.

Sincerely,

BENJAMIN POGROUND

PUBLISHER:

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

Location:- **Johannesburg**

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DOCUMENT DETAILS:

Document ID:- **A2618-Ba11-5-3**

Document Title:- **Letter (copy) to Ambassador Andrew Young, UN Mission, New York**

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Document Date:- **20 February 1978**