

THE BITTER SWEET GOODBYE

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shorter in fact
THE ELDEST son and daughter of former Robben Island detainee Robert Sobukwe left South Africa yesterday to study in the United States.

Dinilesizwe Sobukwe, 19, and his sister Miliswa, 21, left to enrol at Atlanta Junior College, Georgia, as a prelude to taking a degree at an American university.

During their initial stay in the United States they will live with Black American Congressman, Mr Andrew Young, who last year visited South Africa with the Black American tennis star, Arthur Ashe.

Mr Young visited the banned Mr Robert Sobukwe, former leader of the prohibited Pan-Africanist Congress, during his South African tour. He described Mr Sobukwe as a leader of great calibre.

Both younger Sobukwes matriculated in Swaziland last year and the opportunity to continue their studies

in the United States came as a direct result of Mr Young's talk with their father -- and the impression which he made on the Congressman.

It was a day of mixed emotions at Jan Smuts Airport yesterday for Dinilesizwe and Miliswa.

Dinilesizwe was quiet and controlled in the manner of his father, but clearly both excited at the opportunities ahead and saddened to be leaving his parents.

For their parents it was also a day of bitter-sweet emotion. As a banned person Mr Sobukwe may not be quoted, but his wife Mrs Veronica Sobukwe said: "We are sad that they are going but glad for them as well."

The Sobukwe family was split for nine years when Mr Sobukwe was imprisoned for three years for leading a campaign against the pass laws and then detained arbitrarily on Robben Island for a further six years.

The family was reunited in mid-1969 when Mr Sobukwe was released from detention under a banning order confining him to the Kimberley municipal area and his wife and four children were allowed to join him.

During his years on Robben Island Mr Sobukwe completed a B Sc in Economics with the University of London. As a banned person in Kimberley he took his articles as an attorney. Last Friday he formally admitted to the Northern Cape Supreme Court as an attorney.

On the following day Dinilesizwe and Miliswa received their passports to the New World and within four days were winging their way to the United States.

They were seen off by Mr John Guthrie, the US Consul General, who had speedily organised American visas for their passports.

Dinilesizwe — whose name means "Gift to the Nation" — plans to study engineering. Miliswa — "Growth" — intends to become a dentist.

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