July 24, 1956

Dear Ted,

I am thinking so much of all of you in these days, knowing that you are making ready for the trip to Pretoria and the beginning of the "big trial." I have planned to write to you and Mrs. Matthews so many times but always something interfered. My work (for the S.A. Defense Fund) keeps me very busy. I am the only representative up and down the Pacific Coast — a territory over 1,500 miles long.

George sent me on a copy of your most interesting letter, knowing my deep interest. What a shocking thing this is and continues to be! Disruption of lives — of careers — of families — means nothing to those in command. And to have it hanging fire all these months has been terribly hard. I know, it must be a real wrench the go-back-to-court after the weeks at home. Two! What a place you South Africans have to pay for your democracy to come!

Did you receive the little Christmas card that I sent you and Mrs. Matthews? I never am sure that things get through!
It was so sweet of her to write and tell me of her regret that I had gotten in trouble with your government. I didn’t want the jail part of it, I was glad that I had the chance to share a few days of that with you. But I hated having to leave more than anything that ever happened to me. Had I only begun to be a little useful, to know and understand a little. But I would not give a million dollars for the experiences that were mine—the privilege of knowing and working with all of you for the short while that I did—the insight into your common devotion and dedication to South Africa—the real, true S.A. I’ll never be the person I used to be. I was caught up in something bigger than all our lives—the loss of human freedom. You have all been such an inspiration to me. Prof, it was and remains the greatest joy of my life—knowing you.

What am I doing?—As you may have heard from Sami or some of the others with whom I correspond, I devote my full time to being the
West Coast Representative (Seattle to Los Angeles) of the S.A. Defense Fund -- George's outfit. (They can't pay any salary, but I am fortunate in not needing any.) I hold meetings, speak at women's clubs, churches, trade union meetings, I just got a $5 donation from a union coordinating council where I spoke last May. Negro and Jewish organizations, colleges wherever I can get myself invited and tell them about S.A. and of course especially about the liberatory movement. You have many friends in this country -- you know -- many people have at least heard of you, and I am often asked especially about you -- if you were one of the 64' who were freed. I do not succeed in raising a lot of money -- altogether to date about $500 or $50, after a year of effort and some 86 speeches! But the American public is very ignorant of Africa, and (it seems to me) particularly of S.A. and I must be informed about conditions, etc. before I can expect interest and assistance. So that is my job. I am the only full-time worker for the Defense Fund in the U.S., George does much more than I, with the staff in N.Y., but I have to work alone, because we have no money for "overhead." I travel almost constantly, paying my own
expenses, of course as well as the printing of literature, etc, it makes me very, very happy, Prof, that in this way I feel that even 11,000 miles away (what a distance!) I am still your co-worker and “one of our number,” as that wonderful letter which was presented to me, when I left, called me. I work very hard so I may truly deserve to be called ‘one of you’.

I am now in the plane, actually (therefore the poor hand-writing) en route to N.Y. (from my headquarters in San Francisco) to confer with George about my work for the coming autumn, and also to attend some of the functions in honor of our mutual friend, Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah. (yours sincerely) who is now in this country. I was just in Washington and attended one of the State receptions given for him by the Ghana Embassy in N.Y., there will be a big dinner in his honor tomorrow.

How I wish that you could be there, too! I know we talk a great deal of you, Prof. Well, you are still on the front line of the freedom struggle. He has won his, I shall be with you all in Pretoria in my thoughts, and shall be praying very much that things will go as they should. Please give my warm regards to your tribe—my deep admiration and affectionate regard to you, Prof. Nkrumah! —Zoisa