

African Studies

4-11-59

Miss Hansi Pollak,  
135a Marriott Road,  
Durban.

Dear Miss Pollak,

Thank you very much indeed for the kind letter you wrote me in connection my recent decision to resign my post at Fort Hare.

As you know my association with Fort Hare goes back a long way. I first came here in 1918 when the College was only two years and was hardly on its feet as yet. I stayed here until 1923 when I became the first graduate of the College to complete the requirements for the B.A. degree of the University of South Africa. I started teaching at Adams in 1925, but even during the time I was at Adams I kept in touch with developments at Fort Hare until I joined the staff in 1936. Since that time I have played my part in the development of the College to the best of my ability. Although we are conscious of the fact that the College as we know it has many limitations, yet we are proud of what we have been able to achieve and we are sure that we were moving in the right direction in the matter of building up here an institution which could in time take its rightful place among the university institutions of the country. Recent legislation has altered all that, and overnight has reduced the College to the status of a Government department.

When I was offered continued employment at Fort Hare on the implied condition that I should renounce my past and forego my principles for the remainder of time here or forfeit my pensions rights, I was faced with a very difficult choice, but after giving the matter very serious consideration I came to the conclusion that, whatever the consequences, I could not stay on at Fort Hare, under those conditions.

My wife and I have been overcome by the many messages of sympathy and understanding of the position which we have received from all over the country, but you are the first one whose sympathy has taken the form of a contribution to the practical difficulties with which we shall be confronted as result of our decision to resign. For this we thank you most sincerely and want to assure that your generous offer is accepted in the spirit in which it was intended. I am particularly worried of course about the education of my children. Perhaps you do not know that two of my daughters are in Durban, one at the Medical School at Wentworth and the other at McCord Hospital training as a nurse. I also have a son who has just entered the Medical School of Birmingham University. It is these commitments that are a matter of concern to me at the moment, but I feel sure that whatever they may have to suffer as a result they are in agreement with the decision which I have taken.

In conclusion may I thank you once more for your kind message and your generous assistance. Our plans for the future are still uncertain at the moment, but the position may clear in the near future.

Yours sincerely,