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University College of Fort Hare,
Alice, Cape Province
Union of South Africa
September 2, 1953.

Dr Henry P. Van Dusen,
Union Theological Seminary,
Broadway at 120th Street,
New York 27, N.Y., U.S.A.

Dear Dr Van Dusen,

I must at the outset offer my apologies for my delay in letting you know something about my whereabouts and my doings since I left the delightful surroundings and the pleasant associations of Union. I was reminded this morning that things are perhaps not quite so pleasant over there just when I heard the radio announce that the temperature in New York during the last few days has hovered round about the 90 degree mark. What a contrast with the temperature which we are enjoying in Alice just now. We have had bitterly cold days, with fairly heavy falls on snow on the mountains round about us. Only last Sunday we had a visit from some American friends--Dr and Mrs Mirsky of the Rockefeller Research Institute who live at 1 West 68th Street, New York who were not too happy about having left their heavy coats at East London when they came up to Alice. We took them out for a drive to see the snow on the mountains which was responsible for the nippy weather. Actually this is the best time of the year in this area, when we have cold mornings, bright sunny days and cold evenings. We miss the well-heated houses of New York and America generally, for our wood and coal fires can never really warm up our houses properly.

Since our return to South Africa we have had the pleasure of entertaining quite a number of friends from the U.S., such as Dr W.O. Brown, formerly of the State Department and now going to head the newly established African Studies Programme at Boston University, Professor and Mrs M.J. Herskovits of Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill. Dr Frank Loescher of Philadelphia and Dr and Mrs Mirsky to whom I have already referred. We just missed Dr and Mrs Douglas Steere who also visited Fort Hare. I understand that Dr Bates also managed to get to Johannesburg. We were very sorry that he could not come to Fort Hare where we might have had the opportunity to return in a small way the wonderful hospitality we had extended to us at Union. My wife joins me in repeating that if anybody from Union is visiting South Africa they must not forget that there is a home for them here at Fort Hare.

A week or so ago I was in Port Elizabeth where I had a delightful visit with George Molefe who is going strong and is as busy as ever with all the good works on which he is engaged. He has just taken on the additional responsibility of being the Regional Representative of the South African Institute of Race Relations in that area, a position to which he was elected by a joint meeting of whites and non-whites. He passed through a difficult time during and after the disturbances which took place in that city last year, but he is in the forefront among those who are doing their best to remedy the damage done to harmonious race relations in the area, and friend and foe alike admire him for his constructive approach to the difficult problems confronting us in this country. I conveyed to him the good wishes of Union in the good work he is doing for his Master and his country.

I have resumed my work at Fort Hare which I had to do immediately on my arrival owing to the sudden deportation as an 'undesirable alien' of the young American, Mr E.J. Murphy, who was substituting for me while I was away. We have not yet been able to discover why this action was taken against him by the authorities. In my own case I have been under investigation on three occasions since my return, and papers, documents and photographs found in my possession have been seized under a section of the Customs Act which prohibits the importation of goods which are 'indecent or obscene or on any ground whatsoever objectionable'. Among the goods seized were the copies of your letters in support of my application for an extension to my passport. I have of course protested against your letters being included in this category, but I have not yet had them returned to me. In addition the Union Education Department through which Fort Hare is being subsidised by the Government has asked the Board of Directors to indicate what steps they are proposing to take in connection with my alleged 'activities in the United States'. This matter is going to be dealt with at a special meeting of the Board of Directors to be held

here next week. Nobody seems to know what the offence is that I am supposed to have committed. The 'corpus delicti', as the lawyers say, consists of a number of newspaper clippings, chiefly from the 'Amsterdam News'. As far as my passport application was concerned, the reply of the Secretary for the Interior was posted from here to my address at Union, on May 16, when I was already in South Africa! The reply was of course a refusal.

I have also resumed my work as President of the African National Congress in the Cape Province. Many of the leaders of the organisation are still under various bans imposed upon by the Minister of Justice and the work of the movement has to be carried on under great difficulties. I am satisfied, however, that but for the restraining influence exercised by the leaders of the African National Congress the situation in this country might have been worse than it is. The relations between the races are still explosive; irresponsible action or utterances on either side of the colour line might easily touch off something worse than what is happening in other parts of the continent. Fortunately the number of people who are giving serious attention to the delicate situation existing in the country, outside government circles, is slowly increasing. Only last month I had the privilege of taking part in a private conference of white and non-white leaders, convened and presided over by an ex-Judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of South Africa, where there was a frank exchange of views about the problems of the country. The Dutch Reformed Church has already announced that it is proposing to convene a conference of leaders of the different churches in the country to examine the situation sometime next year. A preliminary meeting of white church leaders is being held in November this year to prepare the agenda for next year's inter-racial conference. Other bodies are also contemplating holding similar inter-racial conferences on a wider basis than is proposed by the Dutch Reformed Church. The new political parties that have been formed such as the Liberal Party and the Union Federal Party are also searching for a new colour policy which might draw the peoples of the country together rather than apart as is the case under the policy of the present government. Unfortunately the major parties in the country, the Nationalist and the United Party, do not seem to be sensitive to the new trends of thought in non-party circles in the country. The Nationalists are proceeding with their ideological legislation based on apartheid. Flying in the face of the facts seems to be their stock-in-trade.

I am afraid I have already taken up too much of your time, especially just now when you are getting ready for the beginning of term. I do not know whether Henry Ramaila who is coming to Union has left already. We had a note from him the other day to say that he was all set, except that he was awaiting final word about his passport. I think you will find him a very acceptable young man.

Please convey our greetings to the members of the Faculty and the student body at Union and all those who made our year at Union so memorable. We miss them all a great deal.

With kind regards to Mrs Van Dusen and yourself from us both,

Sincerely yours,