

P.O. Fort Hare, C2-130  
Alice, C.P.  
Union of South Africa.  
22-10-59.

[H.R. Isaacs]

Dear H.R.,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 8th inst. and for your expression of sympathy at the passing of my mother. She was in so much pain during the last few years of her life that in a way we are glad that she is out of it all now, but we shall miss her very much.

I am writing to keep you in touch with developments here especially as far as I am concerned. The Nats. have presented me with a cruel choice. If they had dismissed me outright I would have qualified for a pension which would have kept the wolf from the door for life. The only way I can get my pension rights now is to stay on for the two years that I still had to serve before retirement. I would then have qualified for a pension of between five and six hundred pounds or a lump sum of over £6000, in addition to the £3000 which stands to my credit in the Provident Fund to which I have been contributing all these years. What I have got in the Provident Fund I cannot lose but it is pension which I shall have to forego if I go. Well, we have had long discussions with Frieda about this matter. My children who are away from home have written to express their views about the matter. My son Joseph who has set up a legal firm in Durban has come over to Alice to discuss matters. We are all agreed that it is best for me to go. Staying on here will mean that I shall have to resign from the A.N.C. The Nats will use my name and my reputation to bolster up these tribal colleges and will be able to say to the outside world that my presence here shows that these colleges are not going to be so bad after all. I will virtually be a slave and will not be able to enjoy any of the freedoms which I have hitherto enjoyed as a university teacher. I may even be called upon to defend the present system publicly. Any refusal to do so would be regarded as 'misconduct' under civil service regulations to which I will be subject. For these and many more reasons that I could give I have come to the conclusion that I must exercise my option to resign, whatever the consequences.

That means I shall have to find something else to do during the course of next year. I would welcome the opportunity to get out of the country for some time at any rate, but then I shall run into passport difficulties. One way of getting over that difficulty would be for me to get into one of the High Commission Territories, say, Bechuanaland and get out from there after a time with a British passport. Another is to apply for an exit permit which the Government in terms of the law must grant if you satisfy them that you intend to leave the country permanently. That is what Vilakazi who is now at Hartford Seminary had to do, but that of course is not a decision which can be taken lightly. It would be easier if one knew one was going to a definite job. I must thank you for the inquiries which you are making on my behalf. Perhaps something useful will turn up. If I could get over there, we might then have the chance of working on the MSS. The fact that I had left the country in the present circumstances would probably be additional advertisement for the book. Some of my friends over here are suggesting that it might be possible for a fund to be raised to make good to loss that I am going to suffer as a result of my resignation. I do not know if anything will come of it, but I would naturally anything like that. I suppose they would ask overseas friends to contribute. Dr Mirsky of the Rockefeller Research Institute in New York whose address is 1 West 88th Street has written to say he will look out for something in the U.S. You might perhaps contact him. With kindest regards,  
I shall keep in touch with you about developments. You might perhaps contact him.