

22-150
P.O. Fort Hare,
Alice, C.P.,
Union of South Africa
27-10-59

Professor M. Herskovits,
Department of Anthropology,
Northwestern University,
Evanston, Ill.
U.S.A.

Dear Professor Herskovits,

I have decided to write to you about developments here at Fort Hare. As one who has visited the College more than once and has shown such a keen interest in its welfare, I thought you would like to get some first hand information about what is happening. As you may know the Union Government passed a law this year empowering it to take over the College and to make it into a Government institution similar to the tribal colleges they are setting up at Pietersburg in the Northern Transvaal for the Sotho tribes and at Ngoye in Zululand for the Zulu. Fort Hare is to become a Xhosa College.

The 'Take-over' has begun and it started dramatically with the dismissal of eight of the English-speaking members of the faculty. The Minister of Bantu Education who is now responsible for Fort Hare has given as his reason for the dismissals the fact that the persons concerned were, as he put it, 'sabotaging the policy of apartheid'. The rest of the members of the staff were offered what is called 'continuation of employment', but they were divided into two sections. The whites were offered what the Fort Hare Act calls "Council" posts, and the non-whites were offered "State" posts, the difference between the two being that persons holding State posts will be subject to civil service regulations which make mere membership of a political organisation such as the A.N.C. "misconduct" for which the person concerned may be dismissed, while those holding Council posts will be under different regulations. The discrimination between white and non-white will also be extended to questions of salary scales, housing and other facilities in which Fort Hare has hitherto followed a policy of equality between black and white. All re-appointed persons have been given 90 days in which to decide whether they are going to stay or go. Those who decide to go on their own have to forfeit their pension rights while those who are dismissed by the Minister are given their pension rights.

The whole thing has placed me in a terrible dilemma. I have only two years left before I reach retirement age, but I feel that I have been associated with the old Fort Hare for so long that I shall not be able to fit into the new set-up, and therefore it will mean a serious financial loss to me at a time when I am not young enough to start out on a new career. I have made up my mind that I cannot stay. I am therefore at present looking for alternative employment. Opportunities in this country are not many, and as far as overseas appointments are concerned there will of course be the hurdle of trying to get a passport from the Government whose offer of appointment I have declined. If you know of any African Studies Programme into which I might be able to fit in your country, please let me know. It might be possible for one to find a way of getting out. I have been in touch with Harold Isaacs who is at the Center of International Studies at M.I.T. and he has made certain suggestions. The same with Dr Mirsky of the Rockefeller Research Institute in New York. There are certain proposals being made in this country. So I am leaving no stone unturned.

I am leaving no stone unturned. I hope something useful will
turn up. With kind regards to Mrs M.
Sincerely

Professor L. H. Harkness,
Department of Anthropology,
Northwestern University,
Evanston, Ill.

Dear Professor Harkness,

I have decided to write to you about
development here at Fort Lane. As one who has visited the College
more than once and has shown such a keen interest in its welfare,
I thought you would like to get some first hand information about what is
happening. As you may know the Ohio Government passed a law this year
authorizing it to take over the College and to make it into a Government
institution similar to the annual colleges that are now being set
up in the State. The law was passed for the purpose of making it
more in line with the State and to become a State College.
The take-over has begun and it started
immediately with the dismissal of eight of the English-speaking members
of the faculty. The Minister of Health Education who is now responsible
for Fort Lane has given as his reason for the dismissal the fact
that the persons concerned were not "fit" to represent the policy of
the State. The rest of the members of the staff were offered what
is called "voluntary" employment, but they were given into two
sections. The white were offered what the Fort Lane Act calls "Contract"
contracts and the non-white were given "State" posts, the difference
between the two being that persons holding State posts will be subject
to civil service regulations which make it impossible to change from one
organization such as the M. C. Association for which the persons
concerned may be dismissed. While those holding Contract posts will be
under different regulations. The discrimination between white and
non-white will also be extended to questions of salary, pension,
and other facilities in which Fort Lane has followed a policy
of equality between black and white. All non-white persons have been
given no more in which to work than white. Now one can see why of the
those who decide to go to Fort Lane have to leave their families
while those who are dismissed by the Minister are given their pension
rights.

The whole thing has placed me in a terrible
situation. I have only two weeks left before I reach retirement age, but
I feel that I have been associated with this old Fort Lane for so long
that I shall not be able to fit into the new set-up and therefore it
will mean a serious financial loss to me at a time when I am not young
enough to start out on a new career. I have made up my mind that I cannot
stay. I am therefore at present looking for alternative employment.
Opportunities in this country are not many, and as far as overseas
employment is concerned there will of course be the matter of leaving
to get a passport from the Government whose office of appointment I have
declined. If you know of any African Studies Programme into which I
might be able to fit in your country, please let me know. It might be
possible for me to find a way of getting out. I have been in touch
with several friends who are at the Center of International Studies at
U. T. and they have made certain suggestions. The same with the help of
the Rockefeller Research Institute in New York. There are certain persons
being made in the country.