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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE of FORT HARE,

P.O. FORT HARE,

CAPE PROVINCE.

March 16, 1954

African Studies Department

Mr Julius Lewin,
Department of Bantu Studies,
University of the Witwatersrand,
Milner Park,
Johannesburg.

Dear Mr Lewin,

I have been asked by Mr A. de V. Herholdt, the Registrar of the University of the Witwatersrand to give you my confidential opinion as to the suitability or otherwise of Mr R.M. Sobukwe for appointment to the post of African Language Assistant (Nguni) for which he has applied.

Mr Sobukwe was a student at Fort Hare from 1947 to 1949 when he completed the requirements for the B.A. degree of the University of South Africa. He proved himself a student of outstanding ability both inside and outside the classroom. I happen to know that his professors were disappointed that he did not manage to obtain distinctions in his major subjects in his final year. This we attributed to the fact that he did three major courses instead of the usual two, all of which he passed creditably. In fact as far as Native Administration is concerned I know for a fact that he qualified for a distinction in that subject, but he was not awarded the distinction because he had listed English and Xhosa as his major subjects, and Native Administration 11 as a minor. In his final year at Fort Hare he was President of the Students' Representative Council, a position in which he exhibited considerable gifts as a leader of men.

I always found him painstaking in his work, courteous in his demeanour and frank and open in the expression of his views. Since he left College we have had good reports about him in the area where he is teaching. Personally I have no hesitation in saying that he ought to prove a very capable language assistant. I am not sure whether the standard of his Zulu will be up to that of his Xhosa but I have no doubt that a man of his ability would soon be able to make up for any deficiency in that regard.

I shall be glad to furnish you, so far as I am able, with any further information you may require about Mr Sobukwe.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Z. K. Matthews
Z. K. Matthews

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand

Location:- Johannesburg

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DOCUMENT DETAILS:

Document ID:- A2618-Aa8

Document Title:- Letter to J Lewin, Department of Bantu Studies, University of the Witwatersrand

Author:- ZK Matthews

Document Date:- 16 March 1954