

Letter dated 15 October 1896

Archive:	Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban
Letter reference:	FUZE, Magera Magwaza Papers, KCM 90/13/1/1
Letter date:	15 October 1896
From:	Magera Magwaza. Francis Plain, St Helena.
To:	Sir M Clarke, The Majesty's Resident Commissioner. Etshowe, Zululand.
Other details:	Letter marked 'Copy', hand-written, in English
Transcriber's note(s):	Magera Magwaza writes this letter from St Francis Plain, Dinuzulu's residence at St Helena Island. He was on the island from 1896 to 1897, summoned by Dinuzulu to be his secretary and tutor to exiles and their children. Sir Marshal Clarke replaced Melmoth Osborn, he was the Resident Commissioner and Chief Magistrate in Zululand from 1893 to 1897.
Letter contents:	Magera Magwaza is protesting against his correspondence being subjected to inspection, the authorities opening and reading his letters, his argument being that he is not a prisoner at St Helena. Part of this letter to Clarke, is the letter that Magera wrote on 5 October 1896 to the Governor of St Helena.

OFFENSIVE WORDS/TERMS: Nil

(copy)

Francis Plain. St Helena.
Oct. 15. 1896.

To His Honour, Sir M. Clarke, R. A. K. C. M. G.
the Majesty's Resident Commissioner
Etshowe, Zululand.

Sir

I have the honor to inform Your Honor that after received my full approval of coming to assist and stay with the Zulu Chiefs, I landed on the 14th day of July last, & on the next day I was called by Mr W. J. Madden, the Zulu Guardian, who stated that I was not to interfere with the Guardian's work of the Zulus, but merely do what is my own work – teaching & writing letters for the Chiefs in Zulu, & forward the same to the Guardian for translation & transmission to the Gov. of St. Helena. I was also told that as I was not prisoner, my letters will go free & separately as well as [safe?] in returning to me, & that I will buy my own stamps for my own letters. Part to the above explanation, I must inform Your Honor that I found my private letter from Miss H. E. C. in England brought to me after detained it for about the whole week & officially read & opened without my knowledge, the case I never have known of before. Suppose Miss C. was so disloyal as the Govt. may seem to think (which I am sorry to say) it was so absurd on the part of the Govt. to have a very bad suspicions against a lady who has all along done her utmost righteousness towards both English & Zulu nations, with her best power, after her father's death, since from the time of the Zulu war, that is 17 years, - although it is expected that Miss C. could never send through me a dangerous & mischievous message to Z. Chiefs, an act which cannot be done by any respected person. If not so, why was my letter opened then? I am informed that it was the intention of the Govt. of Natal to [explore?] my letters, which I am quite grieved of. The following was my letter to the Govt. of St H.

Francis Plain. 5th Oct. 1896

To H. E. the Gov. of St. H., The Castle

Sir, I beg to inform Y. E. that I merely recd (for the first time) Miss C's letters of the last mail from England, & was so shocking to find it quite open after seven days detention.

(2) I may as well explain to Y. E. that at my first arrival into this Island I was told not to interfere with the Guardian's work of the Zulus, but just keep on writing all what is necessary for them & forward it to the Guardian for translation, & that my own letters will go [free?] & back because I am not prisoner; & for this reason therefore I had always buy stamps & posted my own letters. But I understand that my letter referred to was opened for purpose of getting English translation from Zulu.

(3) I feel very much hurtful & disgusted as I have been told another thing & then the other (which is being done without [me] being informed of), that I might say I never heard of such a deed being done to any of H. M's subjects in all my life time till this date.

(4) I may also inform Y. E. that this is the first time I ever recd this bad treatment. The English Govt. is Christian one, & is always expected to treat every one with justice. And I thought this was forbidden by all English laws – to explore one's [heart?] without proper reason except when one was found dead suddenly. And for this [course?], I pray Y. E. to advise me what to do to escape this trouble. I am, Sir, Y. E. [on?]

Magema Magwaza

Oct. 6th I took in the above letter personally to H. E., who kindly told me that it was the Natal Govt. intention that my letters should be opened, & advised me to write to the Govt. of Natal on the subject.

Should Natal Govt. thinks good & make its mind to do all justice towards me as well as to other bodies in accordance to all civilised & Christian rules set apart for our use, I pray Your Honor let my letters be not opened without my leave.

I have the honor to be
Sir

Your Honor's most obedient Servant
(signed) Magema Magwaza

[*copy made for [?] from Magema's own copy sent to Miss Colenso, Oct 1896 – A. W. Nov. 23. 1896*]

LEGEND:

- [?] incomplete, illegible word(s)
- [] notes/words by transcriber, not part of correspondence
- [* *] marginalia

TRANSCRIBER:

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