

BULLETIN 14

AMERICANS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN RESISTANCE

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Explanation: This is the first Bulletin which we have issued since April. The elections in South Africa have been held since that time. News of the elections received rather good coverage in the daily papers in this country. During this period the Defiance Campaign has been inactive. We have been waiting to issue this Bulletin until we had some perspective on the meaning of the elections, and some information about the probable road which the African National Congress and allied groups may follow.

Tribute to Z. K. Matthews: Professor Z. K. Matthews, who was in the United States as visiting professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York during the last school year, returned by plane to South Africa with his wife on May 14th. Those who had an opportunity to work closely with, and become well acquainted with, Professor Matthews knew the tremendous contribution which he made to the cause of South African democracy while he was here. He spoke to hundreds of audiences, and thousands of Americans heard his message. However, relatively few people knew the pressure under which he worked a good part of the time. Last fall, when the United Nations was discussing the issue of apartheid in South Africa, many American groups and individuals were anxious for Z. K. Matthews to have an opportunity to speak on behalf of the African National Congress before the Ad Hoc Political Committee of the UN. It seemed for a time that there was a real possibility that the Committee might vote to hear Professor Matthews. Pressure was put on Matthews not to appear by high representatives of the South African government in several direct interviews with him, and even by a representative of the United States State Department. Furthermore, there was more than a suggestion that his teaching position in South Africa might be in jeopardy, because the South African government supplies the greater part of the funds that allow the University College of Fort Hare to operate. In spite of this, Professor Matthews never altered in his willingness to appear before the UN if he felt his words would help the cause of the people of South Africa.

That Professor Matthews was not free from the pressures of the Malan government up to the time he left the United States is indicated by the difficulty he had in arranging for his return to South Africa. He was scheduled to leave by ship on May 15th. However, his passport was due to expire on May 20th. He received notice from the South African government that if he was not back home by the time his passport expired he would be violating the law and therefore subject to arrest. The trip takes at least three weeks by ship. Professor Matthews' attempt to have his passport extended for another two weeks to a month was rejected by the government. Therefore he had either to end his duties at Union Theological Seminary about three weeks before the end of the school term, in April, or else fly to South Africa. The expense in flying was at least twice that of going by ship. Since he could not undertake the expense of this on his own, supporters of his helped to raise the additional funds to make it possible for him to fly.

Although no final word has been received from Professor Matthews since he reached South Africa, we understand that a most thorough search was made of his personal effects upon landing, that every scrap of paper which he had was examined, and that some of his private papers were seized. We have not heard whether these papers have been returned to him yet.

It is heartening for us in America to realize that leadership in the non-violent struggle for freedom in South Africa is in the hands of persons such as Z. K. Matthews.

Effect of the Elections on the General Situation: The Nationalists under Dr. Malan came back into power with renewed strength as a result of the elections on April 15th in South Africa. Whereas in the previous Parliament the Nationalists had only a majority of 13 in the Lower House, they now have a majority of 30 out of a total House membership of 159, this in spite of the fact that the Nationalists received only 45 per cent of the popular vote. The reason for the greater political strength of the Nationalists in spite of their lack of the majority of the popular vote, is that their real strength is in the rural areas where one vote is worth about the equivalent of two city votes, according to South African election structure.

Directly after the elections the executive committees of the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, and the Franchise Action Council issued a joint declaration which said in part: "The Non-white people themselves . . . must consistently and determinedly make the policy of apartheid unworkable in every sphere and walk of life. . . The return of the Nationalists to office means a further reign of terror and fascist brutality which will require the utmost vigilance and resistance on the part of all true South Africans who cherish the principles of democracy and freedom." The declaration went on to call the people to be in a "state of preparedness for any action essential to alter the fascist onslaught of Dr. Malan's Nationalist government". Albert J. Luthuli, the president of the African National Congress, in calling attention to the struggle of the Non-white people said: "Our struggle will always be within the framework of nonviolence. This is a fundamental principle."

In commenting on the elections Manilal Gandhi said: "The elections have resulted in giving a long lease of life to the present Nationalist government. It will do everything in its power to carry through its apartheid policy in every sphere. What line of action the Congresses take remains to be seen. No plans have yet been made to resume the Campaign with renewed vigor. People have become afraid of the very harsh measures that have been enacted. It will require a tremendous amount of spiritual strength and courage to fight against the government with its increasing ruthlessness."

Another South African, a liberal white, had this to say about the Defiance Campaign: "It is true there has been a lull for some time, which gives the authorities reason to say that their strong measures are effective. Actually I think it is true that Congress would find it extremely difficult to get volunteers now that the punishment is almost certain to be flogging, which is no joke. . . My impression is that Congress will lie very low for the next six months to see what happens at the first session of the new Parliament and to give them (the Congress) a chance to organize." The new Parliament convened on July 3rd.

A third communication which came recently from a white South African who has associated himself to an unusual extent with the resistance movement, gives a

somewhat pessimistic picture of possibilities in the immediate future. He points out that the overwhelming victory for the Nationalists will be the signal for the government to use any and every means necessary to meet any resistance. He mentions that although the African National Congress made great strides during the last six months of 1953 it by no means could be said to represent the majority of the Africans. In some sections of South Africa the ANC has virtually no membership. Therefore from his view the Congress does not represent a political power that in the immediate future can challenge the government. He looks for a period of government repression. During this time he believes that the Congress can train its membership in effective nonviolent methods much as Gandhi in India used the period after 1932 as a means of preparing the people for a future struggle. This preparation will consist of more localized nonviolent action rather than a nation-wide coordinated campaign.

The WALL STREET JOURNAL: One does not usually turn to the WALL STREET JOURNAL for an analysis of developments regarding minorities. However, in a recent issue an excellent article appeared in which evidence was given as to how the South African government is trying to speed up its process of apartheid. That the government would inevitably do this was certain because it takes its election victory as a mandate from the people. One law which must be implemented is the Group Areas Act. By this law urban areas in South Africa are to be divided into racial districts. The WALL STREET JOURNAL points out the difficulties and the injustices of this process. In describing the situation in Durban, for instance, it says: "Durban's headaches are just beginning. Apartheid theorists want to turn the Indian-occupied areas of Cato Manor and Sydenham, out on the western end of town, into a white neighborhood. And the predominantly white suburbs of Sea View, Hilary and Bellair in southwest Durban are scheduled for transfer to Indians. It's figured all this reshuffling will, over a period of several years, displace 155,000 people, over 35% of the Durban population. And though the experts claim they don't intend to favor the whites in the huge reshuffling process, the statistics indicate flagrant discrimination. Only about 5,000 'Europeans' -- that's what the whites are called here -- will be forced to move their homes. But about 65,000 Indians will have to leave white or African zoned areas. About 85,000 Africans will be uprooted, including both natives and coloreds. Thus apartheid will affect one-fortieth of Durban's white population, almost half the Asian group and about half the African and colored people."

Part of the process of implementing the Group Areas Act is to have all South Africans register by race. This classification is to take place under the Population Registration Act. This process has now been started. Again the WALL STREET JOURNAL says: "Pretoria's Department of Native Affairs, the organization which oversees apartheid planning, has now begun the last phase of the organizing process. In the last few weeks it has started sending out large numbers of classifiers to major cities where every person will be registered by race. 'Once we get everybody permanently classified, we can start moving them into their separate living zones,' says one official."

American Professor Expelled from South Africa: Introductory Note - Professor Emmett Murphy, a young American anthropologist who took Z. K. Matthews' position at the University College of Fort Hare while Matthews was in the United States, was ordered to leave South Africa six weeks before he was scheduled to depart. He and his wife, Joyce, arrived back in the United States June 22nd. Murphy is a graduate of the University of North Carolina. His native state is Georgia. He did some graduate work at the University of Chicago and expects to finish there this year the work for his doctorate in the field of anthropology. While in Africa Murphy made every attempt to steer clear of participating in politics, though his sympathies were with the Defiance Campaign. However, he did not restrict his friendships to only the Europeans in the town of Alice, where the College is located. A letter from one of his fellow-professors, an African, said: "They [Murphy and his wife] really endeared themselves to the hearts of the Non-white section of this College. The Whites in the area have however not taken kindly to their interracial views and practices." No explanation was given to Murphy as to why he was forced to leave. He was simply called an "undesirable alien". He and his wife left South Africa about the same time that Professor and Mrs. Matthews arrived, with no opportunity to meet them.

The following statement has just been received from Emmett Murphy.

George M. Houser

"I was invited by the University College of Fort Hare to spend a year there teaching part of Professor Matthews' work, with time for research of my own. For that research I chose to do a study of the students at Fort Hare, regarding them as a 'native elite', an emerging social group that assumes more and more prominence in the social, cultural, and political life of the Africans in South Africa. My time was largely spent getting detailed biographies of a number of students and gathering information on their problems, their aspirations, their attitudes on race and political matters, and observing their day to day activity. I had been granted a visa and a permit to remain in the Union until 5 July of this year, as had my wife. On 8 May we were served by the local police an order from the Principal Immigration Officer demanding that we leave the country within fourteen days, that is, 22 May. This order was written at the direction of Dr. Donges, Minister of the Interior. It gave no reasons and made no charges. We were unable to get extensions or reasons for the action; the American Ambassador in South Africa is, as far as we know, still working on the matter to try to learn the reasons.

"In general, our position during the year we spent in South Africa was uncomfortable. We were 'on the spot' as regards our racial beliefs and activities; both Europeans and Non-Europeans watched keenly to see how we acted. At the end of our stay we were classified by all, I think, as being definitely on the side of the Non-Europeans, despite the fact that we were on close friendly terms with several of the European staff members at the college and were on good casual terms with a number of European business people and shop clerks in the town of Alice. We had tried to avoid taking an open stand on our views, though we were quite frank with the Non-Europeans at the college and with the European staff members we knew best. The European children in the town of Alice were the most open in showing their dislike of us, and several times showered our house with stones and rotten eggs. We heard frequently of gossip among the townspeople about our friendliness toward Non-Europeans, and as a result of this we appeared in the town only when going to the shops or the movie.

"There is a powerful tension at Fort Hare between the white staff members (it has an interracial staff), particularly the Principal, and the students. Student

regulations are rather severe; in general they imply by their strictness that the students are not to be trusted in most spheres of activity. Since the European universities known to the students do not have comparable regulations, the students assume (with some justification) that the special measures applying at Fort Hare arise from the race of the students and are evidence of race prejudice on the part of the college officials. My wife and I are sure that many members of the college teaching and administrative staff are prejudiced against Africans, though in the personal contacts they have they do not show it. The prejudice is more a matter of feeling that the students, being the near descendants of primitive people, and coming from primitive areas, are not fully civilized and cannot be trusted fully with the management of their own affairs and with the business of determining their own activities. This is deeply resented by the students, and goads them into frequent acts of protest, rebelliousness, and impoliteness. There were, while we were at Fort Hare, periodic crises between the student body and the University Senate (composed of all administrative officials and most teaching personnel), crises in which the students would hold mass protest meetings, would boycott speeches by disliked officials, would send strong letters of complaint to the Principal, and would defy the college regulations. Our opinion is that the students are treated unjustly, just as Non-Europeans all over the Union are, and that they are largely misunderstood by most European staff members. We had no difficulty in making close friendships with the students, despite our color, nor in eliciting very kind and considerate cooperation from them in various things. This was, of course, a source of irritation to several white staff members, that we received all the friendliness and courtesy from the students which they had not been able to get in years of teaching at Fort Hare.

"I suppose there is little need of going over the various facets of the Nationalistic movement in South Africa and of the passive resistance campaign. The reports we have seen in the American press appear to be accurate. The Non-Europeans in South Africa are treated harshly and unjustly in a thousand ways; there is no area now left in the U.S. where Negroes receive treatment as stern and unfair as in South Africa. We feel that there are two opposing forces at work in South Africa today that sweep all else before them. They are the anti-black, nationalistic power seekings of the Nationalist Party (and by a substantial number of supporters of the United Party), and the nationalistic movement of the Africans, which is fast becoming anti-white. We in America must recognize the growing anti-white feeling among the Africans. It is not a deep color prejudice such as many whites possess; it is more a desperate last-resort of self-protective activity. It has been so difficult for the Africans in South Africa to know who their white friends were, and to see them taking a definite stand, that in their desperation they are moving toward the feeling that there will be prejudice against Africans as long as a white person retains power in the country. This trend is not affected, as nearly as we could tell, by people like Duncan or Reverend Scott. The better educated Africans are simply beginning to say, 'We know there are a few whites who do not hate us and want to oppress us, but they are so few and there are so many others who pretend to be friendly while they are working against us that we must wrest power from all whites before we will be safe.'

"As the Nationalist Party and most whites in South Africa grow more extreme and harsh in their attempts to keep the blacks down, so the various African political organizations and most blacks get more extreme in their ambitions to remove the chains which have bound them and to assume control of their own destinies and their land. White liberals are being progressively squeezed out of power by the extremists on both sides, as are African and Indian moderates. Unless a new element enters the picture, we feel, a violent clash between the two forces is inevitable. Mild and hesitant steps will not relieve the tension for long, as many liberals and moderates in South Africa believe. The only thing that will be effective will be a quick granting of fundamental rights to Non-Europeans and embarkation upon a huge program of social and economic progress for all the people. It is our opinion that at least 75% of the Europeans in South Africa are unswervingly opposed to this much.

"The African and Indian leaders we know are sincere in their belief in the use of nonviolent resistance. They operate against more and more violence from the Europeans, however, and find occasional difficulty in restraining their people from meeting violence with violence. More and more influential Africans are reluctantly accepting the opinion that nonviolence will one day prove useless, and that their people will turn to violence. They do not want violence, of course, and the more aid they get from whites in the outside world the more effective will be their nonviolent methods.

"My general feeling is that South Africa is a world on the brink of chaos. The whites go out of their way to boast and brag of their power and prosperity, yet they are at the same time being consumed by a deep anxiety and fearfulness. They provoke the Africans often and seem to be almost anxious for the day to come when the Africans arise and can be put down once and for all by brutal force. The philosophy of liberalism is a dim and scarce heard voice crying in the wilderness of fear and hate. The Africans are suffering more and more, and are increasingly feeling their sufferings. They are becoming disillusioned with the ideals of moderacy, courtesy, and peacefulness. They are pushed off the sidewalks, they are legislated against, they are shamed for being unable to improve themselves, and they are slapped down when they try to improve. They are still willing to try peacefully to alleviate their lot, but they are beginning to wonder if civilized methods will ever bring more than sneers from their white rulers.

"The country is in a mess and is due for violence, in my opinion. My sympathy, though not with violence, is whole-heartedly on the side of the Non-Europeans. This sympathy, though we made no open and official statement of it, is in essence what caused us to be forced out of the country. A person in South Africa today who obviously, however quietly, treats the Non-Europeans on a purely equalitarian basis and fraternizes often with them is a danger to the Government, and we are examples of how clearly the Government recognizes this."

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