

COPY/LMR.

EXTRACT FROM "AMSTERDAM NEWS", NEW YORK,
N.Y., JULY 4, 1953.

S. AFRICA HITS
MATTHEWS' SERIES.

The Government of South Africa is apparently quite unhappy about an interview series published in the Amsterdam News with Dr. Z.K. Matthews, distinguished African educator. Under the headlines, "Black South African Forced Home", and "Detectives Give S. African Educator Rough Welcome", the Amsterdam News printed the story of Dr. Matthews' year-long visit in the U.S.; as a professor of world Christianity at the Union Theological Seminary, and his "forced" return to his homeland when the South African Government refused to extend his passport.

In a letter dated June 25, from the South African Embassy in Washington, a government spokesman declared that the articles "seriously distort many of the facts" concerning Dr. Matthews' visit and return.

WHAT WAS TOLD.

The articles, published May 23 and 30, actually detailed the facts of how the South African government attempted to bulldoze the famous educator and African National Congress leader when it was rumored that he would speak before the United Nations on that country's brutal policies of repression and extermination against its 10 million coloured inhabitants.

The South African press attache, H.M. Moolman, however, insisted to the Amsterdam News that "any representations made to Dr. Matthews with references to his public utterances in America, and particularly with reference to his possible appearance before a United Nations Committee, were made in his own interests, and, indeed, to warn him of certain possible pitfalls".

These "pitfalls", as the Amsterdam News interpreted them, actually were threats to have Dr. Matthews fired from his position as head of the department of African Studies in the University College of Fort Hare in South Africa, thus depriving him of the possibility of making a living, as well as veiled threats that he might be arrested and forced to resign from his office as president of the Cape Province branch of the African National Congress upon his return to the Union.

The government spokesman denied that Matthews might face "extreme punitive measures" from the rulers of that country, but refused to explain why Matthews was met by detectives on his return home, searched, and had many of his papers confiscated. He also did not explain why Matthews had been "tailed" by police in South Africa, according to later information reaching the Amsterdam News.

While making a great deal of the fact that Dr. Matthews returned to his university post when he went back to South Africa, the government spokesman did not say why Prof. Emmett Murphy, Chicago anthropologist who took Matthews' place in the university was reportedly expelled from South Africa just a week before Matthews' return.

SUBSTITUTE /.

SUBSTITUTE EXPELLED.

It is believed here that Murphy was expelled because of his personal friendship with African students, including Dr. Matthews' son, Joseph, who was convicted of "Communism" for advocating equality for Africans.

Despite the fact that arrests of African leaders continue wholesale throughout South Africa, the government spokesman insisted that "there was nothing beyond mischievous newspaper sensationalism, to suggest that Dr. Matthews faced any threat of punishment on his return to the Union.

The letter from the South African Embassy, signed by Mr. Moolman, is, in its essential parts, as follows:

"I do not propose to deal with all the misrepresentations with which both articles abound, but feel your readers should be acquainted with one or two of the facts of the situation.

TELLS OF PASSPORT.

"Your correspondent makes much of the refusal of the South African Government to extend Dr. Matthews' passport. The fact is that Dr. Matthews was given a passport valid for a year, and thus knew precisely when he left the Union what arrangements he would have to make to leave America to return within the period of his passport's validity. Any inconvenience he may have experienced through his delayed return, was of his own making.

"So far as South African officials are concerned, the suggestion that Dr. Matthews endured "threats and harassments" here is a figment of your correspondent's imagination. He at all times received courteous treatment and all reasonable steps were taken to make his representations known to the Government Department in the Union which was the final arbiter in the matter.

FOR HIS OWN GOOD.

"Any representations made to Dr. Matthews with reference to his public utterances in America, and particularly with reference to his possible appearance before a United Nations Committee, were made in his own interests and, indeed, to warn him of certain possible pitfalls.

"The statement that Dr. Matthews 'may very well face extreme punitive measures from the South African Government' on his return to the Union also does not square with the facts. Dr. Matthews is a member of the faculty of the Fort Hare Native College. He knew that he would be required to resume duty there about the time of the expiration of his passport, and a United Press report, published in the New York Herald Tribune, June 8, in fact mentioned that Dr. Matthews had resumed duty as Head of the Department of African Studies at the College".

- - - - -

EDITORIALY.

The Amsterdam News series on Prof. Matthews was written by one of our most careful writers, Richard Lincoln, and checked by editors. It grew out of the respect which New Yorkers gained for Prof. Matthews' integrity during his stay here, and the Amsterdam News' following of the entire South African situation, as well as any responsible newspaper can.

It is not surprising that South African governmental officers are not pleased with the series. They were not even pleased a few weeks ago with a song in a London night club titled "Don't Malign Malan".

Perhaps, if South Africa wants to give its side, it will invite a group of representatives of the Negro press to visit South Africa and travel freely seeing what there is without proscription.

G. JAMES FLEMING.

Executive Editor.

The ambassador, in fact, insisted that he had refused permission to a representative of the Bantu National Congress (a government controlled organisation) who wanted to speak in favour of "apartheid" because of the "Illegality" of such testimony.

Matthews said that he refused to make such a statement as the ambassador wished. "I refused on the grounds that it would be premature," he said, "and that the African National Congress, of which I am a representative, had already asked the UN for an opportunity to place the grievance of the African people before the world organization, and as an official of the Congress I was in duty bound to hold myself in readiness to appear on their behalf should their request be granted."

Shortly thereafter, an official of the United States State Department, came to visit Dr. Matthews, who, the African leader said, "used his 'good officers' in an endeavour to dissuade me from taking a step that might be 'calamitous' so far as my future career in South Africa was concerned.

"I told the American officials that I would do what I considered to be my duty according to my convictions without regard to the official pressure to which I had been subjected."

Meanwhile, he said, the South African white press raised the issue prominently, and he received a letter from his principal at Fort Hare University, Prof. Dent, "which instructed me not to accept an invitation to appear at the United Nations.

The principal told Matthews that he had been warned by the South African Education Department that the Department will be reluctantly compelled to take a very serious view of the matter as he (Matthews) is employed by your college which receives a considerable subsidy from the State."

Prof. Matthews replied to his principal "that I had not yet been invited to speak but, if I did, I would decide and not allow any intimidation to influence me in my decision."

"The amazing thing," Dr. Matthews said, "is that despite the do-do this thing was causing in the South African press, the United States papers gave the entire matter the silent treatment."

Eventually, the matter was actually raised in the UN by a delegate from Liberia "whom I had not even met at the time," who told the UN committee that Prof. Matthews ought to be heard.

The chairman of the committee, Alexis Kyrou of Greece, asked the Liberian delegate not to press his request since it "would create a precedent" and suggested a submission by Dr. Matthews of a "written statement".

Later, a letter of Dr. Matthews commenting strongly on the official pressure brought to bear on him was circulated among the delegates. He also sent the UN a memorandum from the African National Congress detailing their grievances, but the document was never officially circulated among the delegates.