

# Congress and Non-Collaboration

(BY N. NOMNGANGA)

IF Mr. J. G. Matthews in his letter (Inkundla 29-10-49) was replying to my letter (Inkundla 15-10-49) on Congress and non-collaboration, then he had better start again for he has not answered the question raised at all. The point made by me is that there is a discrepancy between Congress policy and practice. The question therefore is, does Congress take its resolutions on non-collaboration seriously? If it does, then this will be revealed in its actions. So far its actions do not give rise to any belief that Congress honours or intends to honour its resolutions.

Instead of answering this, Mr. Matthews goes into a lot of irrelevancies about the NRC, raves, slates and all but slanders me. (I do not know in what relation Mr. Matthews stands to Prof. Matthews, but if he is any relation at all I suggest, without descending to personalities, that this fact must handicap him seriously in his attempts at an objective appraisal of the situation.) The first thinking he should understand is that the name of Prof. Matthews was incidental to the discussion of the principle of non-collaboration and is not of any particular importance from my point of view; any other name would have done equally well. The only reason it was singled out was that the editor of Inkundla had referred specifically to this name. All that we did was to tell the editor that it is not the personality that matters, but the policy of the organisation which elected him. The question is not whether Prof. Matthews remains in the NRC or not, but whether Congress is collabara-

tionist or not. Mr. Matthews seems to have failed to grasp just this little, though important, point.

This explains why Mr. Matthews is content with the use of emotive language calculated to conceal the fact that he is not thinking at all but merely repeating shibboleths to confuse the real issue. When Mr. Matthews refers to "paid agents" (of whom?—he does not say, but I would not be surprised if he said Moscow), one cannot resist the temptation to ask: Who are the paid agents anyway, we who stand for non-collaboration, or the MRCs who receive £120 per annum from the South African Government in order to keep up the myth that the Africans have representative institutions? Renegade intellectuals and Trotskyites have for him the same meaning as windmills had to Don Quixote, for Mr. Matthews imagines himself to be another David facing all these Goliaths! A more fitting label for him would be "emotionalist"; but he should remember that, although emotion is essential to the development of national consciousness, it has never been known to be an organizing and directing force. Direction and organization need more than Mr. Matthews' emotionalism. Of course to him these are merely swear-words reserved for people with whom he disagrees. One is reminded of Dr. Malan telling the United Party, of all political parties in S. A., that it is Communistic!

Mr. Matthews would even claim that African nationalism is a mysterious experience that can be revealed only to the initiated.

He seems to regard himself as its repository, fount, prophet and apostle all rolled into one. But there are nationalists and nationalists. Unfortunately Mr. Matthews, who prefers to be a mystic when it comes to such matters will be doing African nationalism a disservice if he condemns it to the sterility which is associated with a liberal use of invective and vituperation. (As for his suggestion that Congress is sacrosanct and therefore beyond criticism, I should remind him that we are the people whom the "emotionalists" of the Matthews type claim to lead, and that it is presumptuous on his part to tell us to shut up when our destiny is at stake.) We have every reason to claim that our organisations should represent our views, demands and aspirations, and we will exercise our right of criticism of Congress policy, in or out of Congress, and notwithstanding the intolerance of all the Matthewses. Again one cannot escape remembering Dr. Malan railing at the South African press for "misrepresenting" the Nationalist Government overseas.

I could go on like this dealing with the irrelevancies of Mr. Matthews' letter, but this is enough to show that the question I raised has not been answered. The nearest he ever gets to an answer is when he says: "If the CYL speak of non-collaboration they know what it means." Which enlightens no one. Someone more capable of being more objective than Mr. Matthews may wish to enlighten us as to just why Congress policy and practice do not dovetail.