UNISA DOCUMENTATION CENTRE FOR AFRICAN STUDIES

THE PERSONAL PAPERS OF

ZACHARIAH KEODIRELANG MATTHEWS

Updated by
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ZK Matthews biographical information

Zachariah Keodirelang Matthews was born in Kimberley in 1901. After finishing high school, he enrolled for a BA degree at Fort Hare, and completed it in 1923 – thereby becoming the first African to obtain a BA degree at a South African Institution. After private study, Matthews became in 1930, the first African to earn an LL.B. degree in South Africa, and was admitted as an attorney to the Johannesburg bar and the Transvaal division of the Supreme Court. In 1933 he was invited to study at Yale University in the United States, and the following year he completed an MA there. Afterwards he spent a year at the London School of Economics to study anthropology.

He returned to South Africa in 1935, and in 1936 he was appointed lecturer at Fort Hare in Social Anthropology and Native Law and Administration. In 1944 Matthews became head of Fort Hare’s department of African Studies, and he was also promoted to professor.

On the political front, Matthews became ANC provincial president for the Cape in June 1949. He proposed the basic idea of the Congress of the People in his presidential address to the Cape annual conference in August 1953. In December 1956, when he was the acting principal of Fort Hare, he became one of the accused in the Treason Trial. On his release from the trial in late 1958, he returned to Fort Hare. In 1962 Matthews moved to Geneva to become secretary of the Africa division of the World Council of Churches. In 1966 he accepted the post of ambassador to the United States and chief United Nations representative for Botswana. He died in the United States in 1968.

Bridging the gap between the old guard and the more militant younger members of the African National Congress in the late 1940’s and 1950’s, Matthews exercised a major guiding and moderating influence on African political history in its most crucial period. He was at the same time South Africa’s, and perhaps the continent’s, most distinguished African intellectual.


This collection consists of handwritten manuscripts, letters, pamphlets, photos, typed reports and lectures, with bound and loose leaf pages. 1453 items.
ZK Matthews collection

A  RESEARCH ITEMS

A1  Yale University

A1.1 - A1.18  Correspondence  30/3/1933 – 20/1/1934

A1.19  Bantu law and western civilization in South Africa: a study in the clash of cultures. MA thesis, Yale, May 1934

A2  Barolong research

A2.1 - A2.16  Correspondence 13/5/1935 – 5/11/1935 with International African Institute, Dr. A Kerr, JD Rheinallt Jones, Dr. I Schapera and others

A2.17 - A2.35  Field reports and notes

A2.36 - A2.50  History of the Barolong

A2.51 - A2.77  Genealogies and regiments

A2.78 - A2.97  Family life and culture of Barolong

A2.98 - A2.106  Kinship among Barolong

A2.107 - A2.133  Miscellaneous notes and notebooks

A2.134 - A2.146  Praise poems

B  POLITICS

B1  Native Representative Council

B1.1 - B1.13  Correspondence relating to work of NRC 1942 - 1944

B1.14 - B1.22  Documents re NRC dispute with Govt. 1946

B2  African National Congress

B2.1 - B2.2  Constitution, 1942, Rules and regulations

B2.3 - B2.25  Conferences 1946 - 1955

B2.26  Questionnaire re Campaign against Bantu Education Act, 1955

B2.27 - B2.31  ANC Quarterly Bulletin 1, 1 Sept 1949 - 2, 4 Sept 1951

B2.32  Summary of ZKM’s activities in ANC 1953 - 1956

B2.74 - B2.115 Correspondence re Defiance Campaign 1952 – 1953 including 18 letters from JG Matthews describing events in South Africa, 28/6/52 – 7/1/53; and the collection of funds for the Campaign in the USA.

B2.116 Treason Trial 1956 - 1961


B2.135 - B2.147 Treason Trial’s Defence Fund. Press summaries Feb - Nov 1959. 6, 8 - 13, 16 - 17, 21 - 22

B2.148 - B2.149 Regina v. Adams and others

B3 General political correspondence, 1936 - 1967. Includes letters from: -


Includes correspondence with: -

Canon Collins 1959, Defence and Aid Fund 1961, JS Dey re Multi-Racial Conference 1957, Professor Nic Olivier 1959

B4 Political articles and statements by ZK Matthews, 1930 - 1967

B4.1 The political needs of the Bantu. (1930's?) 3p. Incomplete. TS

B4.2 The Colour problems of South Africa. (Review of the book by EH Brookes. Different to published version, see B4.3.1940) 6p. MS

B4.4 The rehabilitation and development of the Reserves.
South African Outlook, 75, 895, Nov. 1945, p.166 - 170

B4.5 Native Laws Inquiry Commission. Statements by
Professor ZK Matthews and Dr. M Wilson.
17/10/1946. 9p. Roneod

B4.6 The Native Laws Amendment Bill. (1957?). 11p. TS

B4.7 The next twenty-five years in race relations in South Africa.
SAIRR 14/6/1948. 3p. Roneod

B4.8 The political needs of the African. 1948
(Different version to B4.9) p.1 -15, 25 - 27 Incomplete. TS

B4.9 An African policy for South Africa. SAIRR
30/12/1948. 7p. Roneod

B4.10 Race relations in South Africa. (1940's?) 16. TS

B4.11 Untitled incomplete article on politics (1940's?) 6p. MS

B4.12 (Historical survey of “Non-European” politics in
South Africa. 1852 - late 1940's). 32p. MS

B4.13 Memorial service, Port Elizabeth, May 14, 1950.
Incomplete. 5p. TS

B4.14 (Non-co-operation and co-operation, early 1950's) 7p. MS


B4.16 Africa today and tomorrow. (Inaugural address as
Henry W Luce Visiting Professor of World Christianity
at Union Theological Seminary, New York), 1952 - 1953. 19p. TS


B4.18 Apartheid - another view. Journal of International Affairs,
7, 2, 1953, p. 145 - 150

B4.19 - B4.21 Untitled speech and articles re the Defiance Campaign and
ANC (1952 - 1953) MS and TSS

B4.22 The Black man’s outlook. Saturday Review,
2/5/53. 8p. TS

B4.23 The challenge of Africa. (1952 - 1953) 4p. MS


B4.26 Emancipation for all - or chaos. Emancipation Day Program. Peoples Baptist Church. 1/1/53. 7p. TS

B4.27 Gandhi and South Africa. (1952 - 1953) 4p. TS

B4.28 The ICU (1925 - 1953) 8p. TS

B4.29 The place of Africa in the world today. (Howard University. 14/4/53). 16p. MS and TS

B4.30 Racial antagonism (1952 - 1953) 12p. TS

B4.31 South Africa 1952. 3p. TS


B4.33 The South African elections and after. Written for Life, May 1953, but not published. 4p. TS

B4.34 To be or not to be - interned. Includes “African and the War” published in Commonsense, 1942. 11p. MS and TS

B4.35 Miscellaneous notes for speeches on brotherhood. (1952 - 1953) 19p. MS


B4.38 South Africa: alternatives to disaster. The role of Non-White political organizations. Africa today, Nov - Dec. 1957. 4p. TS

B4.39 A memorandum for the Commission on Penal and Prison Reform (1947?) 3p. TS

B4.40 The outlook for our generation. (1959?) 16p. TS

B4.41 Social relations in a common society. (1959?) 11p. MS

B4.42 Untitled article on general political situation in South Africa. (1959?) p. 19 - 44. Incomplete. TS
B4.43  Bantu aspirations. (1950's). 12p. MS

B4.44  The Emergency regulations 1960. 11p. Incomplete. TS

B4.45  Social relations in a common South African society. Supplement to Optima, March, 1961. 30p. MS


B4.47  Crime and the African in South Africa. No date. 3p. TS

B5.  Political miscellany

Articles etc. by others

B5.1  Linington, PA. A summary of the reports of certain pre-Union Commissions on Native Affairs March 1924. Incomplete. 27p. Roneod

B5.2  (NUSAS Survey of Transkei 1947?) 26p. Incomplete. TS

B5.3  Ntloko, CS. The report of the Native Laws Commission, 1946 - 1948; a review. 7p. TS

B5.4  Warner, HS. South Africa: who provoked the riots? The Nation, 21/2/1953, p. 167 - 169

B5.5  Booth, AR. Memorandum to W. C. C. colleagues re: Policy on South Africa. July 1964. 6p. TS

B5.6  African General Workers’ Union. Constitution. No date. 5p. Roneod

B6.1 - B6.55  Political newspaper clippings re NRC, ANC, Treason Trial etc.

C  EDUCATION

C1.1 - C1.6  Adams College

C2  Correspondence on education matters

C2.1 - C2.97  University College of Fort Hare 1935 - 1958 with Sir Fulque Agnew, Dr. EH Brookes, CP Dent, Professor LJ du Plessis, Professor AS Galloway, Professor DDT Jabavu, AC Jordan, Dr. A Kerr Professor JD Krige, CT Loram, GIM Mzamane, SB Ngcobo, MOM Seboni, P Ka I Seme, Donald Stuart, WM Tsotsoi, A Vilakazi, Quintin Whyte, and others
C2.98 - C2.262  1959 - 1961 contains correspondence re resignation from Fort Hare, including advice, congratulations etc. from JA Calata, WS Gawe, A Luthuli, Govan Mbeki, JS Moroka and others; and various offers of other positions eg. from Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass., New School of Social Research, New York, Union Theological Seminary, University of Cape Town etc.

C2.263 - C2.299  Union Theological Seminary 1952 - 1953

C3  Lecture notes

University College of Fort Hare

C3.1 - C3.54  Native Law - general and delicts

C3.55 - C3.81  Public Administration - Native Administration and labour

C3.82 - C3.86  Miscellaneous

C3.87 - C3.95  Union Theological Seminary

C4  Articles and statements on education, university apartheid etc.  1930's - 1968

C4.1  (Native education. late 1930's) 5p. MS

C4.2  South African African Teachers Federation. Presidential address, Dec, 1940. 14p. MS (Published in The Good Shepherd, 13, 26, March 1941)

C4.3  Comments on the letter by Dr. Wolheim on the appointment of Africans as principals of Native Secondary Schools. (1941?) 8p. MS

C4.4  Untitled article on Native Education. (1947?) 3p. MS

C4.5  African music in South Africa (1940's) 5p. TS

C4.6  The aims of Native Education (1940's) 3p. TS

C4.7  Higher education for the Bantu in South Africa (1940's) 13p. TS

C4.8  Native Education in the Union (1940's) 10p. MS

C4.9  Native high schools in Natal (1940's) 4p. MS

C4.10  Recent developments in Native education (1940's) 11p. Incomplete. MS
C4.11 The educational needs of the African (1952 - 1953) 3p. Incomplete. TS
C4.12 Transvaal African Teachers’ Association Jubilee Conference. Address. 1956. 11p. TS and MS
C4.13 The University College of Fort Hare. Reprint from South African Outlook, April - May 1957. 35p.
C4.14 Memorandum on separate university education 1957. 19p. TS
C4.15 Natal University Convocation. Address on history of Fort Hare. (June 1959) 14p. MS
C4.16 The crisis in university education in South Africa. (1959?) 18p. TS
C4.18 Africans in the Union: education. (1950's) 19p. MS
C4.20 African awakening and the universities. TB Davie Memorial Lecture 1961. 35p. MS
C4.21 Education for nationhood. 1968. 6p. TS
C4.22 The University in a multi-racial society. No date. 5p. MS
C4.23 - C4.24 Notes on education. No date. 3p. MS
C5.1 - C5.32 Newspaper clippings on education, university apartheid

D GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE 1937 - 1960

D1 - D94 Contains very general matters such as invitations to attend conferences or to give talks or write articles eg. for Optima. Other matters include correspondence re the African Horizon Insurance Company, 1957, and correspondence re obtaining a passport for Matthews’ son, John Knox, to study medicine in the UK, etc.
E1    General correspondence 1961 - 1968

E1.1 - E1.112 Contains similar material to Section D, but includes for example correspondence re receiving an honorary LLD degree from Rhodes University in 1961, the delivery of the third TB Davie Memorial Lecture at the University of Cape Town in 1961, and the series of articles called ‘Our Heritage’ from Imvo Zabantsundu

E2    World Council of Churches

E2.1 - E2.22 World Council of Churches Consultation, Cottesloe, Johannesburg, 7 - 14 Dec. 1960

E2.23 - E2.51 Correspondence, 1961 - 1966

E2.52 - E2.55 Miscellany

E3    Botswana

E3.1 - E3.43 Early political contacts 1935 - 1960, including documents re dispute over Proclamations 74 and 75 of 1934; dispute between Tshekedi and Seretse Khama, 1950; Tshekedi Khama’s death, 1959

E3.44 - E3.56 Various educational projects, April - June 1966

E3.57 - E3.81 Ambassador to the United States and Permanent Representative to the United Nations

E4    Condolences and Tributes

E4.1 - E4.50 Selection of letters telegrams etc. sent after the death of ZK Matthews

E4.51 - E4.54 Degree certificates (copies)

E4.55 - E4.61 Articles about ZK Matthews

E4.62 - E4.80 Biographical newspaper clippings

F    MISCELLANEOUS

F1    Miscellaneous articles by ZK Matthews

F1.1 The ever-widening - ever-narrowing world.
Undated. 26p. TS

F1.2 Problems of Bantu youth; a study in culture contacts.
Undated. 12p. TS
F1.3 The South-Eastern Bantu: the Zulu-Xosa group.  
Undated.  16p.  TS

F1.4 Professor DDT Jabavu of Fort Hare.  Obituary, 1959.  
5p.  TS1

F1.5 Outline of chapters on South Africa.  (of D72) 3p.  TS

F1.6 - F1.31 Our Heritage.  A series of biographical articles written for  
Imvo Zabantsundu, 1961.  TS

F2 Miscellaneous articles by others

F2.1 Pitje, GM.  Some notes on marriage custom among the  
Pedi and cognate tribes.  Undated.  30p.  TS

F2.2 On the teaching of law.  Undated, incomplete.  21p.  TS

F3 Miscellaneous documents

F3.1 Union of South Africa.  Department of Native Affairs.  
Report of the Inter-departmental Committee on the social,  
health and economic conditions of urban Natives.  
1942.  30p.

F3.2 Ciskeian General Council.  Proceedings at special sessions.  
1945.  22p.

F3.3 Ciskeian Missionary Council.  Resolutions ... of 14th  
February 1945 on the Report of the National Health  
Services Commission in so far as it affects missionary work.  
1p.  TS

F3.4 - F3.5 African Horizon Insurance Co. Ltd.  Specimen premium  
receipt book and policy declaration.  (1957)

F3.6 African Horizon Insurance Co. Ltd.  Memo on deposit  
receiving institution for Africans (1957).  2p.  TS

F3.7 African Horizon Insurance Co. Ltd.  Names and addresses.  
1p.  MS

F3.8 South African Institute of Race Relations.  The logic of  
economic integration.  1952.  15p.  Roneod

F3.9 National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA  
Information Service.  20/6/1953.  South Africa: is racial  
separation possible?  8p.

F3.10 A survey of Southern Africa.  The Economist 7.8.1965.  30p