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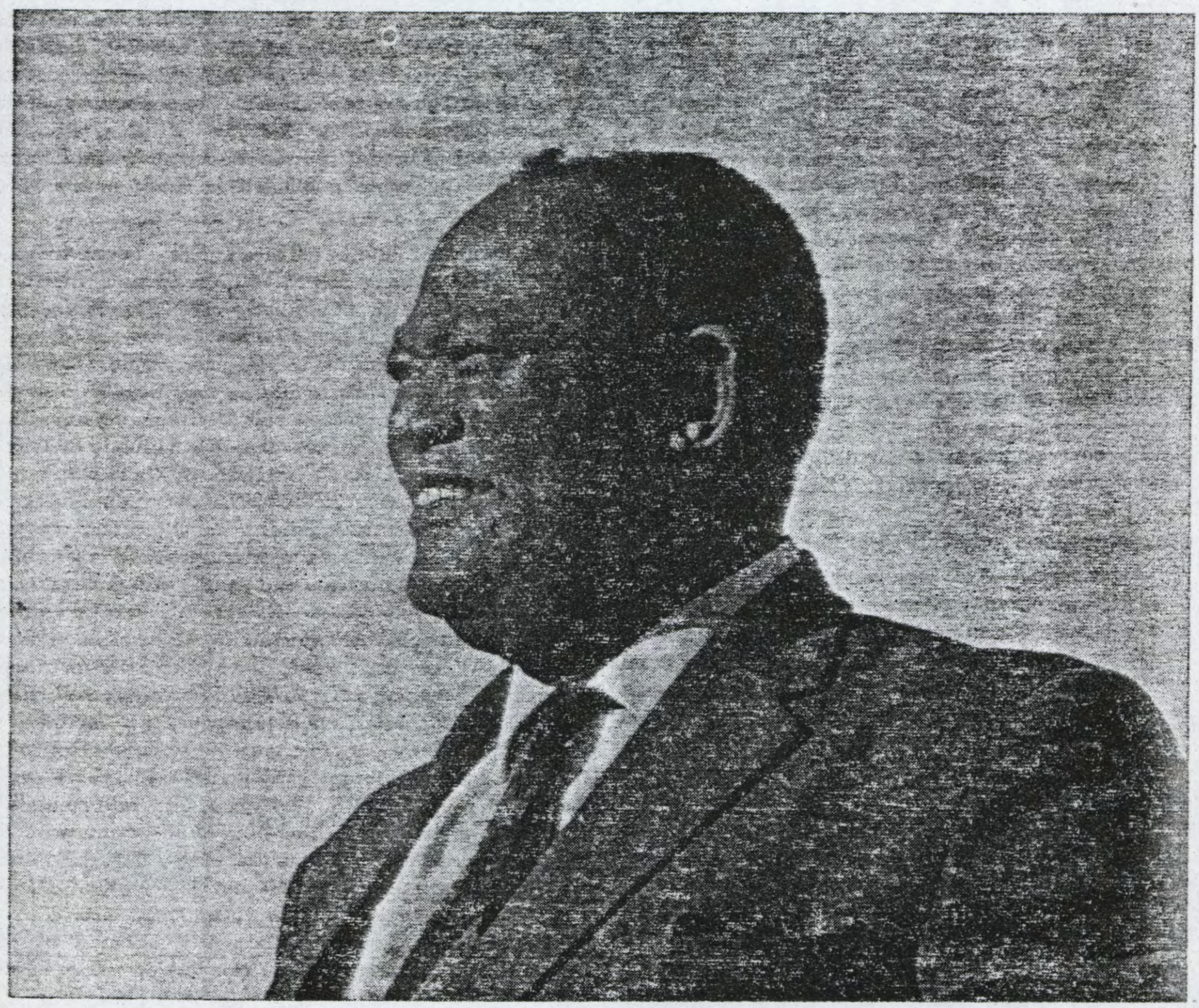
SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Z. K. MATTHEWS



Professor Z. K. Matthews was a great South African patriot. Despite being deprived of his vote at the very time that he was appointed Research Fellow of the International Institute of African Languages and Culture; despite being arrested for High Treason; despite dying in exile in the service of another country; he was a man of too great a stature to be thus dismissed by his own country. And this was acknowledged in his death by the newspapers across the land. In leader after leader South Africans wrote of their loss. Yet must we wait for men to die before we are publicly prepared to recognize their greatness? 'There will,' said a Bloemfontein newspaper, 'be no firm peace in South Africa unless men like Matthews can fulfill their aspirations inside her borders.' This issue of the South African Outlook is dedicated to the memory of Z. K. Matthews, not only because we wish to pay him homage but also in the hope that men may be inspired by his life to work for that well-being of his country for which he strove so valiantly.

HIS LIFE

ALEXANDER KERR

The career of Z.K. Matthews, in passing from the primary school in Kimberley Location to the Botswana Embassy attached to the United States in Washington and to the United Nations in New York, re-enacts in its own terms and scale the not uncommon formula of the passage 'From Log Cabin to White House'.

What were the characteristics of the man who died at his post last May at the age of sixty-eight? Perhaps the present writer had opportunities of knowing what these characteristics were as well as any member of one race can know one of a widely different society throughout the period from youth till life's end. I enrolled Z.K. Matthews in 1918 as a student of what was then the South African Native College at Fort Hare, then only in the third year of its existence, and watched his course till he matriculated, after which he took courses for the Arts degree of the University of South Africa. None of these courses presented any difficulty to a diligent student like Matthews, who by this time had acquired a good grasp of English, the medium of instruction, nor did the post-graduate diploma which qualified him to teach.

In 1925 he was appointed to the secondary school at Adams College in Natal and was later promoted to be head of the school. While holding this onerous post he continued to study for the Bachelor degree in Law and in due course graduated LL.B. of the University of South Africa. Through the influence of Dr. C. T. Loram, who had by this time been appointed a professor at the University of Yale, Matthews was granted a scholarship to study there and in due time graduated Master of Arts. He then went to London where he took courses in Social Anthropology under Professor Malinowski. When he returned to South Africa, in view of these additional qualifications and his law degree he was appointed Lecturer on the staff of Fort Hare in Native Law and Social Anthropology. His next step was promotion to a professorship and to the headship of the Department of African Studies, a position which he held until the College passed under the direction of the Department of Bantu Education, when he resigned.

Shortly after Matthews' appointment to Fort Hare he and I, with the kind permission of the College Council, accepted an invitation to serve on the De la Warr Imperial Commission on Higher Education in East Africa and also in the Sudan. Of the Commission of nine, we were the only two who had any direct experience of the education of Africans, and we could not be oblivious of the influence of this direct experience upon the ideas of our British colleagues. At the same time the exchange of ideas with these colleagues and with educationists in East Africa engaged upon a task similar to ours had a very definite influence upon our own work at Fort Hare. Matthews proved his worth as an adviser and though he was handicapped like the rest of us by ignorance of the local language, his kinship with the Africans in Uganda and Kenya and, to a lesser extent because of the religious element, in the Sudan, helped him to make a useful and individually significant contribution to the deliberations of the Commission. He was early recognised by the U.K. members as one to whom and from whom communication on equal terms was possible without reservation. In the light of subsequent events this interlude in Matthews' career may be regarded as a prelude to an assignment by the World Council of Churches thirty years later, when he and Sir Hugh Foot carried out a survey of the plight of refugees in Africa. The report they issued opened the eyes of the world to a situation calling for attention from the United Nations and other philanthropic bodies, which appeared clamant enough even in the synopsis which this magazine published in three numbers (May, June, and July, 1965.)

To the political field in his own country, South Africa, Matthews had an orderly and useful introduction when General Smuts appointed him a member of the Native Representative Council which it was hoped would advise the Government in framing legislation for the African people. But after ten years the African leaders, finding that their representations were making little impression on Ministers, became discouraged and resentful at the absence of attention to their recommendations. In his Life of J. H. Hofmeyr, Alan Paton, writing of Matthews as a member of the Native Representative Council, says (p. 438) 'Here was another man whom fate was forcing into a mould for which his temperament did not fit him..... By nature he was deliberate and gentle, with none of the tricks of the demagogue.' But though he may have been unfitted for the hustings, there was no mistaking the firmness with which he held and expressed the principles he believed in. In addition to sensitivity he also possessed that historic sense which led him to see that inherited customs, even if harmful, could only be ousted by patience and the slow working of time. He could not suffer compromise on the fundamental principle that all men are equal in the eyes of God, and none of those who knew anything at all of him could be unaware that it underlay all his thought and teaching. After the failure of the Native Representative Council his political allegiance was given to more popular political organizations. With others who were fretting under what they deemed oppressive laws he suffered a period of detention which he bore with patience and equanimity; but he found his rightful sphere when on Botswana's becoming independent, his former student at Fort Hare, Sir Seretse Khama, first President of the new State, appointed him Ambassador to the United States and representative of his country at the United Nations. After only two years in this office, in which he approved himself to President Johnson and other dignitaries of States, his health caused anxiety and after an operation he succumbed in Washington. President Johnson did him the singular honour of sending his body back to Botswana in his (the President's) own plane. It had been 'Z. K.'s' intention, if he had lived, to return with his accomplished wife to Botswana, where as an elder statesman, he might have continued to serve his country, his Chief, and his President.

A MAN FOR RECONCILIATION

MONICA WILSON

Ascension Day 1968.

Z. K. Matthews was a man with a shadow (*nesithunzi,* in Xhosa), that is a man of dignity and authority, the sort of authority that derives from an integrated personality. The man who loses his identity casts no shadow.[1] What is symbolized in Xhosa and many other African languages is what Tillich calls the 'Power.....of self-affirmation in spite of internal and external negation.'[2]

Z. K. was a man reconciled within himself, and he stood all his life for reconciliation—reconciliation without capitulation. He married for love across the Sotho-Nguni cleavage, and that marriage was a partnership greatly blessed, untouched by the conflicts that can derive from difference in language and custom. This was something ordinary people, whether Sotho-or Nguni-speaking, did not fail to note.

In the academic boards and councils on which he served for so long he was concerned to reconcile opposing viewpoints. Watching him in the Senate at Fort Hare (where I served as a lecturer in his Department) I was reminded of a councillor in a chief's court, bred in the tradition that a court exists to reconcile quarrelling parties, rather than to enforce a rigid code of law.

He stood for the reconciliation of a pagan past and a Christian present; for the merging of small, isolated communities in a wider society; for friendship between those of different race. He sought the transformation of South African society from one which is based on race to one which is not based on race. He did not seek the continuation of a racial society with a change in boss which is all the majority of white South Africans can conceive of, and which they fear so deeply. Because he did not hold aloof, or hide in an ivory tower, but worked directly for this transformation as an active member, and finally President of the Cape branch of the African National Congress, he was imprisoned and tried for treason. He was also sniped at continuously from two sides: some of the students at Fort Hare were accusing him of being a 'stooge,' even hanging their accusations on College noticeboards, at the same time as many of my white friends were speaking of him as 'an extremist' if not 'a communist.' In this political tussle he stood also for the reconciliation of generations, knowing well the bitterness of disagreement, and the joy of coming together, within his own family. Attacks from two sides continued to dog him, for when he travelled in Africa he was repeatedly suspect as the bearer of a South African passport, though in South Africa he was tried for treason, and long pestered by watchers on his movements and guests.

Criticism bit deep but he endured without bitterness, and continued to be able to laugh. The judge who tried him for treason and acquitted him, congratulated him, at the end of the case, on the manner in which he had given evidence. He could view even his own case with an astonishing measure of objectivity. And I remember a sunny day after he had come out of gaol when he told of the absurdities of that period of imprisonment without a trace of malice. It was in the manner of a soldier returned from battle who can yet recall the comradeship and the jokes.

Z. K. had wide experience of men and he was shrewd. Even before he left South Africa for Geneva, and travelled up and down Africa on behalf of Inter-Church Aid, or went to live in New York and Washington as an Ambassador, he had far more direct experience of the modern, large-scale world than most South Africans, whatever their complexion. Many years ago when someone was enlarging on the danger of African nationalists being used by communists I heard him murmur: 'I do not think that will happen. After all we Africans have had a lot of experience of whites trying to use us.' It was no accident that he had lived very close to at least one saintly man, the first Warden of Beda Hall, at Fort Hare, for friendship with the saints gives a measure of quality. The window in St. Peter's Chapel, in the Federal Theological Seminary at Alice comes from the old Beda chapel. It shows a pupil at the feet of his master who is expounding the scripture, and though the dress is that of medieval Europe the faces are familiar: the master is Bishop Edmund Smythe, the pupil Z. K. Matthews.

Z. K.'s Gethsemane came when he had the choice between resigning from the College he loved, and of which he was acting-Principal, and compromising his principles. He resigned within two years of the age of retirement, and lost both job and pension rights. He earned a living by practising as an attorney at Alice. In 1961 he gave the third T. B. Davie Lecture at the University of Cape Town, on *African Awakening and the Universities,*[3] examining the part South African Universities might play in training new leaders for Africa. In this he had shared at Fort Hare when it drew many students from beyond the boundaries of what was then the Union, and he deeply regretted that South African Universities could no longer fulfill this function.

Then he left for Geneva with something of the air of a fighter who has been defeated and who goes into exile. But in August 1966 when he was about to leave Geneva, it was quite different. He had done an arduous job for the rest of Africa and succeeded in it. He had edited a remarkable book on *Political Responsibility in a Revolutionary Age*[4] and, although certainly of age to retire, he was embarking on a new job as Ambassador for Botswana. He was gay that August, the gaiety of a man who has come through a valley of the shadow and emerged in a flowery meadow above, unexpected and unforeseen.

Black and white have got to live together in South Africa. Many recognize this as a God-given challenge and opportunity, but some are so fearful that they can conceive of no future in which they themselves do not retain exclusive power. Z. K. pointed to another path, and others will follow him. Here was a statesman and a great South African. What is wrong with South Africa that she drives out such sons?

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HIS DEATH

MANGOSUTHU GATSHA BUTHELEZI

On May 17th, the body of Professor Z. K. Matthews was taken to Trinity Church to lie in state. It is significant that it was Trinity Church that was to be the scene of his funeral services, because it was largely through him, while he worked for the World Council of Churches, that funds were granted by that body for the erection of this church building. Naturally, it was an ecumenical venture, and Trinity Church is used by Anglicans, Methodists, and Presbyterians. A short but very moving service, conducted by the Reverend Father Butler, was held in the Church that evening.

After a short break, a Wake was held and the Reverend Ngcayiya officiated at this service. As the funeral service scheduled for the following day was to be a State one, tributes were paid to the late Dr. Matthews during the early part of the Wake by various people who knew him during his life time. Among these people were his former colleagues at Fort Hare, Professor C. L. S. Nyembezi and Mr. C. S. Ntloko; Mr. Ntusi who represented the Transkei Government; the Rev. G. Setiloane and a representative of The World Council of Churches from Kitwe; Mr. Makanya who represented Fort Hare University College; and myself. His colleagues spoke about Dr. Matthews the academician, a first in many spheres of achievement, Dr. Matthews the family man, and Dr. Matthews the leader of men. The representative from the World Council of Churches paid tribute to Dr. Matthews the churchman, and the role he played while he worked under that body. Mr. Makanya, after conveying Fort Hare's message of condolence to the family, spoke briefly of Professor Matthews as he knew him. Among other things he recalled what the late Professor Matthews once said about racial discrimination. He had said that he could tolerate discrimination between the educated and the uneducated, because the uneducated could at least be inspired by such discrimination to get some education. He could also tolerate some discrimination between clean people and dirty people because the dirty could ameliorate their situation with a piece of soap and water. BUT he abhorred racial discrimination on the basis of colour as no one could help being born the colour he is! Mr. Makanya ended up by asking the family and all of us to be grateful to God for the quality of life lived by the late Professor Matthews. I attempted to pay tribute to him as one of his former students. I recalled the sterling qualities which he showed when, on a matter of principle, he resigned from Fort Hare, thereby forfeiting his pension benefits. I also recalled the ordeal which he and the late Chief Luthuli, and others went through during the Treason Trial and how he emerged out of all these tribulations absolutely unembittered. He had, in doing so, fulfilled our Lord's injunction that we should love even our enemies. These tributes were interspersed with hymn singing and prayers. The prayers and singing lasted the whole night.

On the morning of May the 18th a Requiem Mass was celebrated by Father Butler in the presence of the Right Reverend K. J. F. Skelton, Bishop of Matabeleland. The funeral service proper commenced promptly at 11 a.m. and was conducted by Father Butler. The sermon was preached by Bishop Skelton. As I looked around Trinity Church I was deeply moved and thought to myself that there could not have been a better setting for the funeral of the man as I knew him. A multi-racial choir sang beautifully in Sechuana and in English. Sir Seretse Khama, the President of Botswana, and Lady Khama, and the Botswana Cabinet attended. The VIP's included members of the Diplomatic Corps representing various countries, European, African and even Chinese. In this setting, race and colour were irrelevant. One of the most poignant moments, as far as I am concerned, was the arrival of Joe Matthews, the eldest son, just as we sang the first hymn. I was also touched to watch the lonely figure that Dr. Moroka appeared to be just at this time. He had not only been a former President-General of the banned African National Congress of which the late Professor Matthews had been a Provincial President and Executive member, but was also a colleague of his in the former Native Representative Council, and one of his closest friends.

During the funeral service a tribute on behalf of all the African members of the Diplomatic Corps, was paid by Mr. Mohale, Lesotho's Ambassador to Washington and that country's permanent representative to the United Nations. He told us briefly of the high esteem in which Professor Matthews was held by all his former colleagues during the time that he had been Botwana's Ambassador to Washington and permanent representative to the United Nations. On behalf of President Johnson and the American people Mr. Clark paid tribute and conveyed a message of condolence. President Johnson had made available a plane which had brought the deceased's mortal remains from Washington to Gaberones. The Hon. M. P. K. Mwako, Minister of State, expressed condolences to the family on behalf of the Botswana President, Sir Seretse Khama, and the Government of Botswana. He lamented the loss Botswana had sustained as a result of the death of Dr. Matthews after only eighteen months of meritorious service to Botswana.

After the funeral service one of the longest corteges I have ever seen wound its way to the outskirts of Gaberones where the cemetry is. The rites at the grave-side were performed by Bishop Skelton. There were hundreds of people of all races from all parts of South Africa, Botswana and Lesotho. Mrs. Freda Matthews was the very personification of composure and dignity in her grief, as were her children. Joe supported his mother throughout the service at the grave-side. Mr. Stephen Matthews, the last surviving brother of the deceased expressed thanks to all on behalf of the family.

Thus was laid to rest one of the greatest leaders I have ever had the privelege to know. I thought it was absolutely marvellous that during the latter part of his life in the service of God and his fellow men Dr. Zachariah Keodereleng Matthews should have died in harness serving a non-racial country, in a non-racial setting, something he always strove for even in the country of his birth.

A TRIBUTE

GEO. B. MOLEFE

So, 'Z. K.' is gone! Thousands of Africans mourn his death. He was a pioneer for us in many spheres of life during his lifetime. He had so many 'firsts' in breaking new ground for us, indicating to South Africa and the world that the black-man, given the opportunity, can rise to heights, equal to those of any other nation.

He was the first to obtain higher learning, in this country. It is true that the late Prof. D. D. T. Jabavu was the first man to obtain the degree of Bachelor of Arts. However he got this at Universities overseas. Prof. 'Z. K.' was the first to work for his in South Africa, at the Fort Hare University College, under our illustrious Principal Dr. A. Kerr. This was way back in 1925.

He was born of poor parents at Kimberley. After completing his Primary School education, at Lyndhurst Public School at his home town, he went to Lovedale Training School, mainly through the efforts of the late I. Bud-Mbelle, a High Court Interpreter, and a man who had himself obtained a law Certificate equivalent to that obtained by Magistrates at the time.

At Lovedale he made rapid progress and in 1918 he was one of the first students at Fort Hare, where he passed both the Matriculation and the B.A. degree certificates. His success opened the eyes of many who had believed that the African can only go so far and no more. He was the man who proved to the world that, given the opportunity, there was no limit to the attainments of Africans, and that if the door were opened, the African can compete with any other race, intellectually.

That was one of Z. K.'s first onslaughts on new grounds.

After leaving Fort Hare, he was appointed as Principal of the High School at Adams Training Institution. No African before him had achieved this honour. He had a Staff of all racial groups under him. He had never received any challenge to his authority from any one.

When Fort Hare developed, Z. K. was appointed to the Chair of Bantu Languages. He developed his department to such an extent that today it is very popular among students at the College.

Later, he was raised to the chair of Professor. He held this position until he became Vice-Principal in later years.

When our Northern States clamoured for higher education, Prof. Z. K. Matthews accompanied Dr. A. Kerr on a Commission to Central Africa.

Prof. Z. K. Matthews was a man of principle. What he believed was right, he followed up with courage and zeal.

During the Commission on Bantu Education, and in particular when Fort Hare was to come under the authority of Bantu Education, he fought vigorously against it. He did not believe in the policy of wait and see. When all efforts failed, he resigned his post at Fort Hare, much to our regret. He became a stronger political leader. He was one of the trialists for sedition.

Later on he was appointed as a visiting Professor at Union Theological Seminary, Broadway, New York, for one year. He later went to Geneva as one of the Secretaries of the World Council of Churches. We heard very little of him at that time.

Two years ago, he was appointed as ambassador for Botswana. This was a great achievement for Z. K. In fact it was a crowning experience for him. With all humility and modesty Z. K. made his influence felt by his sober and tactful manner in dealing with the domestic affairs of countries. I believe that this was the pinnacle of his life. It was also the greatest honour that was ever placed on a South African Bantu—the greatest ever.

And so, Z. K. is gone! Many inhabitants mourn his death, especially now when a spirit of friendliness, trust, as well of forebearing among nations is at its lowest. He did bring sanity to the United Nations. He did bring respect for us by other nations, and he did his duty with finesse. He is gone. We mourn his death. We have lost a true and faithful ambassador for us to the world. To his family, we all say:

Rejoice; your benefactor has brought respect to you all. People of goodwill will always remember you through him.

Z. K. ! Farewell to you.

While some changes are normal in every society, those that have taken place in the modern world in recent years can only be described as revolutionary. They have been rapid, widespread and thoroughgoing. More changes have been packed into the last fifty years than have occurred in centuries in the past. They have affected the so-called western world of Europe and North America but, perhaps even more drastically, Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. They go to the root of every aspect of life; they call not for a minor tinkering with the social structure, the economic order or the political system, but for a radical transformation of individual and group attitudes, ideas and values; not for a mere pouring of new wine into old bottles, but for a thorough rethinking and re-evaluation of the traditional, in order to bring about the realignment of social, cultural, economic and political life to achieve a new world order.

* * * *

Within some countries, it may be desirable both for international order and for internal order that more and more powers should be taken away from national political systems. We must be on our guard against the consequences of nationalism in a new form through the formation of larger and powerful national states that compete with one another—the United States and her satellites, Russia and her satellites and the nations of the 'third world'.'

Z. K. Matthews

But Black mine workers were, in 1944, refused a co-allowance and their subsequent strike, in 1946, was crushed.

Following devaluation in 1949, when the price of gold rose from R17.3 to R24.8 a fine oz, White miners immediately concluded a major agreement with the Gold Producers' Committee which, *inter alia*, increased the minimum rate by 15 per cent, established a pension fund for all day's pay men, provided a bonus of R50 to all day's pay men with 12 months' service, increased the overtime rate from 1½ to twice the ordinary rate, raised the holiday allowance and increased payments into the provident fund so as to improve lump sum benefits.

Black workers shared little of the windfall. By 1950 average White earnings a shift worked were 81c higher that they had been in 1948, whereas Black earnings were only 4½c higher.

Since 1960, although Black earnings have increased in real terms, White earnings have gone up much more. Thus, in current terms, the average Black mineworker in 1966 was earning 16c more a shift worked than in 1960. But the average White in the industry was earning R2.88 more.

Apart from the White trade union bargaining power, two important reasons for the lag in Black mine wages are the access which the Chamber of Mines has had to labour in the rest of Southern Africa and the pass-law system. Workers in the rural areas may not freely go to industrial areas—but they can always, if fit, get to the mines simply by applying at the nearest recruiting office.

It is no accident that Black wages are highest in those areas for which it is difficult to get permission to go.

Thus the combination of passports and passes has effectively isolated the Black mine-labour market from the rest of the economy, making possible a totally different wages structure.

Because so many 'foreign' Africans stream into South Africa to work each year, many people conclude that Black South Africans are better off than other Africans. This is not necessarily true. For income, as the Chamber of Mines itself argues, consists not only of the wages earned at the mines but also of what the man's wife, children, and other relatives are able to produce at home.

There seem to be two reasons why a foreign mineworker may be better off than a mineworker from the Transkei.

Firstly, the cost of subsistence is often much lower in a less developed country than it is even in the remote, but well populated, rural areas of South Africa. Thus wages remitted home may buy more, in the way of food and shelter, for a Malawian than for a Transkeian.

Secondly, the amount which the Xhosa family is able to produce may be considerably less than that produced by the families of foreign migrants. For the South African Reserves are becoming poorer not richer.

Despite the small combined income of a Black South African mines-worker and his family, a number of arguments are put forward against any significant increase in wages.

First, it would raise working costs, thus reducing the body of payable ore left in the mines and shortening the life of the industry. But this is equally true of an increase in White earnings. While White earnings a shift worked rose by 288c and Black earnings by 16c in the 1960-66 period, the Black-White-miners' employment ratio has remained fairly fairly constant at approximatey 8 : 1 ever since the 1922 rebellion.

Thus if the increased wage bill had been more equitably distributed, it would have been possible for both Whites and Blacks between 1960-66 to have raised their earnings by 46c a shift worked without any greater increase in working costs than has acually taken place. In other words, if White wage increase had been slowed down, Black wages could have been 30c more a shift than they are today.

A second objection to increasing Black wages is that this would create unemployment. The danger is real, a reminder that any steps to increase the wages of those employed must be accompanied by equal concern to provide training and jobs for those who find themselves unemployed.

One way of avoiding these two problems would be for government to tax any increased profits accruing to the industry from any rise in the price of gold and use this to subsidise African wages. Such a departure from the market would, in effect, mean that the wealthier mines were increasing their support of the marginal ones. Whether a direct wage increase or an indirect subsidy is the better method, is a debatable point. But the alternatives exist.

A third objection to increasing Black wages on the mines is that the effect would be inflationary. But of course there is nothing to stop the authorities insisting that the 66 per cent of the labour force that comes from outside South Africa remit any wage increase home, thus not only 'exporting' much of the inflationary demand but also providing these countries with much-needed foreign exchange.

Indeed, a wage increase could serve both to raise the standard of living of Black South Africans and also provide aid, indirectly, to other countries.

In the light of past experience in the mining industry, and given the possibility of further increases in the price of gold, it seems imperative that an inquiry be made into the overall structure of earnings in the industry.

(Reprinted, with acknowledgement, from the *Financial Mail* 10th May, 1968).

A MAN FOR RECONCILIATION — *Footnotes*

[1]c.f. Philip Mason '.....but O! My Soul is White,' *Encounter* April, 1968, p.61

[2]Paul Tillich, *Love, Power and Justice* (O.U.P. 1960) p.40.

[3]**In performing this task of providing trained personnel for Africa it seems to me to be a tragedy that the universities, which can lay some sort of claim to a better acquaintance with African conditions than others, are not in a position to share in this work because of Government policy. I refer of course to the South African Universities.....**

It is a glorious challenge which opens up vast possibilities for co-operation between peoples of different racial groups with different kinds of experience and knowledge which they might exchange for their mutual benefit.....'

Z. K. Matthews, *African Awakening and the Universities*, (University of Cape Town, 1961) pp.10, 13.

[4]S.C.M. Press, 1966.