



## Chief Kaizer Matanzima BY John Clare

HOW OFTEN IN STORIES is the man at the top of the tree inspired to risk his neck in the climb by an inner urge to prove himself—to himself as well as to others. The rags-to-riches theme commonly ends with its Huey-Long-type hero a successful yet tragic figure, the master yet still the slave of his bare foot origins. An added twist is provided if the tragic figure is himself the son of a house fallen on evil days, to whom the polishing up of the escutcheon becomes a passion. For as fast as he wipes off one blot, another begins to appear . . .

THERE WERE SOME OBSERVERS of the Transkei election who were puzzled at the absence of the name Tshunungwa from the list of candidates for the four Emigrant Tembuland seats.

Thembekile ka Tshunungwa, former Cape Provincial Secretary of the African National Congress and one of the 157 accused in the ill-famed Treason Trial, had long been one of Chief Kaizer Matanzima's trump cards. Here was a leading figure in the "liberatory movement" who had come across to Matanzima—who had thrown his weight behind a man who was trying to project himself to the African people as the leader of a new and very different "liberatory movement". While Kaizer Matanzima was still viewed by the Africans and their sympathisers as a 'stooge' of the Government, it was surely valuable for him to have a former A.N.C. leader as his personal lieutenant.

Personal considerations, however, appear to have outweighed the political usefulness of Mr. Tshunungwa.

Several versions of the quarrel between the Chief and

the political aide circulated. They had a common ending. A scene between the two had ended the expulsion of Mr. Tshunungwa from Qamata with orders never again to darken the doors of that attractive hillside settlement of kraals, modern villa and colonnaded court-house.

They also gave a common reason for Mr. Tshunungwa's departure. However far it may be from the truth, it illuminates an aspect of the reputation Chief Matanzima has acquired among those around him. They say that Chief Matanzima thought Mr. Tshunungwa had slighted him, who was the Senior Chief of Emigrant Tembuland, and Presiding Chief of the Transkeian Territorial Authority.

Here perhaps is the spring of the drama that is the career of Kaizer Matanzima. For here is a man of high birth, of undoubted ability and energy, with power to command above all, with a long campaign to be waged if the furthest limits of his ambition are to be reached, but a man who is as sensitive to real or imagined reflections on his dignity as if he were a jumped-up nobody. Perhaps the truth is that while he is always conscious of his power, talent and ambition, Chief Kaizer Daliwonga Matanzima also feels himself to be the "jumped-up nobody" that he sometimes appears.

BORN IN 1915 of minor royal parentage, his father being head of the AmaHala clan of the Tembu tribe, Chief Kaizer grew up nevertheless as a normal Transkei boy, until he was sent away to be brought up away from his father's home. From the Great Place of the AmaJumba clan of the Tembus, under Chief Falo Mgudlwa, he went

at the late age of 15 to primary schools at Ntlonze and Qumanco in the St. Mark's district, and later to Lovedale, the 123-year-old boarding school at Alice in the Ciskei. In 1932 his father died and an uncle, Dalubuhle Matanzima, was appointed to act for Kaizer until he came of age.

The following year he won the Andrew Smith Bursary to Fort Hare, where he matriculated in 1936, and went on to take a B.A., majoring in Roman Dutch Law and Politics. After graduating in 1939, Chief Kaizer was duly appointed Chief of the AmaHala in the district of St. Marks, successor in line to his ancestor Matanzima, heir to the right-hand house of the Paramount Chief Mthikra-kra, who had ruled the Tembus before the cattle-killing delusion (or "national suicide") of the neighbouring AmaXhosa in 1857. The first Matanzima had taken advantage of the Governor, Sir George Grey's offer of land east of the Indwe River, a fertile area vacated by the Kreli's Xhosas, who had been decimated by the starvation that followed the cattle-killing. With three other chiefs and their people, he emigrated away from the "Tambookie location", as the present Queenstown area was then called, out of the Cape Colony's confines and nearer to the main body of the Tembu people in "Tembuland Proper". In character, and by birth, Matanzima was the dominating chief in what then became called Emigrant Tembuland.

BUT SIXTY YEARS SAW A SAD DECLINE in the fortunes of the Matanzimas, while the ruling house of the Tembu, especially under Paramount Chief Dalindyebo, who died in 1920, grew in stature. When Dalindyebo's son, Paramount Chief Jongilizwe, the father of the present Chief Sabata, visited his "younger brother" Mhlobo Matanzima, father of Kaizer, on family business, in 1930, young Kaizer, aged 13, witnessed the unedifying spectacle of his uneducated, tribally-dressed father, a petty chief over a handful of locations appearing so obviously inferior to the powerful and educated Jongilizwe. Chief Mhlobo's habits, moreover, were such that Paramount Chief Jongilizwe recommended to the Government that Mhlobo be suspended from the chieftainship because of his heavy drinking. The recommendation was taken by the Government as final evidence that such independence as the Emigrant Tembu had had of the Tembu Paramount was at an end.

Thus, when, at 25, Kaizer Matanzima became Chief of the AmaHala, he had power over a mere 17 locations, and a declining house as his background. His brains and application had won him academic success, and it seems that from then on his driving urge was to put those assets to the service of raising his power to the level of his ancestor's, and, more fundamentally, dispelling the aura of Mhlobo about him.

His associates were surprised when, after taking study leave from the Chieftainship in 1944 and becoming qualified as an attorney in 1948, Kaizer Matanzima took a

quite inferior Government law examination. The explanation seemed to be that a puppet chieftainship under the paternalistic Smuts Government was not enough to satisfy the young chief's craving for recognition. Matanzima doubtless saw himself as a magistrate, dispensing justice to the Transkeians, as proof that even such a lofty eminence was within the reach of Mhlobo's son.

POLICY CHANGED QUICKLY under the Afrikaner Nationalists, however, and Matanzima began to see that his seat in the Transkeian Territories General Council in Umtata, which he took in 1943, was not so valueless after all. Greater heights were to be reached than a mere seat on the magistrate's bench under a distant white Department of Justice. Mr. C. W. Prinsloo, a persuasive propagandist of the policy that the new Minister of Native Affairs, Dr. H. F. Verwoerd, was beginning to formulate, early convinced Matanzima that under the Bantu Authorities scheme, the power of the chiefs would be greatly increased, and who knows what degree of autonomy the Government might finally accord to this Transkeian "heartland" of the "Bantu".

In 1955, he accepted the Bantu Authorities Act on behalf of the people of Emigrant Tembuland, although his Paramount Chief, the young, popular and fiery Chief Sabata Dalindyebo, had so far refused to do so. This brought him far greater power, as he became presiding chief of the Regional Authority that was duly set up. It also brought about a conflict with Chief Sabata: in 1958, after a commission under Dr. Eiselen, secretary for Native Affairs, had sat in Umtata, capital of Tembuland, he was refused the title of Paramount Chief of the Emigrant Tembu, which he coveted. Sabata was reaffirmed Paramount Chief of all the Tembus but the jurisdiction of the Emigrant Tembu districts of St. Mark's and Xalanga (Cala) was taken from him and given to Kaizer as compensation. Matanzima's title was also elevated from "Chief of the Hala clan resident in St. Mark's" to "Chief of the Natives in Emigrant Tembuland, comprising the districts of St. Mark's and Xalanga." And his salary was increased.

THE SEVEN YEARS THAT FOLLOWED saw Kaizer Matanzima consolidating his position, proving himself a model Bantu Authorities ruler, and a heart-and-soul *apartheid* or separate development man. He enforced the highly unpopular land betterment scheme; he ruled his people with a firmness which many called harshness, and occasional stories, even newspaper reports, began to appear regarding stiff sentences for offences, often only those affecting his dignity he appeared anxious to convince himself and his government-backers that he was filled with "a deep natural love" for his people. Criticism or opposition became "communist agitation"; peasant stubbornness when it transgressed the 1960 Emergency Regulations, was punished by forced removal to strange and distant locations, often by corporal punishment, and heavy fines.

His popularity with the Government increased—here was the only African in the country, and both a B.A. and a Chief at that, talking the *apartheid* language as fluently

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as Mr. De Wet Nel himself. He was proving himself a very good B.A.D. investment and even his several attacks on Bantu Education, though they made him enemies in the Nationalist Government, were useful evidence that this was no stooge. In 1961 he was made presiding chief of the Transkeian Territorial Authority, the body which had replaced the old TTGC, and the same year he was elected to a Recess Committee which the T.T.A. had set up to consider a "self-government" motion. This had unexpectedly come up in the May session, and had been blessed, with reservations, by the Government. The resolution went no further than to require the Recess Committee to consider "the advisability or otherwise" of asking the Government for "self-government". It was handy outside propaganda for the Government's good intentions to implement "positive apartheid" some time in the future.

THEN, THE FOLLOWING DECEMBER, the Government suddenly decided on a desperate bid to win foreign support by producing a Bantustan rabbit out of the *apartheid* hat. Chief Kaizer was the very man to call on and the Recess Committee, which had never met, was quickly gathered under his *ex officio* chairmanship. In a matter of months after the announcement of self-government in January 1962, it had accepted a constitution drawn up by Republican advisers, notably Mr. J. H. T. Mills of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development.

Mr. Chris Prinsloo's hints at future greatness seemed to be becoming more concrete. From the petty Hala chieftainship to the head of Emigrant Tembuland, from presiding chief of the T.T.A. to chief minister of the Transkei . . . The failure to become a Paramount Chief

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might be compensated for were he to head the new state. Where the tribal hierarchy had proved too high a ladder, the Western democratic system could at last satisfy vaulting ambition.

Favour with the Government had been won at the expense of popular esteem. Early association with left-wingers in the All-African Convention made his adherence to *apartheid* seem the more heinous to African intellectuals and "politicoes". After the banning of the Congresses in 1960 it was the Liberal Party which co-ordinated the attack on Matanzima in the Transkei and beyond, earning his bitter enmity. Though he hit back at accusations that he was a "sell-out", he responded to them by trying to convince the public that he too sought freedom for Africans, that he was, in fact, the apostle of a new Verwoerd-model African nationalism. To back up the new line, he made demands of the Government that they did not like, and for a while his star seemed about to set, after he had publicly talked of a Transkei from the Fish River to the Natal border.

THE PEOPLE SEEMED UNCONVINCED, as stories of unpleasant doings in Emigrant Tembuland spread around South Africa. The two attempts on his life late in 1962 were, the evidence showed, the work of embittered tribesmen, who felt that they had no other way of getting justice than to remove their Chief. His heir's unhappiness became talked about too - the boy had left a school in Basutoland as he had been victimised as Matanzima's son, at Fort Hare he had joined the anti-Matanzima camp. A major snub was administered to Matanzima when it was explained to him that he would not be welcome at the state marriage of the Paramount Chief of Basutoland.

In the Transkei, whites and coloureds came to fear him. White residents at Cofimvaba talk of their grievances against "his nibs" at Qamata, who they say might ruin them yet. The Government, which had showered him with authority, and, it is rumoured, gifts like the fence round his farm at Bolotwa, was held to blame. Educated, Christian people of the area were not without disapproval of his private life, for though this tall, youthful-looking and handsome man is a teetotaler and non-smoking Methodist lay-preacher, he has been married three times, divorced twice, and apparently keeps all three ladies in establishments around Qamata.

THE 1936 TRANSKEI ELECTION saw Kaizer Matanzima as a man eager to grasp a prize, and becoming increasingly intolerant of those who sought to keep him from it. If the Tshunungwa incident showed him reacting ever more strongly to the shadows of his early background, his thirst for power and authority might be thought to have been slaked by his election as Chief Minister on 10th December. But if Shakespeare's Macbeth is any lesson, Chief Kaizer Matanzima may have a long way to go before he accepts that there can be a limit to his power. It will be the fate of many unwilling companions to travel that road with him, but for them there is the solace that the directions forced on them by Dr. Verwoerd's scheming and Chief Matanzima's ambition may shorten the final journey to their real freedom. ●