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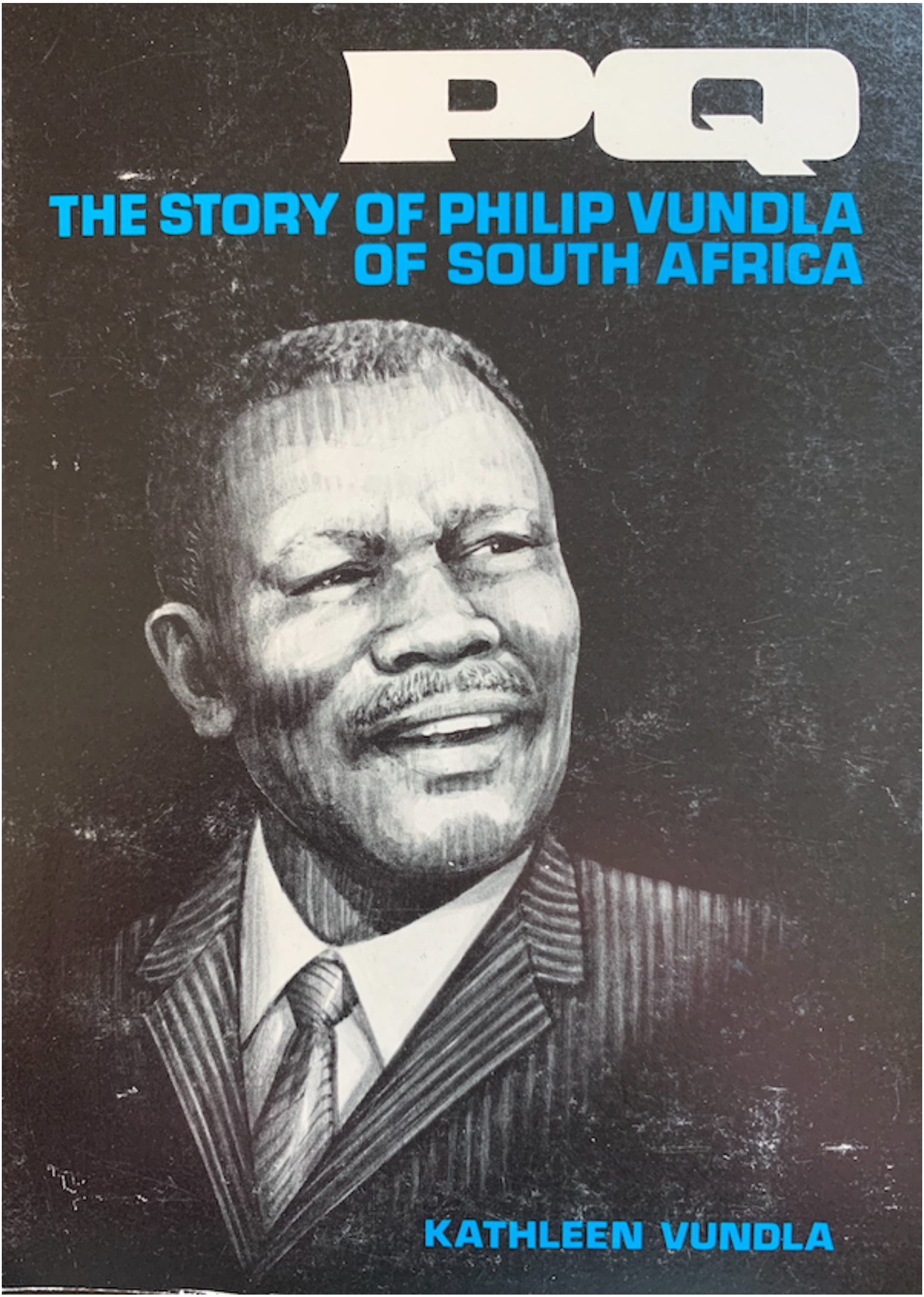
THE STORY OF PHILIP VUNDLA OF SOUTH AFRICA



KATHLEEN VUNDLA

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ILLUSTRATIONS

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This book is called "P.Q." as that is the way my husband Philip Qipu Vundla was known throughout this country.

I am very grateful to Barbara Burns who helped me with this book. Much of it is taken from notes left by my late husband and many events are described as he saw them and interpreted them at the time.

K.V.

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

The cold wind blew dust and sand across the rough roads of the African township outside Johannesburg. The sand stung the bare legs of the children and got in the eyes of those taking part in the slow funeral procession that walked down the road. It was a small wooden coffin – the funeral of a child.

Young Philip Vundla watched them pass. In the few months he had been in Johannesburg, working in the gold mines, he had seen this sight often enough. There were many funerals. Too many.

As he watched his heart hardened. He was gripped by hate and fury.

"Terrible if I died before I had done in enough whites," he thought.

In those days it seemed to him that all the troubles of our people were the fault of the white man. Working conditions were bad in the years of the nineteen twenties and our people were very poor. The Johannesburg winters were hard and at 6 000 feet above sea level the nights can be cruelly cold. Many old people and children did die.

But Philip's bitterness had started years before this, when he was a child in the Ciskei, and it is here that this story begins.

Philip Qipu Vundla was born in 1904 in Healdtown, a Methodist mission station in that south eastern part of the

Cape Province known as the Ciskei, the homeland of the Xhosa tribe.

The mission station had been established at the beginning of the nineteenth century for educating Africans and training them as teachers. Situated in the district of Fort Beaufort, this area had been the scene of fighting during the "Kaffir Wars" between the British and the Xhosas.

Fort Beaufort itself was one of a line of forts built by the British to protect the colonists from being pushed into the sea by the Africans.

From Fort Beaufort the red clay road to Healdtown soon leaves behind the citrus farms in the valley and climbs steeply into the mountains, winding in a series of hairpin bends. Lorries drive carefully here as the sharp turns have been known to send lorry and load plunging over the precipice and into the stream far below.

Healdtown lies in a natural basin, with hills to the north, east and west. The site was chosen because of a strong spring of water which rises in the hollow. Little can grow in the rocky hillsides and only hardy scrub bushes and small thorn-trees survive, with aloes and cactus, and some mimosa trees.

The mission school – or Healdtown Institute – is a large single-storey building of plastered brick walls and red corrugated iron roof. Above the main entrance to the building is the symbol of the Institute – the figure of an eagle, wings outspread, talons extended.

A church stands in the grounds and round the main building are the small houses belonging to the members of the staff. Water from the spring flows through irrigation furrows into cultivated gardens and instead of stunted thorn-trees are groups of tall blue-gum trees.

The African houses all lie across a small river. This little village, known as Tjatjoro, consists of a variety of houses, some square, some rectangular, with thatched or corrugated iron roofs and mud walls. There were some rounded wattle and daub huts, made from the flexible branches of the wattle and mimosa trees.

The Vundla home had an iron roof and was a family unit of four separate square one-roomed huts. The family consisted of Philip's parents, who occupied one hut, Philip and his three brothers who had another, and his four sisters who shared the third hut. The fourth one served as a kitchen and living room. Here there was an open wood fire over which the meals were cooked in large three-legged cast-iron pots. As there was no chimney and the open door was the only outlet for the smoke, the atmosphere, after the fire had been lit, was almost intolerable, and the family had to keep going out for fresh air. Once the fire was burning well the smoke died down and meals could be taken quite comfortably.

The main food was maize. This the family would grind down with home-made implements on the pestle and mortar principle, using a hollowed tree-trunk and a piece of hard wood. It was made into crushed mealies called samp, the Xhosa national food. They usually bought the maize from the white trader who owned a store between the Institute and the village. In a good season they could grow their own maize and sometimes even have enough to sell to the trader. Of course it was always the trader who fixed the price.

It was a struggle for the Vundla parents to bring up the children. Sometimes there were terrible droughts. Always there was very little money. The children all learnt what it meant to be poor and what it felt like to go to bed without

food. In the cold winter nights they would have to scramble for a portion of blanket to cover themselves. Philip never understood how his parents managed to keep them all at school as there often did not seem to be enough money for food, let alone school fees and clothes. Yet somehow they did manage it.

The family was of simple peasant stock. Philip's grandparents had been converted to Christianity and were taught to read and write by missionaries, and his parents went to school. His father was very interested in politics and was one of the first registered voters in the Cape Province and one of the first members of the village Board. He was a much respected citizen in the community. In politics he supported the party of General Louis Botha, the South African Party (later to be General Smuts's party and now the United Party). It is not surprising that his son Philip became actively interested in politics from an early age and intensely concerned for the well-being of his people.

From the time he was six years old Philip followed the custom of herding the family livestock. Although the vegetation was best suited to goats, the villagers kept cattle and sheep as well, and even some horses. In the mornings the boys would take the animals up into the hills behind Healdtown where some pasture could be found, leave them there to graze, and fetch them again after school.

In the winter red and orange aloes, growing wild, brought the rocky hillsides to life with flame-coloured patches and on the skyline the red spiky flowers on long stiff stems would be silhouetted against a deep blue sky.

In spite of the prickly spines on the leaves the children had great fun with the aloes. They would suck the juice from the flowers, taking care not to damage the blossoms, for if they

were not damaged they would obligingly fill up again for the next day.

Philip did well at school.

There were a few white children in the school – children of the missionary staff and the local storekeeper. They did the same work and the same examinations and Philip now discovered that nature had not made the white child superior in mind to the black. There were white children who were below Philip in his class. When Philip saw these children given opportunities for further education that he longed to have for himself he grew bitter and frustrated. He knew his father could not afford to pay for this.

One afternoon the school principal, a Welshman, called Philip into his study. He did not beat about the bush.

"Have you started going with women?" he asked Philip bluntly.

Philip was taken aback. But he knew and trusted this man and found the courage to answer honestly that he had.

The principal spoke harshly to Philip, told him to cut it out and dismissed him.

Philip left the study in a daze and stumbled out into the sunlight. He walked through the grounds, his thoughts and feelings surging inside him. Subconsciously he was aware of the Institute and its surroundings. The late afternoon sun, slanting through the leaves of the blue-gum trees, splashed the silver-grey bark of the trees with sunlight. The scent of the leaves lay heavily on the air. Under his bare feet the red sand was pleasantly warm, shifting and stirring as he walked. A fierce love of this land gripped him. He loved his people, he loved this country. This was what he really cared about – not these women. This man was right. If he kept on with these

women it could destroy him. He would do as his principal advised. He would cut it out.

Some time later the headmaster asked again to see him.

"I'm glad to see you've stopped," he said quietly. "I can see it from your work."

When Philip finished at the Healdtown Institute he applied for a bursary to the Lovedale High School, which he hoped might lead to university.

He did not get the bursary – and the Governor of the Healdtown School Board had to tell him so. It was an unhappy interview. Philip was very bitter about the decision and felt it was because of his political activities while he was at Healdtown. There may have been good reason for his not getting the bursary but he was convinced that the Lovedale Selection Committee and the Healdtown Governor did not want him to have further education in case he used it one day against the white people. He felt that white authority in all its forms was combining in a conspiracy to prevent his being educated.

The Governor told Philip that if he was so keen to continue his education his father could sell some of his cattle and raise the money. This increased Philip's fury and he told his friends that only those who were prepared to toe the line of the white man could expect to be given assistance. He vowed he would not rest until he had changed this system. It seemed logical to blame the whites for the poverty of his people and for everything that was wrong, since the government of the country was in the white man's hands. Remove these people, he thought, and the problem would be solved. He used to say to his people, "The only good white man is a dead white man."

His mother worried about him. She had been begging him for years to stop his political activities. But Philip paid no

attention to this advice and this strong desire to do something to help his people was fast becoming the main driving force in his life.

When he was eighteen he left home. He worked as a domestic servant in a private boarding house in the port of East London. Within a few years he was recruited to work in the gold mines in Johannesburg. He signed a six-month contract and worked underground, where his younger brother soon joined him. But Philip felt that the work was dangerous and he saved up money to buy his brother out. He worked the full six months himself and then moved through a succession of jobs, in a shoe factory, selling patent medicines, and finally back to the mines, this time as a clerk. It was a good post. Philip always claimed that he only got it because he was a good cricketer. The mining communities take their sports seriously and he was expected to play cricket for the mine that engaged him. This was no hardship.

Philip now found himself in a position to study working conditions of the miners and to see what could be done to improve them. These were some of his critical impressions:

"I was opposed to the treatment of the African workers by the mining company employers, both on the grounds of the low wages they were getting and because black miners get less compensation for injury than white miners. I regarded the whole African migrant labour system as immoral. It meant that ablebodied Africans left their homelands and their small farm-holdings, leaving their wives and families to look after the stock and till the soil, while they worked on the mines. Here they lived in the large mine compounds which all mines provide. This is the sort of exploitation that makes the mines operate so profitably. The Government taxes the mines on

profits which should go to improve the wages of the African mine workers. That was my attitude."

Philip worked quietly and steadily, gathering his evidence and waiting for the day when he would be able to go into action.

It was during these years that I met him for the first time. I had come from my home in the northern Transvaal to train as a nurse at the hospital at Crown Mines. My cousin was also doing her nurse's training there. Our custom, when we are away from our families, is to make friends with elderly people. They then keep an eye on us. This way we met an elderly married man who worked in the operating theatre and he introduced us to his wife. Whenever we were off duty we went to their home and were treated as part of the family. The man's name was Ezekiel and his wife was called Vera. One afternoon when I was there I met Philip's mother, who was Vera's elder sister. I felt very much at home with her and she, in the meantime, thought I would be very suitable for her son. But she was discreet and I never guessed what was in her mind when she invited me to visit her home.

One Saturday, when I had come off night duty I decided I would go and visit her. She could see I was very tired and suggested I get some sleep. Philip arrived to visit his mother and when I woke up she introduced me to him.

He was a man of medium build – strong, lean, wiry and physically very fit, like an athlete. The square set of his shoulders and firm jaw indicated that he knew where he was going and let any who tried to stop him beware. He had a great sense of fun and a lively sense of humour. Usually his eyes twinkled in merriment but I was also to see them often blaze with anger. He did not stay very long that afternoon, as he had to practise for a cricket match the following day.

I did not hear from him again for three months, as he was

travelling round the country. Then I got a letter from him asking me to marry him.

I did not know what to think. Fortunately he was to be away for a few months which gave me time. I had liked him very much when I met him but I hardly knew him and I was afraid, too, of what my people would say, as we did not belong to the same tribe. I am a niece of the Batlokoa chief. My mother was of royal blood. Apart from this it is not our custom to marry outside our tribes. Philip also believed that the missionaries supported the tradition that intermarriage between the tribes was wrong, even between the Xhosas and the Fingoes, though they spoke the same language and had the same customs.

It is typical of Philip that he saw this not so much as tribal custom but as a political measure of the white man to divide and rule. So it was less difficult for him to break with the custom than it was for me.

But my love for this man grew and I decided that I would defy my people. I married very much against their will. They could see that Philip was a man whose strong political convictions would almost certainly put him in prison and they were afraid for my security.

When I think back to those difficult days I like to remember that, just before Philip died, one of my family said to me, "I am glad that when we did not want you to marry Philip you insisted and married him all the same. I apologise for all the trouble we caused."

In 1932 we were married and I went to live in Philip's small two-roomed house in Western Native Township, a couple of miles from the centre of Johannesburg, to the west of the city.

CHAPTER II

POLITICS AND MARRIAGE

Western Native Township was, in those days, one of the major residential areas for Africans working in or near Johannesburg. The houses, usually two- and three-roomed, were red brick with corrugated iron roofs – this roofing is used a great deal in the Transvaal as it is proof against the violent hailstorms that occur in the summer. During the storm it is like an aerial bombardment but you do have a roof over your head when it is over! Many houses had verandahs, which could be enclosed to give an extra room. Each house had one tap of running water and there was water-borne sanitation. But there was no electricity and we used candles and paraffin lamps for light and we cooked with coal stoves.

The roads were untarred. They were dusty, quite passable in the winter but turned into channels of mud with the summer rains. The ruts in the mud dried out into a very rough road but it kept down the speed of the cars which was just as well, as children were usually playing in the roads.

There were several schools and sports fields.

A few slum areas existed, where people had not been able to find housing and had put up "shanties", made from sacking and sheets of iron. But most houses were well kept and people made the best possible use of their small gardens, coaxing hardy annuals like marigolds, zinnias and petunias from this

poor soil. Vegetables and fruit trees grew in back gardens.

Our home had one bedroom and an L-shaped room which served as living room and kitchen.

Philip's days began at five in the morning, as he started work at six. I would fill the kettle the night before and put it on the coal stove. Then I put a basin and towel ready for the morning and would put out his clothes. He set a very high standard in dress and neatness and was particularly fussy about the clean shirt he put on every day. If he found one crease in it he would drop the shirt on the floor for me to iron later and take a fresh one. He used to say, "I am a poor man but I hate to look poor." As long as I attended to his clothes he would forgive me anything.

Our first child was a girl. Then we had a son. Over the following twenty years we had six sons and six daughters. As the children grew up they learnt to regard their father with awe. He had a quick temper. I began to notice that they would go out at the back door as Philip came in at the front. Only our dog Bonzo would rush out to welcome him when he came home in the evenings. Philip would shout "Hey!" as he approached the house and Bonzo would go tearing down the road to greet him.

Philip's priorities during these years were simple. First came his burning desire to improve conditions for his people, and at this he worked night and day for he was a committed revolutionary. A close second came his passion for cricket which took up most of his weekends. He was a good bowler and much in demand. On Saturdays and Sundays he would leave the house at eight in the morning and return about six or seven in the evening.

His family came a very poor third.

When he came home from work he would rest on the sofa for an hour and then be ready to receive the numerous people who poured in from all over the township to ask his help and advice on their problems. For whatever his children may have felt about him, the people of Western Native Township appreciated his concern for their welfare and knew that here was a man who would fight their battles and do all he could to help them.

He was elected to be a member of the Advisory Board of the Johannesburg City Council in 1939. This was a committee of African leaders, democratically elected, who advised the City Council on African affairs. He was thirty-five and the youngest member on the Board.

He continued to serve on this body for over thirty years.

A commission was set up in 1943 to go into working conditions on the mines. It was the Lansdowne Commission of Enquiry and Philip was delighted at this first opportunity to make a public protest on behalf of the miners. He decided he would give evidence at the Enquiry. I told him he would be fired.

"Many sons of Africa die on the battlefield," he replied, "It won't be the end of my life."

Throughout the following Sunday he and a friend of his collected their facts and prepared their memorandum. It was hard work and they were exhausted when they had finished it.

Next morning when he was at work the compound manager came to him and said, "I hear you are going to give evidence. Can you tell me what you are going to say?"

Philip was angry. How had the compound manager known? It could only mean that men whom Philip had thought loyal and trustworthy had talked.

The mining authorities then offered him free accommodation. They said, "We know you are a family man. How about coming to stay in the compound where you will get a free house and rations?" Philip laughed. He said, "Well now, you don't really know me. I am a very cheeky native, you know. I might easily quarrel with my boss and then where will my children be? We will have no house and we will be stranded. No, thank you."

He gave evidence and the memorandum he and his friend had prepared made a great impression.

The following Friday, without reason or explanation, he was told to report to another shaft. He knew perfectly well that he was being demoted to a junior position. To the man in charge he said calmly, "I will not go. I will go out and play golf." He picked up his jacket and left the office, never to return. (By this time his passion for cricket had been replaced by an equal enthusiasm for golf. It took up just as much of his time, so as far as we, his family, were concerned it made little difference.)

He joined the African Mineworkers' Union as a full-time organiser. It was a form of retaliation, but he was glad that he could now devote all his time to working to improve conditions for African miners. He organised public meetings – there were plenty of grievances and it was not difficult to gather large crowds.

These were hard days for our family and we never knew where our next meal was coming from. Apart from the small allowance Philip received from the Advisory Board there was no money coming into the home so I decided I must work. I would have chosen to nurse but it meant being away from home too much. The most practical solution would be to take

in washing. Many women earned money this way in the township, but it was generally taken as a sign that one did not have education. So it was only after an inner struggle with my pride that I decided to make a laundry of our home. I knew word would soon get round and I dreaded what people would say. But we now had some regular income.

With Philip being at home so much of the time, people came to see him at all hours, bringing their problems and troubles. It was an ever open home – but a very small one for a growing family and Philip's increased responsibility in the township. We asked the township Superintendent for a bigger house and were given one with three rooms. By adding a verandah, enclosing it and turning it into the kitchen, we managed to make it a four-roomed house.

Philip was happy in this work of tackling the difficulties of his fellow-citizens, whether the problem was legal, economic or personal. He never refused help and never seemed to tire of dealing with the steady stream of people who came to see him. One group in the community who particularly needed his protection were the widows. He fought to help them until his last day.

One widow we met, Regina Gqiba, was to become one of our greatest friends. She was herself a vigorous champion for better conditions for her people. Her militant, revolutionary activities on occasion landed her in jail.

She is now almost blind, but is still regarded as one of our most interesting personalities in the township and is known affectionately as "Queen of the Coffee Carts". These coffee carts were one of her most imaginative services to the community. She decided with her friends to provide hot drinks and food for our people in the city, who started work early

in the mornings, and for whom there were no cafes or suitable eating places. In 1950 Regina became first president of the Coffee Cart Association and there were finally about six hundred carts operating east and west along the Witwatersrand. The "carts" were small caravans and each woman chose her site and kept it. They could be locked at night and the women would come in early from the township and start their water boiling.

Regina started at four-thirty in the morning so that by five she could start serving her first cups of tea and coffee. Her cart was near the Pass Office, (every African has to carry a Pass) and as they used to begin to queue for the Pass Office at two o'clock in the morning, she did good business. Tea or coffee cost threepence (a tickey, as it was known then) and a "vet koekie" (a type of unsweetened doughnut) cost a penny. They made the tea and coffee by placing an iron plate over two primus stoves and on this they put two or three urns for coffee or tea. They provided lunches of mealie porridge, eggs, boerewors, (sausage) and bread, and breakfasts of sour porridge, served with sugar, and meat pies with rice or potatoes (which cost between one and two shillings). Licences from the City Council cost £1 a year approximately and health inspectors came round regularly to check on general hygiene. The carts were kept very clean, so the women were very bitter when owners of Greek cafés, opening up near the carts, launched a campaign to get the coffee carts off the streets.

Regina tells how they all went in bus-loads across to Pretoria (36 miles), dressed in their white overalls, for the first of the court cases. They won their case and later she went to the Appeal Court in Bloemfontein, where they won again. She was very impressed with the Court. "It is like a small

heaven," she said, "there are lights everywhere. When you go in there you don't know which door to enter."

She raised hundreds of pounds for these court cases, but, sadly, in the end the Greek cafés won. The women considered these cafés unhygienic and they did succeed in getting new regulations of cleanliness imposed on the cafés which was some comfort to them.

I asked her recently what she could remember of those earlier years when Philip was becoming increasingly involved in political activities.

"I knew Philip from 1941," she said. "Those were the heavy days of fighting and fighting. He was always fighting for something for his people. The first one I remember is the battle against permits. A regulation had been passed that Africans had to have permits in order to be able to have anybody to stay in their homes, except immediate family. Police would search homes in the middle of the night checking up on this. Philip fought against this, using his position on the Advisory Board until the regulation was withdrawn in 1942."

In 1944 Philip decided it was time to tackle the low wages being paid to African school-teachers, and he organised a demonstration to draw public attention to their grievances. A call went out to rally at the football ground of Western Native Township on Saturday morning, anyone who wanted to take part. Saturday morning was the busiest time in the week for traffic in the centre of Johannesburg. There was a great response when the day came, with people from nearby townships joining in, from Sophiatown, Newclare, Orlando and Eastern Townships.

Philip, wearing his oldest and most comfortable shoes, gave the signal for the march to begin. His plan was to march

up Eloff Street, the main street in the city centre. With his thousands of followers this was all that was needed to bring traffic to a standstill and chaos to the city. Carrying banners with slogans like "How can hungry teachers teach hungry children?" they marched along, sweeping aside a policeman who tried to divert them away from the main streets. They surged up Eloff Street, halting all traffic, until they were halted themselves by a cordon of tightly massed police across their path. Philip now brought in his "shock troops". He called some of the women to the front ("some of the hefty women" as he put it), and said, "Now push until you break the police chain."

They did.

The police, disconcerted by these tactics, gave way and the march continued.

These days it is fashionable for everyone to demonstrate but in 1944 it was an event which came as a shock to the city.

Almost immediately measures were taken to increase teachers' salaries and a school feeding scheme was introduced.

The Communist Party took an interest in Philip's activities, but they did not really trust him and strongly disapproved of his rather dashing style of dress and immaculate appearance. But they invited him to lecture to various Leftist clubs and gave him some training in public speaking. He acted in some Communist plays and appeared in a production of *The Hairy Ape* put on by a producer from the London Unity Theatre.

"Injury to one is injury to all!" was the great cry. But Philip was not sympathetic to many of the Communist aims, and did not realise at first that it was Communism he was involved in. He believed in justice for all but he did not like anarchy. Law and order were practical and of greater benefit to people.

Certainly there needed to be many changes but why on earth should he support a campaign to overthrow the British monarchy? He had nothing against it. Rather the reverse – he could remember his parents having a great respect and affection for Queen Victoria and they all used to sing "Rule Britannia" with terrific fervour.

But the Communists found him useful, particularly if they were going to see the police, for his fearlessness and physical courage made him a valuable comrade, and he was not afraid to tackle anyone.

The spirit of unrest amongst the Africans was spreading. In the mines, grievances over pay and conditions had been building up to a crisis and in 1946, Philip, now organising secretary for the Mineworkers' Union, called a strike. It was the biggest industrial strike ever organised by Africans. East and west of Johannesburg, for some fifty miles, amongst the many mines in this gold-bearing area, the strike spread fast.

At first it took the form of a "sit-down" underground. Police were sent down the shafts with the miners to make them work underground, which greatly increased the hostility of the miners. A massive demonstration was arranged, with thousands of African mineworkers converging on Johannesburg, heading for the headquarters of the Chamber of Mines, where they intended to put their case before the top management – the Gold Producers' Committee. They never got there. The police stopped them, fighting broke out, many people were injured and Philip and other leaders were arrested.

To everyone's surprise the charges were withdrawn and they were not convicted. But to ensure that no such disturbances would occur again a regulation was brought in prohibiting

Africans from holding gatherings of more than twenty people on mine ground.

The miners did get a pay rise but Philip left the Mineworkers' Union as he felt that, without being able to hold meetings, trade union work was impossible.

During the year that followed, the police raided our home at regular intervals, searching for subversive documents or evidence that he was planning to overthrow the Government. He was now a marked man.

But life continued quietly until, in 1948, the Johannesburg Municipality raised the tram fares, which meant that the journey between the township and the city would cost threepence instead of twopence. There was an outcry. People said they would rather walk to work – which they did. In the tram boycott that followed, Philip became Chairman of the Anti-Tram Fare Increase Committee. Nobody was allowed to board the trams, so they ran empty for nearly two months. There were separate trams for the blacks and the whites. The Africans' trams ran backwards and forwards empty, while the Africans stoned the trams for the whites. The City Council had wire netting put all round the tram windows and detailed special police to travel inside. There were riots, clashes with the police, and one African was shot and later died.

Philip had political enemies on the Advisory Board who saw an opportunity here to get him thrown off the Board. They told the police that they had seen him hiding among the trees and handing boys pennies to throw stones at the trams. Philip was immediately arrested, somewhat roughed up by the Johannesburg police at Marshall Square and kept there for two days. At the end of the two days the police discovered the

accusations were false. The charge was withdrawn and Philip was released, but he was very bitter about this arrest.

After the tram boycott the name of Vundla was registered on police files as one of the most dangerous men in the country.

He was again the victim of a plot of his political enemies in his next brush with the law. He had agreed to act for some citizens of the township who had been having trouble with their chimneys ever since the municipality replaced their brick chimneys with metal ones. These smoked unbearably. The matter was brought to court and suddenly Philip found himself facing a charge, brought by a political opponent, of inciting people to oppose the Government. It was not the chimneys that were on trial, but Philip himself. His friends were most anxious and thought there was every likelihood that he would be banished from Johannesburg and sent back to the Ciskei. Fortunately he was able to produce evidence for the magistrate that this was a conspiracy brought by his opponent in the next election in the township. The court was adjourned, the magistrate visited the offending chimneys and the case was dismissed.

In spite of all Philip's organising of boycotts and protests one of his main concerns was the preservation of law and order and how to make the township a safer and a happier place for those who lived in it. True, he continued to plan and arrange demonstrations – he organised a number of anti-pass protests, as he felt that this law, which compelled every African to carry a pass at all times or they could be arrested by the police, was carried out with great lack of humanity and caused needless hardship. But at the same time he was organising the Civilian Guard, a body of volunteers who patrolled the streets at night. (This was in 1950). The township was a dangerous place.

Gangs of young hooligans, called "tsotsis", burgled and looted houses and roamed the streets looking for trouble. They were quick to stab anyone who resisted them.

The Civilian Guard had certain advantages over the police as they knew the gangsters and could track them down in their homes.

Philip called a meeting of residents and asked for their help in dealing with these wild boys. They readily agreed and many dangerous weapons were collected. Part of the trouble was that many of the boys had no passes so could not get employment. With the aid of the township Superintendent Philip managed to get their passes in order and helped them to find jobs. One of these boys came and thanked him afterwards. He said, "I used to spend my time snatching handbags in the town. Today I have settled down with a family. I feel I have become a man."

CHAPTER III

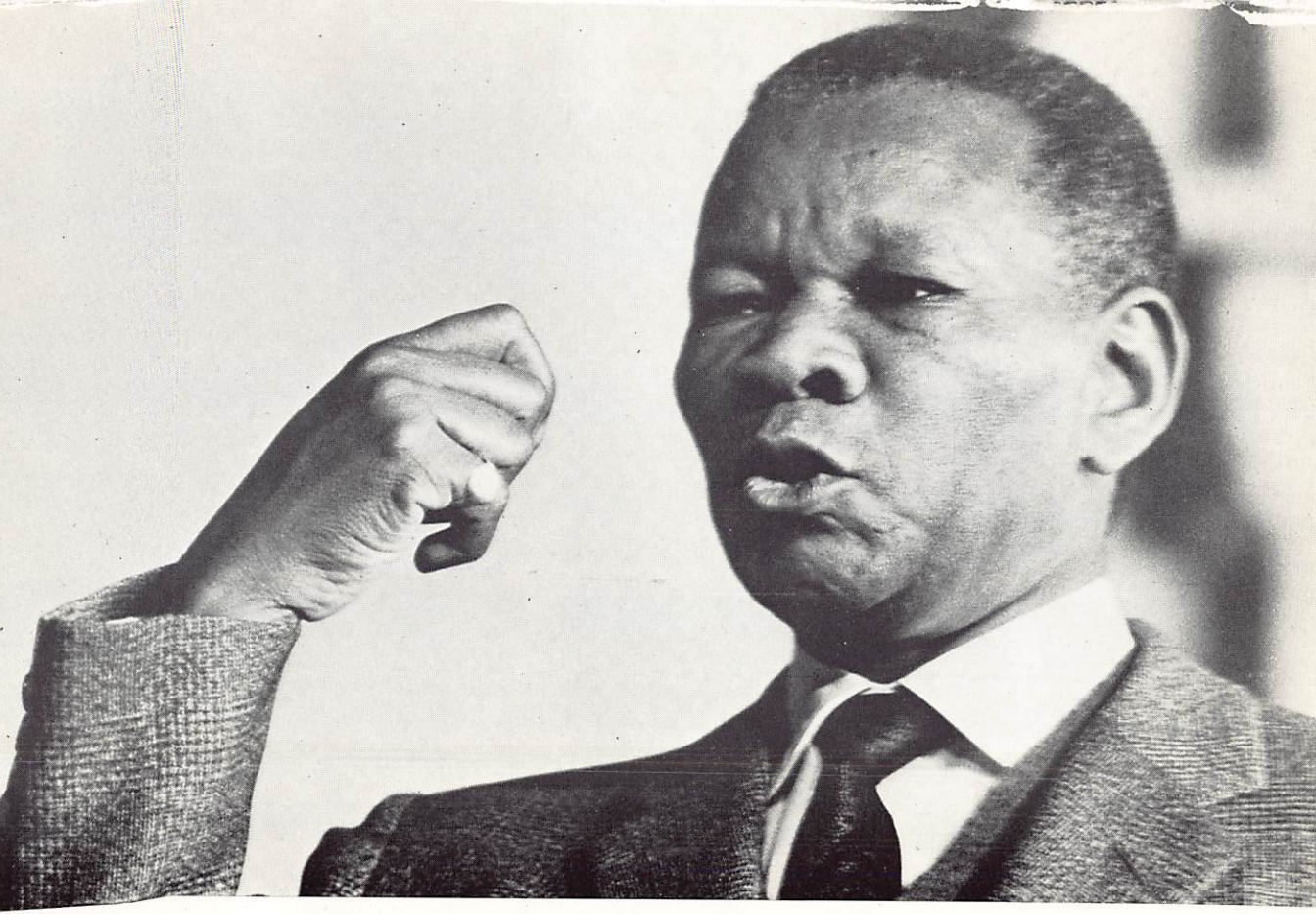
THE REMOVAL OF SOPHIATOWN AND A NEW IDEA

Philip was elected to the National Executive of the African National Congress in 1952, when Chief Albert Luthuli was president. I was also a member of the Congress.

Founded in 1912, the African National Congress* aimed to improve the position of the African people and to win for them democratic rights. It did not have any political affiliation. It recruited adult Africans from all walks of life – teachers, men employed in industry, clergy, doctors, lawyers and sporting organisations.

The programme was always to fight along constitutional lines — nothing would be done to break the existing rules of the country. Every effort would be made to ease the burden imposed by the many discriminatory laws being passed, but it would be through protests, deputations and the passing of resolutions, to impress their grievances upon the authorities,

*For this short summary of the development of the African National Congress I am indebted to Dr William Nkomo, who later presided over the first conference of the African National Congress Youth League. He was a medical practitioner in Atteridgeville, Pretoria, a leading political figure, a lay preacher in the Methodist Church and a frequent delegate to church conferences. He was appointed President of the South African Institute of Race Relations in 1972, the first African to hold this post.



Philip Vundla in action

The Vundla family

always acting within the law. It was hoped that peaceful protests would in the end bring about the desired changes.

There was also a great deal of agitation for more land to be given for Africans as there has always been a land hunger amongst our people. In 1913 the Land Act entrenched certain reserves for the Africans but this fresh demand led to a delegation going to Britain after the First World War to present their case.

In 1927 a man called J. T. Gumede returned from a visit to Moscow and produced a document called the Black Manifesto. This was the first call to militant action, to include even the breaking of certain laws, and it was very much opposed by many of the other leaders who felt it would damage the cause of the African people. Gumede was ultimately overthrown from leadership on the grounds of being an extremist.

But there were new anxieties arising which were creating militant reactions. First, in 1936, the Native Representation Bill was passed through Parliament. This put African and Coloured voters on a separate roll. Africans would now be represented by the Native Representative Council consisting of some elected and some nominated members. There were some fine men and women who served on this council but they were all white. The second event was the coming to power in 1948 of the present Nationalist Government and there was fear that there would be new reactionary measures and legislation.

The African National Congress met in Bloemfontein in 1951 and considered the worsening situation. Public feeling was still in favour of peaceful means of protest. They decided on a defiance campaign. It was a Civil Rights Disobedience Campaign, based on Gandhi-ism and passive resistance. The United Front was formed, an organisation of non-white

bodies and including the South African Indian Congress and the African People's Organisation (representing the Coloured people).

The campaign encouraged people to defy unjust laws and deliberately to court arrest. Many went to jail. Only when it seemed that none of this made any impression on the Government did people, for the first time, begin to speak of violence as a factor to consider.

The Government increased its pressure and finally, in 1960, they banned African political organisations: the African National Congress, the Pan-African Congress, the All Africa Convention (formed after the legislation in 1936). The South African Indian Congress was likewise banned. These now all became illegal and underground movements arose, often inspired by people with Communist leanings. These led to the well-known Treason Trials. Political refugees started skipping the border and running to other countries and there was a political vacuum and lack of leadership. It was into this void that Philip Vundla stepped, with others who had come to believe that there was an answer to this problem and that we could give a positive lead.

But these events still lay ahead.

During the Defiance Campaign of 1951, Philip had been a "Field Marshal", organising Africans into groups which would be sent out, deliberately, to break discriminatory laws in order to be arrested and convicted. They were instructed not to pay any fines. He also acted as Welfare Officer, looking after the families of those in jail, and helping those who were released to find work.

After serving a year on the National Executive of the African National Congress in 1952, Philip decided he could serve the

cause more powerfully by writing and he took up journalism. It meant giving up his full-time work with the Congress though he continued to work for them.

There was no sign of a breakthrough with the Government.

Philip was aware of a wave of despair sweeping the country. His people were frustrated and embittered.

Why not violence?

What was there to lose?

He wrote for a widely-read weekly paper called *The Bantu World* and applied his pen with bitter fury. It was a continuation of his political fight and it brought an improvement in our family finances. We all promoted the sale of the paper and our sons did paper rounds in the township where there were plenty of customers.

One day when I was coming home I was dismayed to see a strange car drawn up outside our gate. I was afraid it was an uninvited "visitor" from the C.I.D. (Criminal Investigation Department) come to search our house. But it was a white man looking for Philip to ask him to contribute articles to his paper as a freelance journalist. Philip agreed and the articles paid well. This extra financial security was a great help to us as the storm of the removal of the Sophiatown township was about to break over our heads.

Sophiatown was situated in the same area only divided by a fence from our township. It was a very popular place to live, as it was a quick, cheap journey to work for those who worked in the city. It was also one of the few places where Africans held freehold rights on their property. It was an old township, the housing conditions were bad and there were some appalling slums. But people liked living there. Some years earlier the Johannesburg City Council had tried to clear the

area and move the Africans but there was such opposition they gave up the idea. Now, in line with its apartheid policy, the Government had decided to move Sophiatown out into the country, some twelve miles from the city, where a newly-built township, called Meadowlands, was reaching the final stages of construction. A special body, the Native Resettlement Board, was created to deal with all aspects of the removal.

In Sophiatown and in neighbouring townships there was an angry reaction to this removal scheme. Africans felt that the Government was using this slum clearance programme as a convenient excuse for depriving them of their rights of freehold in urban areas. They would not have freehold rights in the areas to which they were moving. Feelings were bitter and hostile.

Philip organised big meetings in the Sophiatown square, which became known as "Freedom Square". He spoke with fire and fury. He encouraged the crowds, already bitterly opposed to the Government plan, to refuse to move. Meetings of support were held weekly at Western Native Township and women played a great part at these meetings, singing liberation songs and giving their leaders every backing.

The situation was extremely tense.

Foreign correspondents were coming into the country to cover this event for their newspapers for they all thought that when the day came for the removal it would mean the beginning of a revolution in South Africa.

As the day grew closer all meetings were forbidden.

One day, during this time of tension, an unexpected visitor called at our home to see Philip. He was a young Nationalist Afrikaner who worked for the Native Affairs Department in Pretoria and was temporarily employed by the Resettlement

Board. A militant white nationalist, he had been secretary of a student youth organisation at one of the leading Afrikaans universities.

He asked for Philip and I told him Philip was at work. He asked when he would be likely to find him at home and said he would call again.

I told Philip about the visitor. He was none too pleased.

"I wonder what he wants," he said. "No good news ever came from a white man." Philip felt that the only reason any white man would have in coming to his house would be to arrest him.

The next day he came again.

Philip answered the door and invited him in.

The young man, whose name was Nico, came in rather hesitantly, as behind Philip he could see a large, powerfully built man.

Philip offered him a seat and said, reassuringly, "That is just my bodyguard."

This did nothing to reassure the visitor as, before he had come to us, he had gone to the Newlands Police Station to find out where our house was. The police had tried to discourage him from coming. "This man is very dangerous," they said. "When we go to his house we do not go alone – we are either three or four. Take care! You might not leave that house alive."

"What can I do for you?" asked Philip.

"Well, I have heard about you and I know you are a leader of your people," said Nico, "and as I have been sent to work in your area I thought it would be the proper thing to call on you."

"I do not talk to young people," said Philip bluntly. "You

are far too small to come and see me. I would like the Prime Minister to come and see me. I am a leader of my people. I want my people liberated from white supremacy and nothing will do that except a blood bath."

Philip had actually been much taken aback at the simple courtesy of this young man, and he felt quite disappointed, because he had his attack prepared and ready for the first time the young man opened his mouth about the removal.

Philip allowed him to speak and Nico continued: "Something has happened in my life and I see a new hope for our country. I believe that if people like you and me decide to listen to God and do what he tells us is right, we can work together and build a real future for this part of the world. For myself I have decided to give up my old ways of thinking and start living differently so that a man like you can begin to trust me."

Never in his life had Philip heard a white man talk like this. He was deeply struck by the sincerity and humility of the man. Later Nico told Philip how he had found this new thinking at a conference of Moral Re-Armament in Lusaka in Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia). There he had met Dr William Nkomo who had been one of the founders of an organization dedicated to the liquidation of the white man in Southern Africa. Then one night four Afrikaans theological students called on him in his home near Pretoria. They apologised to Nkomo for their arrogance and superior attitudes. They told how they had always prayed to God, but had only recently learned the secret of listening to the "still small voice" and seen how much of their living and thinking needed to change if they wanted to take Christ's standards seriously.

William Nkomo had come with them to the Lusaka conference. One day he stood up and said simply: "Here I have

seen white men change. I have seen black men change and I have decided to change. Any idea that excludes anyone else is too small for the age in which we live." Nico had a long talk with Dr Nkomo. He recognised a new factor for Southern Africa. He knew the challenge was for him equally, and he accepted it.

Speaking about Nico's visit to our home Philip said afterwards: "When he left I felt within myself that he was the type of man who would always be welcome in my home. I did not usually have white men in my home. No white man at that time would come to my house, except the police who came to search for documents. Until Nico came I did not want to have white friends and I did not think they wanted my friendship either."

After this visit Philip was very thoughtful. If an Afrikaner like this could change was anything impossible?

But there was little time to think as the day of the Sophiatown removal was almost upon us.

Police carrying guns moved into Sophiatown early in the morning of the removal day, serving notices on all the people.

They came in army trucks and were detailed to protect those engaged in the removal. Bull-dozers rolled in to demolish houses. The atmosphere was tense but the day passed without any serious incident. Philip moved round helping out in difficult situations. Many people agreed to move and accept the new houses. For others Philip and his colleagues found temporary accommodation.

The crisis had passed but there was fear and foreboding for the future, for a new Act was being passed affecting the education of our children. There are few things we cherish more than education and we opposed this "Bantu Education Act"

because it decreed that in future our children would be taught in their respective African languages instead of in English. We felt we were being given an education for African people only, that it would make our children inferior to white children and dwarf their minds. We were afraid they would not have scope for higher education and we wanted what we called "universal education".

The education provided by the Government, though subsidised, was not free. It would cost, on a rough estimate, ten shillings a term per child – about two pounds a year. Since parents were having to pay for it they felt entitled to express what type of education it should be.

At a conference held in Natal in December 1954 the African National Congress decided that parents should withdraw their children from school. Later the Executive of the Congress relaxed these boycott instructions as they realised that in areas where there was no alternative education, any schooling for the children was better than none.

But the Youth League of the African National Congress was passionately keen to enforce the boycott and they forced children to stay away from school and even went into the schools and told the children to go home.

Dr Verwoerd, who was Minister for Native Affairs at that time, (later to be Prime Minister), gave an ultimatum that unless children were back at school by the following Monday they would be expelled and would not be registered in the schools again.

Philip addressed a crowded meeting in Western Native Township and advised parents to send their children back to school.

"We have demonstrated to the world that we do not want

Philip Vundla in hospital after being stabbed

Philip Vundla played a leading role in Peter Howard's play *The Ladder* in many South African cities

Bantu Education," he told them, "but the odds are against us and I advise all of you to take your children back to school."

The A.N.C. Youth League spread word round the township that Philip was a "sell-out" and a "traitor", that he had been seen with white people and that parents should not listen to him.

Their hatred of him was so violent that Philip knew he went with his life in his hands. He found it very hard.

During these days, as he was washing and getting up in the mornings, I used to hear him singing to himself the hymn:

"Go with me, my Lord,

"Go with me, my Lord."

The day after the big meeting Philip asked me to give him an early supper as he had an executive meeting in the Advisory Council board room. An hour or two later a woman rushed in carrying Philip's hat.

"Where is brother Philip?" she asked, "is this not his hat?"

I knew that it was and for a moment felt sick with fear.

The woman could tell me nothing except that there had been a fight and she was sure Philip had been hurt.

We went to Coronation Hospital where we found he had been admitted with bad head injuries. When he was able to he told us of his miraculous escape.

He had arrived early at the meeting and while he was waiting for his colleagues to arrive thirty A.N.C. Youth League boys burst into the room, shouting, "You have betrayed the youth of Africa, Philip Vundla, and are not fit to live!"

The boys all carried weapons of one kind or another and they rushed at Philip. They had been warned that they must first of all get his stick away from him as he was very good at using it in his defence. Philip had one thought, to put out

the light. The fight that followed took place in darkness which probably saved his life. He was stabbed in the head but somehow managed to get out of the room through the window. He climbed over the fence and made for the home of a friend of his, a Mr Kubeka. He found the gate locked but jumped over it and knocked at the door. Covered in blood, he was let in and Kubeka, after giving him some fresh clothes to put on, took him at once to the hospital, where the doctors were very concerned about his heart condition as well as his head injuries.

His assailants knew they had stabbed him and were sure he must have died of his wounds. They were jubilant.

Ironically, this branch of the A.N.C. Youth League had been founded some time earlier by Philip himself and they were one of the most militant branches. Philip was very proud of them. He remarked later, rather wryly, "Even the people who assaulted me were my trainees."

The young Afrikaner, Nico, came across from Pretoria to visit Philip in hospital, bringing a gift of some grapes.

Philip was very pleased.

"I knew you would come, I knew you would come," he said, "This strengthens my faith."

Philip had many visitors while he was in hospital, including some white men – journalists who came to get his story. But Philip knew that Nico had come to see him as a friend.

The police went to the hospital and asked if Philip knew who had assaulted him. Philip told them he did not want the men arrested and would be glad if they would drop the matter.

But his supporters wanted revenge, so when he was discharged from hospital Philip called a meeting.

To the packed hall he said, "Revenge is not the way. Our children are at present on the streets – fighting each other,

breaking windows, stealing or playing in dangerous roads. Let us have our children back in the schools, where they are taught not only to read and write but are also taught discipline. Half a loaf is better than no bread. Let us not boycott this Bill yet. First we should build up more schools and we can boycott Bantu Education later."

Philip's wisdom won the day and many people began to notice that their leader, while no less militant in his fight for the rights of his people, seemed to act with less violence and bitterness. His enemies, however, were still threatening to kill him and to burn down his house and he had to ask for police protection. But in his heart he was at peace, for he knew he was now, at last, beginning to give the right leadership to his people.

He was invited one day to meet some of the people associated with Moral Re-Armament in Johannesburg and to talk about the future of the country.

I was very unhappy about him going to this meeting and I could see no good coming from this fraternisation with whites.

I went to visit our great friend Regina.

"Philip has gone to a meeting with a white man," I told her.

She was also most disturbed by it but we could do nothing so I went back to bed. Philip got back about eleven in the evening but Regina was on our front doorstep at five o'clock the following morning, anxiously enquiring if Philip had got home. All Philip would tell us then about the meeting was, "I met a lot of educated Afrikaners. They all spoke and finally I said I would also like to speak."

But later on he told us how he had met white South Africans – Afrikaans and English – who had lost their arrogance and superiority and had treated him like a fellow countryman and a colleague. They said, "We are not happy about things in

the country. We feel change is needed. But how do we get it moving? The Africans are bitter against the whites. We understand that. The whites are scared of the Africans and don't want to give way. So nothing happens. But suppose each person began with himself, because none of us is perfect. As far as we are concerned we are going to start changing ourselves and not wait for anyone else to begin." He asked them what they meant by this change. They said, "A great many of us, black and white, go to church. We talk about Christian civilisation. But do we live it? Christ held up absolute standards – honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. But we cut them down to suit our convenience and our compromises. This is where change starts for us." As they told how they themselves had changed, Philip began to wonder inwardly whether this might begin to help him in his battles. Outwardly he insisted that the white leaders must change first, and that they should go and change the Minister of Native Affairs and the Prime Minister.

Until now the only things that Philip had heard about Moral Re-Armament were that it was a Government-sponsored organisation, financed by capitalists who wanted to use MRA to keep the Africans oppressed in order to exploit them. He was told that any Africans who became involved would be "softened up" so they would no longer fight for the liberation of their people. When he said this the Afrikaners laughed as the story they had been told was that this was an international plot to soften up the Afrikaners so that the Africans could take over.

Philip said, "I begin to see that this is an even bigger fight than the one I have taken on: a fight to put right what is wrong, not just in South Africa but in the world."

One of the first areas where Philip decided to apply this new Idea was in the family. He apologised to me for the way he had treated me. He said he had not considered me as an equal partner in the home but as someone whose role was to serve him, whether I liked it or not – that I had been more like a servant than his wife. He said that, although he justified it to himself on the grounds that it was African custom to dictate to one's wife and family, he knew all the time that it was wrong. He told me he had decided to live differently in the future. Then he apologised to the children and said, "From now on, in the things that affect us as a family, we will make the decisions together. I have learnt that God still speaks to people when they listen and I believe that we as a family can listen to God and start to change people in our own locality by setting an example."

The children had been noticing a change in Philip's attitude for some time – they used to come to me in the kitchen and whisper, "Whatever is happening to Daddy?" At that time I was as puzzled as they were.

Now we all knew that a revolution had happened and there was an immediate change in all of us. Suddenly there was a new spirit of warmth in the home. Whereas before the children would rush out of the back door as he came in at the front, they now ran out to greet him and he would come in with children hanging on each arm.

As a token of this new unity in our family Philip gave me a present, which is one of my most treasured possessions – a very fine red and gold china tea service. It was the first gift for many, many years.

Some people wonder whether human nature really can be changed. I know that it can.

CHAPTER IV

PASSPORTS

One of the first of our political colleagues to join us in Moral Re-Armament was our friend Regina. She describes the event in these words:

"The first day I knew Philip had changed was when I went to the Vundla home and found them happy. I said, 'What has happened here?' because Philip was a lion in his house. Even the dog would go out when he roared. He would shout, 'Kathleen, come here!' and when she came and stood before him he would again shout, 'I want food!' It was like attending to a king's wants.

"But on this day I found these people happy. When I knocked at the door he said, 'Come in' in quite a different voice – a normal welcoming voice. Then three white people walked in – two men and a lady.

" 'What is going on in this house?' I said, 'You know very well we do not like whites. Let me get out.'

"Philip said, 'Sit down'. There were only two men I was afraid of in Johannesburg. One was the Minister of my church and the other was Philip. So I sat down. But I was very suspicious. I thought maybe they were detectives. They said to Kathleen, 'Please do tell us how you manage with so many children', and they started talking. I tried to avoid getting into the conversation and once again I said I would like to go.

" 'I tell you sit down,' said Philip.

"Then Kathleen made tea. It was the first time I had ever had tea with white people and I did not like the idea. But something wonderful had happened to Philip. He was so relaxed with these people. In my heart, however, there was fear and hatred.

" 'Come and have tea,' said Philip.

" 'What, all of us?' I asked. He nodded.

"I went up to Kathleen and whispered, 'Kathleen, what is going on?'

"She said, 'It's all right, Regina, come and have tea.'

"So I sat down at the table. I took a cup of tea. Then I took a biscuit. I took the tea without sugar. Nobody offered it to me and I was much too afraid to ask for it. I have never had such a bitter cup of tea in my life!

"I thought I liked this lady but what could I say to her? I had never before tried to have a conversation with a white person. Of course, I'm nice enough to the Madam I work for because she pays me. But we could never talk together like this. I used to go to church on Sundays with my family and my friends. But on Mondays we used to plan how to kill the whites. I said, 'The boys can kill the Master and I will kill the Missus.' But here I was, sitting having tea with this white lady and we were talking like friends.

"That is where I met Moral Re-Armament and where I saw white people who were different.

"The following day I asked Philip what had happened to him and he told me how he had started to change and put right the things that were wrong.

" 'I am still a revolutionary,' he said, 'but on God's side.'

"I said, 'Nobody can change.'

" 'Only a fool believes we cannot change,' he replied.

Regina often came to see me and we had very honest talks together. God showed her certain things that she had to put right. She paid back some money she had taken and she wrote a letter to her mother apologising for something she had done. Regina said, "Change did not come quickly or easily and I found out that you must have a friend near you – someone you can talk to."

Philip was convinced that this spirit of change and unity was meant to spread through Western Native Township. He went to see the leaders of the opposing party and talked to them about working together. Could they not sink their differences and find a united mind so that all the residents of the township would benefit? Some leaders were suspicious of his motives and were not prepared to co-operate, but word spread to the people in the township that Vundla was not just a party politician, but cared for the welfare of everyone in the township.

He was particularly concerned about the gangs of young men who fought each other. Our township had two gangs, the Co-operatives and the Headquarters. Across the road in Sophiatown was another gang, the Vultures, led by a Coloured boy Don Mattera, the son of an Italian father and an African mother. Philip wrote in the papers about the folly of black fighting black. One day two gangs were slashing one another with knives and pangas on the sports field. Philip rushed on to the scene with some municipal policemen and broke it up, and of course the gangs ran away. Philip sought out Don Mattera, the leader of the Vultures and spoke to him, saying that he was the one person who could put an end to the fighting. Don said later, "There was something about him that is difficult

to express in words. It was something you had to feel. His fatherly gestures, his way of talking to you made you feel you were on a par with him. These things touched me, yet I told him the chaps in his area were the chief culprits, not me. So the gang warfare went on."

Then came tragedy. In a battle with the Vultures one of the Headquarters was killed. Many of the gang including Don were arrested and charged with murder. But they were discharged for lack of evidence. Once more Philip went to Sophiatown to plead with Don. He asked the gangs to come to a meeting in the communal hall in Western Township. Philip presided over it and it became a peace conference. In the presence of Mr Robinson the township superintendent peace was declared. However not all the gang members were there, and outside the hall some of the Headquarters were again attacked by the Vultures. But when they saw Philip they stopped fighting out of respect for him.

Philip kept in touch with Don who today describes himself as "ex-gangster, politician, poet and journalist".

Philip sensed his frustration at being of mixed race and accepted by neither white nor black. Don says, "He called me and told me that being Coloured was not a thing to be ashamed of, and that rejection by Whites or Blacks was not the criterion in life, but what a man could do, and what he could give to humanity. He tried to give me a picture of what it could mean if my life were guided by God. By this time I was so embroiled in politics that I felt for the moment God was irrelevant. Mr Vundla insisted that the basic battle was not between White and Black, but between God's will and man's selfwill, and I have never forgotten this."

In 1956, when the Advisory Board elections took place,

Philip was re-elected with an overwhelming majority. The following year he was returned unopposed as the opposition did not consider it worth while putting up a candidate.

Gradually he won the friendship of some of the men who opposed him and they found they could begin to work together for the common good. Even the white Superintendent, who had been most suspicious of his activities, now changed his attitude and welcomed Philip into his office and was glad to co-operate with him and the other township leaders.

It was Philip's honesty, as much as anything, that disarmed his opponents, and, as he discovered a whole new idea of leadership, he admitted the ambition and wrong motives that had driven him in the past. In his own words:

"In all African organisations where I served I always had my eye on the position I wanted to hold and it was always my ambition to be the leader. I was autocratic in our discussions. What I said was the important thing, even though I was often aware that others had made better suggestions. I did not hesitate to use force – physical force if necessary – to remove any obstacle in my way and this included people.

"I made extravagant utterances in order to prove to the people that I was more militant than anyone else. In many meetings fights broke out and sometimes I got arrested because I assaulted people who opposed me. My weakness was that I could not tolerate opposition. It did not matter whether the others were right or wrong. Like all dictators I surrounded myself with organised protection. But I did quite sincerely believe that our white oppressors were our only problem and all my political activities were directed against them."

With Philip's new sense of leadership came a new sense of responsibility and he began to think beyond the borders

of South Africa. He wanted training in Moral Re-Armament outside his own country and he wanted us both to attend the international conference held each summer at Caux, the headquarters for Moral Re-Armament in Switzerland. In particular he wanted to meet Dr Frank Buchman, then in his seventy ninth year, an American from Pennsylvania, who, starting with a few Oxford undergraduates in 1921, had inspired the growth of an immense force of people across the world.

Amongst the new friends that we made at this time was a Scotsman, Charles Burns. He had sold his estate in Scotland, had taken South African nationality and had bought a home in the Johannesburg suburb of Westcliff. People of every background or belief were welcome in this home and we drew much strength from the friendship we found there.

These friends understood how much we risked with our friends in visiting a white home or having whites in our own home, for they themselves risked the disapproval of their friends in receiving us.

Charles was convinced that it was in the national interest that Philip should go to Caux.

With all our friends eager to help we put in a request for passports.

The application was refused.

This was not altogether unexpected. We all knew Philip had a long police record.

Our friends now mounted a campaign to help us get the passports and Charles, in particular, decided that he would never take 'no' for an answer and would fight this through until the passports were granted. He, and others working with him, wrote letters and visited heads of different departments. When all official channels failed Charles wrote to the Minister

of Native Affairs and finally, as the months dragged by, to the Prime Minister. A file was drawn up for officials to study, as the applications went back and forth. It reported on the work of reconciliation Philip had done among his own people. There was evidence to prove that on more than one occasion he had averted bloodshed.

This battle for the passports went on for eighteen months.

During this period Philip was able to have a part in the formation of an important consultative group of responsible men, black and white. It followed a crisis which arose in the Johannesburg townships when the local bus company increased bus fares by a penny. Militant African leaders called for a boycott of the bus service. Philip was against this but was away in the Transkei and came back to find the boycott had started. He was under attack in the African press and we at home were very frightened as there was a threat to attack our home. Philip got home shortly before a large crowd, singing liberation songs, came to storm our house. They threw stones and bricks, breaking the verandah window and frightening the youngest girl and one of the boys who were standing there.

Fortunately one of the leaders of this hostile crowd stepped in and stopped the attack.

Philip was convinced that this boycott could and must be settled. It had spread from Western Native Township to Alexandra Township, on the opposite side of Johannesburg. Weeks became months and still no sign of a solution. Philip made a press statement calling on people to end the boycott. He went across to Pretoria to see officials in the Native Affairs Department, suggesting that the Native Service Levy Fund might subsidise the bus fares (this was a fund provided by

employers for housing and other needs of employees). But this was not possible. One of the problems was that in a crisis like this there did not exist the machinery for negotiations of this kind.

At no point did Philip lose heart as he was quietly certain that God had a plan to answer this problem. He had got to know a number of white business men. These men were very concerned about the boycott and recognised that much of the problem was due to the white man's policy of forcing African families to live outside the city areas. Ten of these men now met with African leaders, Philip, William Nkomo and eight other Africans and they talked frankly until midnight. It was the first time these businessmen had heard, firsthand, of the bitter hardships which the penny increase had meant. The Africans assured them that the boycott would be called off at once if the increase could be lifted. In twenty-four hours the businessmen raised £25,000 which formed the basis of the subsidy and later the Government, together with organised commerce, imposed a national transport levy. (This now subsidizes transport costs in most parts of the country.)

This group of men continued to meet over the next few years and had a great influence on attitudes and wage levels through frank and open dialogue.

Philip now faced the task of calling off the boycott. He called a meeting for residents of Western Native Township.

"This meeting is for residents only, and will anybody not belonging to Western Native Township please leave the hall," Philip said at the start of the meeting.

No-one moved.

Philip had himself seen lorry-loads of people arriving from all over the Reef and he knew that the African National Con-

gress, particularly its Youth League, had been organising people against him. He knew there would be trouble.

He told the meeting that the bus company was to be subsidised from a special fund and that we would not have to pay the fare increase.

Voices in the hall shouted, "We do not want the buses!"

The women shouted, "We want the buses back!"

Our friend Regina was sick and tired of the boycott. It had been so much walking and walking and, she said, even the taxi people would not always help, because they did not like to take fat people like herself when they could get more passengers and more money by taking thin people. So she got onto the platform and addressed the meeting: "We women are tired. The trains are overflowing. We want the buses back."

Philip asked all those to stand who wanted the buses back.

All the women stood up.

"Well, the women must have the last word," he said.

There was some good-natured laughter and then the young militants started shouting abuse at Philip. His first thought was to get the women out before fighting broke out and he asked them to leave the hall.

They refused, saying, "We will not go, as the Opposition will remain and will kill you."

"Will the women leave the hall!" Philip roared, for the second time. As Regina said, "When Vundla spoke like that you did what he said."

We women left and almost immediately the fighting started.

There were a number of casualties but Philip and his supporters had no difficulty in dealing with the militants. The buses started to run normally and the township residents were happy. But there were some men, committed to destroy

and disrupt ordered society, for whom this settlement had been a crushing defeat and for the next two months our home was in danger of being burnt down and we had to ask the police to guard it. Our children were so distressed that one of my daughters said, "Mum, I have never seen a family die overnight. We are not going to sleep here." So each evening they left to stay with friends nearby.

One day the police asked Philip, "What is this we hear about your people?"

"I hear they want to kill me," answered Philip. "But they can never kill the idea that I live for."

Our old friends were afraid to call on us.

I became ill, partly because of my great anxiety for Philip. I knew his life was in hourly danger. Even in my hearing men would say, "His wife will wear black. We will kill him."

Thanks to the Almighty Father, we had a faith and God gave us strength. As Philip said, "There is a time when you have to stand with God and see your people and your colleagues turning against you. Then you have to have a backbone of steel and a faith to keep you going."

We were invited to attend a conference for Moral Re-Armament in Salisbury, Rhodesia. Passports were not required, only permits, which we got without difficulty. It was the first time either of us had been outside the borders of South Africa, and it was interesting to meet so many new people.

At one of the meetings I spoke of my bitterness against my own people for the way they had persecuted us. After the meeting an Afrikaans housewife and mother from Johannesburg, Mrs Sophie Smuts, invited me to lunch. I would have liked sympathy, but she did not give me sugar, she gave me salt. She said, "Kathleen, these people are wrong. But are you

not just as much at fault in your bitterness against them?" I was furious and told her that I had done nothing to these people. She suggested that I ask God to show me if I were really free from blame.

Two days later I became ill and while I was in bed I read a book called *Remaking Men.* This book tells the story of Frank Buchman, who, when he was looking after a home for underprivileged boys, grew very upset when the governing committee told him to cut down on the boys' food. He got so bitter he became ill. One Sunday, listening to a preacher talk about the Cross, he suddenly realised that although there were six governors who were wrong, he was the seventh wrong man.

He wrote letters to these six men. At the top of each one he wrote the verse:

"When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride."

Then he wrote:

"My dear Friend,

I have nursed ill-will against you. I am sorry. Please forgive me.

Yours sincerely,
Frank."

When I read this it was like lightning in my heart. I realised I nursed ill feeling against these people who had made our life so difficult, and I could see where I was just as much at fault. I thought of one man in particular, who lived five houses away from us at home. He had been one of the men who had threatened to burn down our house. I had said to him, "If

Philip Vundla with Stellenbosch University students in the Town Hall after a performance of Peter Howard's play *The Dictator's Slippers* by a black and white cast

Chief Walking Buffalo of the Stoney Indians of Canada is guest of Philip Vundla on a tour of Soweto

you could see into my heart you would be shocked. Even if you died I could not come to your funeral."

The next morning I told the people at the conference that when I went home I was going to put things right with these people I had hated so much.

I felt as if a great load had been lifted from me.

The day after I got home I visited the home of this man who had wanted to burn down our house. His wife was there and so was his mother. I told my story and said I had come to apologise for my hatred of him. The mother said quickly, "My son did not do it," but the wife said, "Yes, he was working with them and was part of it."

For a few moments there was silence. Then the wife said, with great warmth, "Sister Kathleen, you certainly have come to the right place." The mother said, "This step you have taken is very rare. Tell me more about where you have been and what has happened." We ended on our knees, praying together, and from that time on were such good friends that when their daughter married they asked our daughter to come and dress her in her bridal gown. (According to our custom this is a great honour and sign of trust.)

I had experienced a miracle.

Sophie Smuts, whom I continued to see after I got back from the conference, became one of my most trusted friends.

In October 1958 there was news that the passports might be granted soon. Charles Burns, who had kept pressing for them all these months, was not well and was to have an operation. Philip, much concerned for Charles' health, asked if he could come and see him before he went into hospital and Charles invited him to dinner. After dinner the men talked for some time about the state of the country, about what was

happening in the rest of the world and about what needed to happen in South Africa. They sat quietly, listening to God, writing down the thoughts as they came. Charles wrote, "We need to change on this attitude 'because I'm white I'm right.' It is completely different from real leadership based on humility and care."

Charles went into hospital. Complications set in shortly after the operation. By the third day he had developed pneumonia and was critically ill. At this moment the news came through that the passports were granted. Someone took the news to the hospital and his wife told him. It was something he had been praying for, morning and evening, for eighteen months. He was still just conscious. He understood and said, "Terrific!" Soon afterwards he went into a deep coma and died the next morning.

We felt this loss deeply. We had often been guests in their home and Charles had given Philip friendship and hope when things had been very hard. Philip talked of this and how much it had meant to him when we went to the Burns home the following day and had tea with Barbara and the friends who were with her in the home at that time. As he talked about Charles, tears streamed down Philip's cheeks.

There were two funeral services, first in Johannesburg and then in Pretoria. William Nkomo was one of the pall-bearers, the others were South African friends, black and white, and a doctor from Scotland. Philip spoke at the service, together with an Afrikaans educationalist and an English South African businessman. Nobody needed to say very much, for surely this was the South Africa which God intended and which Charles had given everything to bring about.

The Johannesburg service was held in the Presbyterian

Church, St Columba's, Parkview, one of the fashionable residential suburbs of the city. Here, and in many parts of Johannesburg, streets are lined with jacaranda trees. At this time of year, for about three weeks, the trees are covered in clusters of blue-mauve bell-shaped blossoms, which come out before the leaves so there are whole avenues of pale blue trees. On this day in late October, the jacaranda blooms were beginning to fall, carpeting streets and green lawns with the blue flowers.

One week later Philip and I left for Europe. Busloads of African friends saw us off from Jan Smuts Airport.

CHAPTER V

BEYOND THE LIMPOPO

To visit Europe and then on to the United States to meet Frank Buchman was going to be an expensive trip. We did not have the money ourselves, but we discussed this with our friends in Moral Re-Armament and a number of them contributed to our fare, some selling capital to do so.

We went first to Holland where there was a conference at the Hague. Meeting the people of Holland and remembering that this was the original fatherland of many of the Afrikaans people brought back to Philip his old hatred and he had many bitter feelings. He talked about this to some of the Dutch men and women who were running the conference and told them that he had decided, with God's help, that he would no longer hate, but would fight to change men instead, whatever their background. He also talked to the Dutch about their own attitude to the Afrikaans people.

He said, "You seem to think that all black people are right and all Afrikaners are wrong. This is something I do not like at all. It is treating me like a special case and not like a man, making me realise all the time that I am black. It is an attitude based not on character, but on colour."

We found that an answer to bitterness was of interest to people in whatever country we were in. Holland still had bitter memories of the harsh German occupation during the war years

and it was helpful to us to hear how other people had had to find an answer to bitterness in a situation that had nothing to do with colour.

We stayed in the home of a remarkable Dutch patriot, Mrs Charlotte van Beuningen, who was responsible for getting food into prison camps during the German occupation. These Dutch civilians whom the Nazis imprisoned had no protection and her efforts saved many lives. After the war she was decorated by the Queen of Holland for her work.* Now her beautiful home outside the Hague is a centre for the work of Moral Re-Armament in Holland.

We were invited to Germany and went first to Karlsruhe, where we stayed with a senior judge and his wife. The town was having a performance of an African film called *Freedom* and Philip was asked to speak before the film and tell the audience about it. The idea for the film had come from a group of Africans from different parts of Africa who had been at the Caux conference together. Frank Buchman said to them he believed Africa could speak to the world and suggested they write a play. They did this and later some of them went to West Africa and took part in making the film. The photography was done by one of Walt Disney's gifted cameramen.

The German audience were very interested and asked us many questions afterwards.

We spent six weeks travelling through Germany. Philip got on very well with the Germans. He met a number of them who felt very responsible for the two world wars and who said to him, "We do not want such a thing ever to happen again."

In the Ruhr we met German miners and their wives. Many

*See "A New World for my Grandchildren"—Himmat Publications.

had been committed Communists until they met Moral Re-Armament, which was a bigger revolution, they said, and went further than Communism. Philip was very much at home with these people. "I like their spirit," he said, "They are fighters – as I am."

There was much that we could learn from one another.

We went to Mannheim. Here we were guests of a German pastor, a fine man who had the confidence of people in all political parties. His wife was a great church worker and active on many committees. But she had very little time for the running of the home. It was the middle of winter and bitterly cold. After a few days here Philip became very disgruntled at finding his tea always cold and the food put on the table with no care in the preparation. It also worried him that the drawing room and dining room were never used. We had all meals in the kitchen, which was part breakfast room. After some thought Philip decided that the thing to do was to care for the family and try to inspire them to do things differently. He took the next opportunity that offered to talk to our host and hostess about the cold tea and the bad atmosphere in the home in general. Our hostess was very angry. She said that as a pastor's wife she had to keep house on very little money and as it was they were hard put to it to feed the extra guests.

Philip chuckled and with a twinkle in his eye, asked her if she knew what "mealie-meal" was. He explained that it was ground maize which was the staple diet of his people in South Africa – and he hated it. He then described how I used to cook it. "She would throw the water into the pot," he said, "throw the pot onto the coal stove, throw in a handful of salt, and when the water boiled, throw in the mealie meal. She did

not always stir it. She would push a plate of the porridge in front of me and it would be lumpy and horrid. But I had to eat it. I would leave the house, cross with Kathleen, slam the door and then give hell to the people I met through the day. Then one day Kathleen's niece Florence came to stay. She took on the cooking. She would take the pot quietly, measure the water into it, put it gently on the stove, measure the salt into it with her fingers" – at this point in the story Philip's fingers flickered delicately over the imaginary pot – "and she stirred the water and tasted it. Then she took the measured meal in her cupped hands and let it fall slowly into the boiling water and would stir it until it boiled. She would ladle it into a bowl and set it before me with a spoon. It was warm and smooth and just right. And my stomach used to say 'thank you'. I found I liked it. I would leave the house, shutting the door quietly behind me and I would enjoy working with people for the rest of the day."

Our hostess got the point. She asked Philip to tell the story again so that her housekeeper could hear it.

Then we all started to clean the house from top to cellar. The drawing room was opened, the dining room was opened, the same food was beautifully prepared and good meals appeared without extra expense.

For the first time in their married life the pastor was able to entertain his friends in their home. They invited their friends in to meet us. When we left they thanked Philip warmly for his help.

One evening we were invited to have dinner with a judge and his wife. We were surprised how many things we had in common in spite of our different backgrounds. It was a gay meal with much laughter. After dinner our host said he

would like to play Beethoven's Fifth Symphony to us. They had a very fine hi-fi radiogram. It was the first time we had ever had an opportunity of listening to any symphony like that. At the end Philip was very moved and said. "This is of God". It seemed natural at the end of the evening for Philip to ask our host if we could all listen to God together, which we did.

While we were in Germany a cable from Los Angeles arrived asking us to fly out to California to take part in an M.R.A. Assembly.

Our journey took us over the North Pole. We arrived on Christmas Eve and went straight to the conference, where we were greeted by a choir of young people from many different nations singing our African national anthem "Nkosi Sikelel' i Afrika". In all our travels nothing moved us more than this did. They sang it from their hearts. They sang it better than our own people. It completely changed us.

On Christmas Day we spoke on the telephone to Frank Buchman. He had not been well enough to come to the conference. He asked us to come and see him in Tucson, Arizona, as soon as the conference was over. He made us feel very welcome in America and said he was so glad we had arrived at last.

During the six weeks we were in Los Angeles, Philip met a number of trade union leaders. He challenged them to pursue their fight without bitterness and to work for what was best for the whole nation.

Then we went to Tucson. Frank Buchman welcomed us on our arrival and took us in to have tea.

He was eighty years old and very frail and suffered much pain. But he was very alert and wanted to know everything we had been doing.

"So your Government has let you free at last, Philip Vundla," he said.

"When you get home," he continued, "you must go and bring something new to your government."

Philip and I looked at each other dumbfounded, as it seemed to be asking the impossible. Frank smiled and winked at us.

"I know it is not going to be easy," he said. He pointed to a mountain we could see from the window.

"You will be like a man climbing up this mountain," he said.

Although what he said seemed impossible we were moved by the faith of this man who expected miracles to happen.

Then he asked me the names of our twelve children and what sort of home we all lived in. I told him about our little house and how hard I found it with a big family and so little room. He said, "When you go home build a big home for those children so they can grow up decently."

To have a home big enough for our family, and where our friends could meet, was one of my great dreams. I did not see how it could ever be realised but I held on to the vision. (When we were in Germany I had thought about this home and had started embroidering two tea cloths for it.)

After this time with Frank we pondered over the things he had said. It all seemed impossible but perhaps, with God's help, it might be possible after all.

We visited Lincoln's memorial in Washington, and also the home of George Washington. It was a great inspiration to us to see them.

Our American friends had given us some money to take back presents for the children and something for ourselves. We bought gifts for the children. For ourselves we chose a map of

the world and a photograph of Frank Buchman, because he thought and cared for the whole world.

Philip said, "Before we went overseas we only saw our fight reaching as far as the Limpopo River (the northern border of South Africa). After these months away we decided that from now on our fight was going to be global."

Three months after we had left Jan Smuts Airport we were back there again and two busloads of friends from our township were there to welcome us on our return.

It was a wonderful reunion with our family and friends.

CHAPTER VI

THE CLIMB

One of the first things Philip did on his return was to give a party in Western Native Township. This was fulfilling a promise he had made while he was away, for during his absence his supporters had to fight an election on his behalf. The election was for the Advisory Board and it was Regina who suddenly realised that Philip being away was going to give his opposition the chance they had been looking for to get him off the Board.

Candidates for election have to be nominated and the nomination forms signed by twelve rent-payers. Regina had difficulty even getting a form. "He is overseas," she was told. "He is not working for his people any more." But she got a form from the secretary of the Board and sent a cable off to Philip and gathered her fellow fighters for the battle. It was Friday morning and the nomination closed at four o'clock that afternoon. Regina describes the drama:

"While we waited to hear if Philip was ready to stand again for election I went down my street to get signatures for the form. Everyone I asked signed it. As soon as the reply cable came we rushed with it to the superintendent of the township.

"He said, 'Where is his pass?'

"It was in his home. So we ran back to the house, found the pass, and at a quarter to four we put in the nomination. Then

the real fight began. His opponents said, 'He is overseas. He does not care for any of us any more.' We said, 'He is fighting for us all the time wherever he is. We will see that the right things are done, even though he is not here.' Whenever an aeroplane went overhead we would shout, 'There is Vundla! He is watching. He is coming!'

"When the results came in the opposition had 128 votes and Philip had 707.

"By the end of that day we were very, very tired. We cabled Philip the result and he promised that when he returned he would give a party for us."

Regina was sure that those defeated at the election would take their revenge. At two o'clock on the morning of the day of the party she could not sleep. She dressed and went outside and at three o'clock she saw a group of people coming towards her house. She quickly got out her hosepipe and by the time they arrived at her house she had a strong jet of water going. She told them she was cleaning her street, but as they advanced she turned the hose on them and the jet of water broke their ranks. They went off, very wet, saying they would kill her, but that was the last of the trouble.

We had a wonderful party. Philip had a sheep killed for us to roast. We felt people were glad to have us back.

Regina summed up the simple reasons why Philip got re-elected:

"The people really wanted Vundla. He beat the other leaders because they would not go into the poor homes, but he always went to the poorest people and they got confidence in him and knew he came because he cared for them. The other leaders would only go to the homes of the people who were better off. Philip battled on with the opposition until they understood

his ideas and what he was trying to do. He helped his enemies as well as his friends and finally they turned into his friends. When they were in trouble they used to go to his house and put their case to him. If I were there, too, I would give Philip a warning look – that he must not do anything for them. But always he would do everything he could to help. He said, 'If I am elected, I am elected for everybody.' So people trusted him."

A few days after we got back the teachers in the township invited Philip to come and tell them of his experiences overseas. The women teachers said to me, "May we invite ourselves to your home?" The house and verandah were tightly packed. One of the teachers was June Chabaku, one of the young firebrands of Soweto. Whenever Philip spoke at a meeting she used to get on to the platform and stir up trouble, saying, "Did you hear him? He talks about this and he talks about that. If you are wise you can hear that the man is betraying you."

She expected that I would not allow her in my house.

I greeted her and made her feel at home.

She was in tears and said, "I never thought I could be allowed to enter this home."

I spoke to the teachers and they asked me many questions. Then one of them said, "I am surprised. I never knew Mrs Vundla could express herself in English."

In the old days this would have hurt my pride and I would have withdrawn and thought bitterly, "This is what comes of taking in laundry." But now I did not mind and realised that in the past I had never really dared to express my thoughts.

More and more people wanted to hear about our time in Europe and in the States and more and more people came to

our little home. Always in the back of our minds was the conversation we had had with Frank Buchman, when he had said, "It will be like a man climbing a mountain." We could not see how to start this climb, but we were sure that we would be shown step by step. In the meantime Western Native Township was due to be cleared as part of the Government's re-housing programme in the same way as Sophiatown had been moved.

We remembered what Frank Buchman had said to us about a home where we could bring the children up decently and it seemed that this might be the time.

We chose a site in Dube, part of the big Soweto Township about fifteen miles from the centre of Johannesburg. We had to raise the money for it and we wrote letters to friends we had met through Moral Re-Armament, in South Africa and in other countries, to tell them of the home we hoped to build and the way we felt it could be used.

Many people seemed to want to have a part in helping us build our new home and we were deeply grateful as the money kept coming in.

We were sad to say goodbye to our friends in Western Native Township. Some time after we left, the residents of the township showed their gratitude for what Philip had done for them by presenting him with an illuminated address:

To: Mr P. Q. Vundla (Leader of the People).

From: Former Residents of Western Native Township to Moroka.

As a token of our spontaneous recognition, appreciation and indebtedness to your services we present the following testimony that between 1939 and 1963 you selflessly, wholeheartedly and courageously championed the cause of African people as a leader in the following:

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

a) *Made representation for better housing in Municipal Township.*
b) *The establishment of Civilian Guards to combat crime during the war years.*
c) *Your very personality has always been of pacifying influence during social upheavals in the Township; your courageous outlook inspired faith and confidence in the future during the hours of gloom and distress.*

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

You endeavoured to bring about better working conditions and improved wages by approaching and consulting:

1. *The Chamber of Commerce and Industry.*
2. *Department of Railways and*
3. *Department of Bantu Administration and Development.*

In conclusion, your extensive travels abroad, and your contribution to the Press from time to time, and your personal contact with V.I.P.'s in all walks of life, have broadened the horizon of your outlook in life for the benefit of us all.

Aah! Ngelengele Bhungane!

Towards the end of 1959 we suffered a great personal loss in our family, with the death of our eldest daughter Nozizwe. She was a diabetic but in spite of this she trained as a teacher and was teaching until her last illness. She died suddenly, after going into a coma, and it was a great shock to us all. Many of our new white friends came to the funeral service and the sincere way in which they shared in our family sorrow helped our African friends to understand some of the things Philip and I had been talking to them about.

Life moves on.

Our new house was almost ready for us to move in.

We called it "This is it". It is a single-storey house, or bungalow, built of faced brick, approached by a small flight of stone steps and a porch. It looks across open land: a wide river bed – usually dry – with light-coloured sand fringed with reeds, bamboos and small scrub trees. Nobody can build on this land.

We moved in and in this home, as in our previous one, the children were each given their own tasks around the house and expected to carry their share of running the home.

My son Peter, talking one day about our old home, brought back vividly some memories of our early life:

"The earliest recollection I have of my father was when I was about five years old. He had what appeared to me then to be the biggest motor-bike in the world. I remember how he used to take me and my ten-year-old brother and my sisters for rides in turns, along the dusty streets of Western Native Township. How I enjoyed those rides!

"My memory then jumps to a warm summer evening when about a hundred people milled around our house, seeking my father's blood. I could not understand what was happening. I heard the crash of window-panes and fear possessed me. The younger children clung to my mother and my elder brothers were at my father's side. There were a few of my father's supporters in the house. My father pulled his shirt off and took two sticks to ward off the attackers, but his supporters stopped him. He was without doubt one of the most courageous men I have ever come across.

"This courage he tried to instil in us in many ways. I would not dare go home after losing a fight in the streets. I knew I had to win every one of those fights. My father would never have tolerated it if one of his children had had a fear for

The Mayor of Cape Town opens a meeting in the City Hall. On the right are miners from the Ruhr in Germany

The authoress serving tea to her husband

heights or enclosed places. He hated fear. He said, 'Fear clouds the mind.'

"He naively believed that urban-bred children were less responsible than those brought up in the country. He therefore proceeded to give us a sense of responsibility. Every member of the family had a household chore to perform. My eldest sister at home, Nozizwe, had the task of helping Mother. Xolile, my eldest brother, would assist Dad in all manly chores; Elizabeth had to prepare what breakfast there was to be had. My brother Philip supplemented the family income by selling newspapers. Merry had to clear the yard, I had to polish all the family's shoes, and so on, down the ranks including my two brothers, Michael and Temba and my sisters Dorcas and Caroline. One department we all cringed from and only assisted in most grudgingly was gardening!

"My father believed that it is through the family life that a nation is disciplined.

"Dad had a wonderful sense of humour, even when the odds were against him. He used to joke about his greatest weakness, vanity. He was joking about it a few hours before he died, refusing to wear a woollen cap on his head to go to the hospital. He had us all laughing.

"My father was very particular about money. Each of us had to give a detailed account of how we spent money, no matter how little it was. He taught us a song on saving and spending! Luckily for us, however, no money was spared in feeding and clothing us and paying our school fees. To P.Q. education was an extension of the political struggle of our people and this he sought to give his children.

"We did not see eye to eye on certain issues, especially national politics. To me he represented the old school of

thought, that believed the liberation of the blacks in South Africa could be achieved by non-violent means. I thought him a tea-party revolutionary. 'How could we blacks adopt a non-violent stance against a violent government?' I argued. 'What you achieve through violence,' he answered, 'you will need even greater violence to maintain.'

"I could not argue against such a truth. He believed not only in changing men's minds but their hearts as well. He had a vision of a democratic and non-racial South Africa. He frequently said, 'I should care for the future of the white child as much as for the future of the black child.' Indeed it would be folly and tragic if Black and White in South Africa disregard P.Q.'s wisdom."

Unlike his sons, Philip was a keen gardener. He bought plants and manure and we both tackled the new garden right away, putting in grass, plants and rose bushes in the front and fruit trees, vegetables and a grapevine in the back garden.

One reason why Philip loved working in the garden was that he could see all the people who passed. He would wave and talk to them.

As the garden developed and finally blossomed, it became an attraction for visitors and tourists going round the township and they would sometimes come and ask if they might take photographs of the house and garden. Although our house was on the edge of the township, our road is the main one round it and it was always teeming with life and activity. Sometimes it was white schoolchildren being shown round, sometimes tourist buses or visitors from overseas. There was one tourist bus in particular which passed every morning and used to stop regularly. Both the driver and the guide knew Philip well and Philip loved to speak to the tourists. I think the

tourists were sometimes rather surprised. This man, cracking jokes and so at home with everybody, was not quite what they had been led to expect!

It was as easy for white to approach him as it was for black. From time to time he would invite them in to tea. The young white people liked him very much and enjoyed his sense of humour. One day the teacher of one of these school parties came to our home. He came on his own but came back a second time with some senior students. They asked Philip a lot of intellectual questions. He did not argue. He told them about his life and battles and the discoveries he had made. "We all want something that satisfies, don't we?" he said, "Well, here it is."

Philip knew that although youth was in revolt on every side what they were really looking for was something that would fill the vacuum inside.

Our home was a home of all races.

Some people were surprised to find photos of white people on our radio, as they knew how bitter our people are about them. They would ask us who they were. We would tell them. We would also tell them that we believed that the crisis we are facing today in the world is not of colour but of character.

Philip was worried about the crime in our area. Christmas was approaching and he decided to do something about it. He invited some of the top men in the police on the Reef, and he invited some of the leaders of the African community to meet them. There is much bitter feeling between our people and police. Philip said to them, "We want to work with you so that at this time of Christmas, rather than so many lives being destroyed, we would like to see a way to save them."

It made us very happy to have our home used in this way for all people in our country.

Amongst Philip's friends were some clergymen in the Dutch Reformed Church. Sometimes he used to go to the Afrikaans University at Potchefstroom and talk to the theological students there, and sometimes he would have the Dutch Reformed clergy to our home – six or eight at a time.

We both wanted to build bridges in the country. It is a costly thing to do. We used to wonder: who will be the people who will walk on these bridges?

1960 was a year when events followed fast, one upon the other. Some were good and some were bad.

It was the year of the tragedy of Sharpeville. The world press carried the news of how police had opened fire on Africans in this township and seventy-three of them had been killed. The country was shocked and tense. Philip and William Nkomo called together two hundred people of all races to meet in Johannesburg a week after the shootings. They gave evidence of a world answer to hatred, bitterness and violence and planned a strategy to meet the crisis. It was the only platform on which black and white met together at that time of national emergency.

There was an Assembly of all races for Moral Re-Armament held in Johannesburg, with extremes of white and black nationalism meeting each other and speaking from the same platform. There was a delegation from the Central African Federation (the Rhodesias and Nyasaland, as they used to be), and a message of support from the first African Minister in the Cabinet. Speakers at the meeting included a judge from the Transvaal Supreme Court and the chairman of the National Coloured Affairs Committee. These assemblies took place

regularly in South Africa from 1954 onwards, with the full knowledge of the authorities who were always invited to send observers.

The Treason Trials, which dragged on for three years, and attracted a lot of publicity around the world, brought fresh trouble to Philip. African political leaders were being arrested all the time for plotting against the State – a charge of high treason. Many of them were Philip's old colleagues. His enemies spread the word round that these arrests were being made because Philip had gone to the police and informed against his friends, using information about them to which he had access when he was on the council of the African National Congress. They also told the police that Philip was one of those inciting people against the Government. Either way they would be bound to win.

It was a heart-breaking time for Philip.

"How can this happen?" he said to me one day, "to be persecuted by my own people, in my own country. If men were still men this would never happen."

Then he prayed, "Almighty Father, if I am leading your people astray, cut off my life. But if the opposition is leading your nation astray, get rid of them."

He wrote an article at this time, calling for incorruptible leadership in which he said:

"It is no good just blaming the white people for the situation in South Africa. No one behaves badly simply because he is white. There are forces working to exploit colour, to divide people for their own ends. It is not a question of colour but of character.

"I have devoted my life to the fight for the freedom of my people. It has been a just fight and I believe still is. If I were

elected as a member of Parliament I would not want to represent only the black people, but all the people. Our leadership nowadays must be above race or colour and any idea that excludes anybody is not big enough. We need African leaders today who will serve the people and not ask anything for themselves. We need incorruptible leadership. We are going to have independence and in an independent nation we must have absolute integrity. We must face the truth about ourselves. As a leader I used to say that I was entitled to a private as well as a public life. But I found that people were more interested in my private than my public life.

"Unless we change there will be such bloodshed in my country that none of us will survive and neither side will win. No human wisdom will provide an answer. Only the power of God will change human nature and show us the way ahead."

One evening Philip went to a dinner given for him in the home of some white friends of his and at which he was a joint-host. After dinner, as the guests wanted to know about his ideas and his beliefs and what he thought about the situation in the country, he talked to them of his longing to build a fear-free, hate-free, greed-free world. He told them he believed that the heart of the matter lay in the idea that when man listens, God speaks and suggested they sat in silence for a while. Then a man rose and said, "Mr Vundla, you remember the night when a lot of young people attacked you and tried to kill you? I was one of them. I have watched you to see if you truly believe what you say. I am convinced that you mean it and I want, tonight, to take my stand with you."

Incidents like this lifted Philip's spirit.

In May of this year (1960), we had an unusual and most welcome visitor – Chief Walking Buffalo of the Sioux Indian

tribe of Canada. He was eighty-nine years old at that time, and was travelling with a party of eight Canadian Indians on a world tour.

They arrived in full regalia, with massive head-dresses of feathers. Walking Buffalo wore a pair of great buffalo horns as well.

The Mayor of Johannesburg gave a civic reception for them, attended by city councillors, members of the Diplomatic Corps and prominent citizens. Radio and press reported it widely with splendid photographs in the newspapers.

Philip acted as their host when they visited the African Community. He took them over his Dube home where they met a lot of people and introduced them to African leaders.

Our newspaper, *The World*, published a full page on their visit under banner headlines: "REDSKINS HIT TOWN".

The Red Indians created a sensation in the townships. Wherever the cars carrying them stopped, excited crowds gathered immediately, and people abandoned buses, scooters, cars and coal lorries to get a better view of Chief Walking Buffalo and his party. As they went through the townships the Red Indian Chief handed out Moral Re-Armament booklets and pamphlets, telling people how important he felt this work was.

We gave a reception for them in our home and Walking Buffalo gave an address. Our children, who were allowed to sit near the Chief and his party and even got into some of the press photographs, were beside themselves with excitement and were rather the envy of the other children.

At the end of this eventful year, Philip met the Minister of Native Affairs. It was the first time that a visit of this kind had taken place in the Johannesburg African areas. Philip was

elected to be the spokesman for the 600 000 people living in these areas. At the official reception for the Minister, Philip said, "We are living in a changing world. I am grateful for what you are doing for us. But it would be much better for us to do things together rather than for you to do what you think is good for us." At the end of the speech the Minister leapt to his feet and grasped Philip warmly by the hand.

In February 1961 Philip went to Cape Town to take part in the launching of a full length colour film, *The Crowning Experience*, the true story of the great black educator, Mary McLeod Bethune of the United States.*

Press and Public praised the film.

A week after the film had its opening night Philip addressed the Rotary Club at Sea Point, one of Cape Town's fashionable suburbs. For this club of white senior citizens to invite an African to speak to them was a very unusual event.

He had just returned from Britain where he had been asked to help launch this same film in Birmingham and the Midlands. He had met and addressed many leaders of Britain's immigrant community and it had renewed his conviction for what South Africa could do for the rest of the world. He told the Rotarians about his change and how he had lost his bitterness.

"The black people," he continued, "now enjoy the sympathy of the whole world, including the West. It is very difficult today in Europe to convince the people there that I can be wrong, although I am black.

"If South Africa can do the one right thing the whole

*Mary McLeod Bethune, born of slave parents, rose to become the adviser of Presidents in the White House. Of Moral Re-Armament she said, "To be a part of this great uniting force of our age is the crowning experience of my life."

world will take notice. South Africa can lead Africa, not because of her know-how, but through a change of heart. The trouble is we want it both ways. We want change, but we also want to hang on to certain things.

"I am grateful for what the Government has done for the African people, but we must now do things together. We must be included in the planning.

"The battle is on in the world today for the minds of men and we have ideas that can capture the hearts of people. You cannot keep the peace permanent through guns. We need guns and missiles, but more than that we need God-guided men."

He told them what he felt about violence and what he felt about Communism. He urged all of them to see *The Crowning Experience*. He said, "If you have a satisfying idea the Africans will accept it. We believe that if we really apply Moral Re-Armament empty hands will be filled with work, empty stomachs with food and empty hearts with an idea that really satisfies . . . This can be the turning of the tide.

"On the basis of absolute moral standards, honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, we will build a new country.

"You must go and give the Africans hope. They are becoming desperate."

CHAPTER VII

MINERS FROM THE RUHR BRING HOPE

Ever since Philip's first visit to Germany he had hoped that one day he might be able to introduce his people to some of the Germans he had met there. He had felt a great affinity with the German people, particularly the miners of the Ruhr.

At the beginning of 1962 a party of these miners offered to come to South Africa for a few months, if it was thought they could be of service. As a result of the new spirit they had found since meeting Moral Re-Armament they had written a play, *Hoffnung* (Hope). It had been performed in Britain in 1960. They took the parts themselves and after the play spoke to the audience and apologised for the suffering that Germans had caused in two world wars. It did much to heal wounds and cure bitterness. The play had been made into a film and the miners offered to bring this with them.

It meant great sacrifices for them. They had to ask for special leave and, as well as the earnings they lost, they helped to raise their fares, one of the miners selling his Volkswagen and the others raising money in different ways. With them, to help with interpreting, came the son of a German general and a Norwegian resistance fighter, who had lived and worked in Germany after the war, both engaged in full-time work with Moral Re-Armament.

Philip was very pleased and helped plan occasions in all

the main South African cities for the miners to show their film and meet people.

In our township Regina and I distributed leaflets and our large Mofolo Hall was packed for the showing of *Hoffnung*.

A determined group of hecklers started to disrupt the evening as soon as the first speaker tried to introduce the miners. These people might be German miners but they were white and as such were unacceptable. Then the first miner spoke and told the audience how the film had come to being. From his first words he transcended every barrier of race or colour. These miners, many of them former members of the Communist Party, sensed the feelings of bitterness and oppression in our people and within seconds the hecklers were silent and listened quietly for the rest of the evening.

They won the confidence of our people, who asked them many questions and wanted to know more about what it was that would bring miners from the Ruhr to an African Township.

In March the miners addressed the 8th Annual Conference of the South African Trade Union Council, meeting in East London and told members of fifty affiliated unions of the new spirit of teamwork between management and labour that they had found in their industry. They also told them of the new unity which M.R.A. had built between France, Germany and the nations of Europe.

Philip, while this was happening, was addressing a cross-section of some of Johannesburg's leaders at a private gathering of about 150 people – militant Africanists, Dutch Reformed Church clergy, heads of the Coloured community and men in Government service and commerce.

He told them how interested people were in the miners' film and how they had crowded in to see it in Pretoria.

"Moral Re-Armament is reaching the masses," he said, "and that is why we are going to by-pass the people who are still fighting the colour war."

"We are fighting the wrong battle in South Africa – the battle of colour. I stand here to record that colour will never again be my battle because I am convinced that it is too small an issue. I have reached a stage in my life where I fear no man because there is absolutely nothing that I want for myself. If you want people to praise you, if you want the approval of men, you are selling your country short because you are not thinking beyond yourself.

"I have met leaders from all parts of Africa and the thinking of some of these leaders has become confused. They think that if the white people are out of their country then everything will be fine. That is how Communism exploits leadership that has no ideology. They tell us, 'Your trouble is the white man.' Then they go to the white man and say, 'The natives are going to kill you.' And if you have no ideology you will honestly believe them. These people want us to clash. They seek to cause friction so that we fight one another and then they take over. And if we ever fight in this country, God help us, because we will all be destroyed and nobody will benefit."

The miners' film had aroused so much interest it seemed to be a good idea for us to put on a play ourselves. The play chosen was *The Ladder*, written by the journalist and playwright, Peter Howard.

It is a symbolic play revealing the choices that face a man as he climbs the ladder of success. At each point of decision there comes across his path a man carrying a gladstone bag. He lights up the moral choice facing the hero. It turns out that

in the bag is a cross, and this man is, of course, carrying the cross. Philip played the man with the bag.

At the end of the first performance the audience were so stirred that they sat for some minutes in complete silence. Then there was great applause.

Most of the cast were white South Africans – Johannesburg businessmen and their wives, an advocate who had represented the Government in the Treason Trial, a journalist on the *Pretoria News*. The backstage work was carried by black and white South Africans and many students gave up their holidays to work with the play.

Sometimes the audiences were white, sometimes black, sometimes all races. The Mayor of Johannesburg came to a performance in the Alexander Theatre.

For Philip the most fascinating performances of *The Ladder* were those given in the university town of Stellenbosch in the Cape. This village, set in one of the loveliest mountain ranges of the Cape, is both one of South Africa's leading universities and also the heart of Afrikanerdom, where six out of seven of the country's Prime Ministers have been educated.

Many students came to the play and after performances they would swarm round Philip, asking him questions. Since those days we have heard of the enthusiastic receptions that the Stellenbosch students have given to Dr Banda of Malawi and to Chief Buthelezi of the Zulu people.

But at this time it was unprecedented that an African political leader should be received like this by the students of this University.

We went on tour with the play – to Bulawayo and Salisbury in Rhodesia, and then north to Ndola, the copper-mining town in Zambia.

Rhodesia was going through a very unstable time politically. There was a tense atmosphere of bitterness and hate. Young nationalist Africans were becoming more and more militant, forcing all Africans to join demonstrations. Some came to the play disguised, so as not to be recognised by these youths. Seeing this cast of different races from South Africa and this evidence that even white South Africans could change, brought hope into a situation which many had thought was beyond hope.

Our son Philip was one of the backstage crew on this tour. It was a great joy to have these weeks working together. Shortly after we returned home he was caught up in an outbreak of violence and was stabbed to death. It was a terrible shock to us. We never found out what really happened.

He had been a prominent member of a soccer team and on the day of his funeral his team lined up next to the grave, as a final tribute, all wearing their soccer jerseys and boots. It is an African custom, after the coffin is lowered into the grave, for the young men to take shovels and fill in the grave before any of the mourners leave. When the young Africans began to do this, a student from Stellenbosch University, who had got to know the family, stepped forward, took a spade and helped move the earth. It was an unexpected act and it made many of our friends come to us in the days that followed to ask us who the young man was and what it was all about.

Philip felt the time had come to inform the whole of the Soweto township with its 600 000 people about M.R.A. He felt this should be done through the film *The Crowning Experience.* Every Sunday morning black and white South Africans would meet in Soweto and parade with banners and bands announcing the film. They took invitations from house to house, gave

each home a piece of literature and invited people to the film. In this way they visited 19 000 homes. The film went through every part of Soweto for sixteen weeks.

Philip thought constantly about South Africa's position in the world. He watched the world-wide campaign to ban South Africa from all world bodies – sport in particular. Many of his own people backed the campaign and he could well understand it. Some countries applied a boycott on South Africa. Now there was nothing anybody could tell him about boycotts. But he had learnt that the bitterness and hate that was stirred up during a boycott stayed on after the boycott was over.

He saw the white South Africans withdraw further and further from the world, trying to disguise the hurt inflicted on them by attacks in the United Nations and from other quarters, by giving the impression that they did not care and preferred to be alone. He understood the Afrikaner who, having been defeated in war by the British, was going to take care to see he was never defeated again.

Although Philip never hesitated to say publicly that the way his people were being treated by the white people was wrong, he also knew that both black and white in South Africa needed a change of heart and that they needed to let God replace bitterness, fear and hate with trust and understanding.

South Africa's isolation from the rest of the world seemed to be a tragedy which helped no one and Philip felt that the country needed men of integrity, whatever their race, who would create a spirit of trust. He knew that the true battle in South Africa was not between black and white but between right and wrong. It was this determination to bring his country

back into the world family and to help the rest of the world understand the real issues in the country, which made Philip a good, if unofficial, ambassador for South Africa.

He was very pleased when he received an invitation to meet members of the United Party Caucus in the House of Assembly in Cape Town. The thirty members who were there were as interested to meet Philip as he was to meet them.

Because he was free from wanting anything for himself he had no hesitation in approaching anyone, regardless of their position. One day he rang up a Cabinet Minister.

"I should very much like to see you," he said, "What time do you have tea in your office?"

The Minister may have been astonished, but Philip had tea with him and, as he was leaving, the Minister said to him, "Everyone who comes to this office is usually screened before they come in. You have not been because I trust you."

Philip was meticulously punctual about keeping appointments, something that he knew was not the case with many of his compatriots. If he said he would be at a certain place at a certain time he would be there, and he hated to be kept waiting. When making appointments on the telephone he would say, "Yes, four-thirty. Four-thirty European time, not African time."

He enjoyed laughing at the weaknesses of himself and of his people, and he loved teasing people. He was particularly interested in students and young people and welcomed any opportunity to speak to them and meet them. On one of his visits to Britain he was invited to address a meeting in the Oxford Union. Naturally it was a very sympathetic audience but Philip refused then, as always, to exploit public sympathy. He wanted people to make their judgements on a man's

integrity, not on his colour. He said to them, "Because my skin is black you don't have to believe everything I say is true."

People who invited him to speak never knew quite what to expect. On one occasion he was asked to address a group of white South African Ladies. They were an association well known for their outspoken criticism of the Government. They knew he was opposed, as they were, to the Government policy and they looked forward to being congratulated by him on their bold stand. After paying tribute to their hard work and their courage this is how he addressed them:

"Ladies," he said, "I am very worried about you. I do not feel that you care for the Government. I do not agree with them any more than you do. I think they need to change. But I care for them. You will never change a person if you do not care for them."

There were times when we seemed to be criticised on all sides and felt neither black nor white understood our situation. We also found that if you stand for the truth a lot of people will hate you. But in 1966 we were helped and encouraged by the production of another of Peter Howard's plays, *Through the Garden Wall*. It was played by white professional actors. The "wall" in the play was a brick wall between two families – next-door neighbours. There was no mention of race at any point in the play, but it could not have been more relevant for a divided country like ours. The play ran for eight weeks in the Alexander Theatre in Johannesburg. Apart from its message, the play made money.

We had a run of the play in our Soweto area. The white cast had never before in their professional careers played to an audience in an African township. They enjoyed the experience. Large audiences came and many school parties were

able to come to matinees. Our people certainly got the point.

Philip felt this was a suitable moment to challenge the African clergy, who he felt could not get along with their next-door neighbours – building a wall so that they should not see each other. He said to one of them, "Why don't you live what you preach and care for your neighbour until you can win him? This wall you have built is right in your heart." The minister to whom he said this was very annoyed, but this may have been because it was true.

The following year, 1967, Philip discovered that there had been a bad decline in the matriculation results of the African school children. He was very concerned about this and called together the school principals, teachers and inspectors, as well as some ministers of religion and doctors and said to them, "What do you think about these recent results?"

The teachers explained that after the Bantu Education Act was passed many teachers had either left the country or gone into industry and there was a shortage of teachers.

They discussed what might be done about the problem and some of the teachers offered to give free coaching after school hours to those scholars who were writing examinations the following March. It was a great success. Children passed who had failed previously, and passed in the subjects in which they had had special coaching. Professional men in the townships offered to help financially and paid the teachers for their overtime teaching.

It was the founding of a new organisation. It was called the Association for the Social, Educational and Cultural Advancement of the African people of South Africa and Philip became the first chairman.

Soon after the Association had been formed we heard from

our two boys, Peter and Michael, that there was a crisis of unrest at the African University of Fort Hare, where the boys were now studying. This university, founded in 1916, had for many years played an important part in giving university education to African leaders from many African countries, particularly the East African countries, as well as many from Southern Africa.

Our sons told Philip that there was a sit-down strike at the university and they asked him if he could come and speak to the students. Permission for this was given and we went to Fort Hare.

In an atmosphere filled with tension, Philip addressed the students on a Sunday morning:

"I know that everywhere around the world youth are in revolt. The question I ask students is, 'You want to destroy authority – what do you propose to put in its place?' The answer they give me is, 'We will see when we get there.' "

The students listened quietly.

He told of his life, dedicated to the service of his people, the choices he had made, the stand he had taken and the violence he had suffered. "I myself needed to change," he said. "I was a man of many human weaknesses. But today I can look you in the eye and tell you there is an answer. We need a leadership that cannot be corrupted by money, liquor or women. In my revolution liquor has no part. And why can't you protect your women?"

Then, like a father, he talked to them about the importance of purity in their lives.

They listened with such attention Philip hoped they would reconsider their actions. But two weeks later trouble flared up again and a number of students were sent home. Philip offered

the Rector the services of his newly created organisation. The Rector travelled the 600 miles to Johannesburg and met with the executive of the Association. He said he welcomed the bridge of trust and friendship which this organisation was building and he would always be glad to work with them. Most students were allowed to return to the university. Others took correspondence courses with the University of South Africa, with the Rector giving them recommendations.

At the end of the first year of this new organisation, which had come to be known as A.S.S.E.C.A., Philip was well pleased with what it had achieved.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SUMMIT

Philip longed to see Government leaders in South Africa begin to articulate ideas and a way of life to which his own people could respond.

He had been knifed by his own people for fighting for what he believed was right: an ideology beyond hate or fear. There were other fellow-revolutionaries like William Nkomo who were fighting the same battle.

Philip did not doubt that this new leadership was the answer for South Africa, but sometimes he doubted whether change would come in time, especially among the white people.

It was hard not to get so involved in the affairs of South Africa that he lost sight of what was happening in the rest of the world, and hard too, not to lose heart. When he was asked to come to the 1968 Assembly at Caux he welcomed the chance to get perspective on South Africa and the African continent.

He went first to Britain and had the opportunity to work with Conrad Hunte, formerly Vice-Captain of the West Indies cricket team and now giving all his time to work with Moral Re-Armament. Through him Philip met some of the Black Power leaders. He told them how he discovered that there is an answer to hatred and division and said:

"South Africa is being used to divide men all over the

world on a basis of colour, but the real issue is character. Some people feel that the problems of South Africa can be solved by changing the laws. Let us by all means change the laws. They are unbearable. But in some countries laws have been changed yet the violence has grown, because men's motives have remained the same. It is important to change people as well as laws. Remember that those who say bloodshed is the answer have other people's blood in mind, not their own."

On another occasion Philip said, "Many African leaders say, 'We can use Communism to cross the river, but when we are on the other side of the river we will abandon it.' But by the time we reach the other side we are prisoners of the forces we try to use."

He was the guest speaker at a luncheon in Dr Buchman's London home, 45, Berkeley Square. Among the guests was the wife of a senior official in the South African Government.

"The heart transplant operations," said Philip, "have put South Africa on the map. But in M.R.A. we do something that is more powerful – we change hearts without an anaesthetic."

He went on to give his vision for what South Africa could do for the rest of the world and to give his convictions on how white and black needed to change.

From Britain Philip went to Switzerland, breaking his journey in Paris to take part in an M.R.A. conference and to speak at a special showing of the film *The Crowning Experience* at the N.A.T.O. Headquarters.

A series of leadership training courses were in progress when he arrived at the Caux conference, and he gave some lectures to the students attending, who came from many different parts of the world.

During one of these lectures, some of the African students made some violent remark about revolution.

"Revolution! Revolution!" Philip flashed back at them. "Do you really know what revolution is?" And he told them of his own experience of struggle, sacrifice and change.

He had not been impressed with some of the young people he had seen in the London streets – black and white – and he challenged these students to take up a much greater revolution, that of allowing God to direct all their creative energy so as to bring to birth the real revolution with purity at its heart.

On 1st August the conference celebrated the Swiss National Day in customary Swiss tradition. Flags were whirled, long Alpenhorns were played and in the evening there was a bonfire and a lantern procession with yodelling and singing.

Philip loved it.

The next day he addressed the assembly at the morning meeting. It was not so much a speech as a conversation with the people gathered there:

"Soon after I arrived from South Africa I met a lady from Peru. She asked me, 'When did you come out of the jungle?'

" 'Two days ago – if you mean Johannesburg,' I replied.

"You see, people get superior. I do too. I met a Swiss a few days ago. He had never been to Africa and he asked me about it. I told him that Africa was a continent so huge that if you took the whole of Switzerland and placed it in the middle of the jungle, you would never find it again. You see, I wanted to feel superior. But what I told him was the truth. There are also huge deserts like the Sahara and the Kalahari, and I am hoping that one day science will make these deserts fresh

once more so that we have enough food to feed the people around the world.

"I often think about the British. When I was at school I used to sing "Rule Britannia!" I did not know what it meant. I do now. But I love the British. They taught me how to play cricket. I used to be a very keen cricketer. The people in my country worship sport. The first lesson I got in cricket was to play with a straight bat and watch the ball. You see, I know now that cricket can be used for character-building: to keep your eye on the ball and to play with a straight bat in your own life."

He told the story of his change and how to tackle changing human nature. He talked about nationalism – and how interested he had been to discover Welsh and Scottish nationalists still wanting to fight the English for their independence!

"Britain is a well advanced country," he said, "and they have nice cars. I love those shining cars – the Rolls Royce, the Bentley . . . I see people ride by. They have got the things they want. They have succeeded in life. But will they be like the Romans? The Romans, even when their Empire came to an end, did not know it.

"Poor Romans!

"People here ask me what help do I want for the Association for the Social, Educational and Cultural Advancement of the African People? I am the chairman and they think I am going to ask for money because other African leaders come here in search of money. I am not here for that. But we do need help. My people suffer, but we will never be able to stop poverty in Africa unless we change people. The money you give here in Europe does not always reach the people in Africa for whom it is intended. It often goes to those at the top and the suffering

people remain suffering. So you see how important it is to create in Africa leaders who are incorruptible. That is the priority. Leaders who cannot be bought with money, drink or women. That is the type of leader we want.

When I get back to South Africa I would like to go to the universities and speak to the students. I am going to see men in the Government. I hope I can talk with men in the Cabinet. They are fellow human beings and I can see myself in them and the things they do. Of course I will never be able to change them if I hate them. You need to care for people. You need to love them.

"I wish I could be here longer. Last night was the first time that I was ever in Switzerland on their National Day. I felt very happy thinking of all the nations here. Nations are intended to live as sons and daughters of God all over the earth."

Philip returned to South Africa just after this.

In July of the following year (1969) be became ill, with a recurrence of his heart trouble. But he seemed to get better and by October he felt he was well enough to visit his people in the Ciskei, something which he was longing to do.

I travelled down with him, but he had barely been there a week when he became very ill again. He said to his people there, "If I should die now, let my wife take my body to Johannesburg. I know I was born here but you do not really know me. The people who know me are in Johannesburg, as they and I have fought tough battles together."

We were staying in the town of Alice. Philip was having a good deal of pain and not getting much sleep at night. The African doctor who saw him said it was due to his enlarged liver.

In spite of his bad health Philip spent much time talking

with his people, trying to advise them and thinking about the future. He was worried about them.

We came home at the beginning of November. He was very weak and obviously seriously ill. He was glad to be back in his own home.

At night, when he was in great pain and he could not sleep, his mind used to wander round the whole world. One night he said to me, "What do you think about the young Americans dying in Vietnam?" Another time he said, "What do you think of my people? They are gradually drifting away from God." I told him God would care for them.

"No," he said firmly. "That is not right. If they go on as they are they will perish."

Philip always had hope that people would change, but he was not afraid to look reality in the face.

At the end of November our doctor in Johannesburg told him frankly what course this disease would take. I was very upset that the doctor should have told him. But I need not have worried. Philip was ready for it. He said, "Why are we afraid of death? Who is not going to die?"

People came constantly to our home and Philip joked with everyone who came. He would not stay in bed and people did not realise how ill he was.

When the pains were bad he used to ask me to rub him, specially his feet. But the week before he died he would no longer let me. He knew I worried because they used to feel so cold. So he would say to my grand-daughter, "Your granny does not rub my feet well. Will you come and rub them for me please?"

I realised he was trying to spare me unhappiness.

The nights were the biggest problem for him. As soon as he

lay down he would get these pains. This trouble of pain keeping him awake at night had been going on since July, when the nights were very cold, being the middle of winter. I would wake up at night and find that he was not in bed. I would go to the warm kitchen and there I would find him, sitting up, with his head on a pillow on the kitchen table, and a rug on his knees.

For the last few weeks of Philip's life he was engaged in his constant fight to change the law which forced widows to leave their homes on the death of their husbands – they would have to move to a relation. This happened particularly if they did not have children, or only had daughters. He was having interviews all the time with the Manager of Housing in Soweto and was constantly on the telephone. The Manager was very helpful. There were also a number of widows in and out of the home asking him for help.

On Sunday the A.S.S.E.C.A. had their closing meeting for the year. Philip, as Chairman, insisted on presiding himself, though he was really too ill to do it. He was very exhausted at the end of the meeting but said, "Generally the Chairman does not give a closing prayer but today I am going to."

That night he had a severe heart attack and he asked me to call the boys. We prayed together.

The children asked him if he ought not to go to hospital. He said he would see in the morning. I was very very fearful. He wanted to sit at the kitchen table with his pillow and his rug. I lit the fire as he said he was cold. He dozed off but he was breathing with difficulty.

The next day, Monday, he had an interview in the morning with the Housing Manager about the widows. Then he rang up his old friend Nico and asked him to come and see him. Nico

came in the early afternoon and Philip asked him to take him to see the doctor.

After Philip had seen the doctor he said with a twinkle in his eye: "Do you know what the doctor says? He says I should come back in four days time. And where will I be in four days time?"

On the way home Philip looked out over the vast area of Soweto and said: "People like you must know the people in these homes and understand them and help them with their problems. If your people and mine lose contact, dark days will follow."

When he got home there were five widows in the lounge, waiting to hear the results of his interview that morning.

I gave them tea.

I gave Philip tea with Nico in the kitchen. The widows were a bit embarrassed that they were having tea in the lounge and I was giving the white man tea in the kitchen but I said, "Do not worry. He feels quite at home."

Philip went out to the car to see Nico off. He said to him, "First thing tomorrow morning you must ring to see if I am still alive." He said it jokingly. But it was as if he knew what was coming.

He talked to the widows and went to bed straight after supper. His breathing was very bad. The boys were frightened and tried to ring the doctor but could not get through. Finally they got through to the hospital where they found Philip's doctor was on duty. They were told that Philip should be brought in at once.

I rang one of our neighbours who came immediately to take us to the hospital.

He said, "All right P.Q., let's go."

"Where to?" asked Philip.

"To hospital."

We got him ready and Philip did not raise any objections until I handed him his woollen cap. Then he protested.

"What about my vanity?" he said, and he laughed.

He put on the cap and we drove straight to the hospital where the doctors were ready for him. They put him in a side ward, Philip still cracking jokes and never showing how ill he was. We went home.

On Tuesday morning my daughter rang the hospital early. They asked us to come at once as he was very ill.

A relation came to take us to the hospital but just as we were leaving we saw one of the school inspectors coming to us with a message.

I knew at once that he was coming to tell us it was all over.

It was the 16th of December.

News of his death was broadcast on the national news and carried in the national press and the editor of the African paper brought out a special mid-day edition.

Even though we had been expecting it, his death was a very great shock to us all.

He died a poor man, but rich at heart.

He built such a faith in those round him that I knew God had a plan for my home and that he would provide for us.

If his aim in life had been to make money, he could have done so – he was an intelligent man. But he used to say to us, "People come before profit".

We started a fund for university scholarships for African boys and girls (the P.Q. Vundla Scholarship Fund) and people could contribute to this instead of wreaths if they preferred to.

The newspaper *The World* carried the following article

on the 18th December. It was written by Percy Qobosa. A page with photographs covered a range of his activities from gardening at our home in Dube to addressing the Caux conference and at the polling booths during an election. It appeared under the headlines:

"He always stood up for what he believed was right.

"CONTROVERSIAL VUNDLA WAS LOVED BY US ALL.

"Mr P.Q. Vundla – the man they all loved but could never understand – is no more. He died in the Baragwanath Hospital at 7.15 yesterday morning . . . Another chapter closed in the life of one of South Africa's most colourful and controversial politicians.

"You could hardly accuse him of being 'anti' anything. For the years I have known P.Q., he was a man with his own mind. He baffled those close to him with some of his decisions and at times shocked those who thought they had an ally in him.

"In the old days of the Advisory Boards, when his colleagues were moving around in baggy and shabby suits, P.Q. was always impeccably dressed.

"Even in the Urban Bantu Council, except perhaps for his colleague Mr Richard Maponya, he was still the best dressed councillor. He always arrived at the meetings in style – sometimes in Mr Maponya's fast-back car. The two men added colour to a lack-lustre atmosphere!

"In the Moral Re-Armament movement P.Q. was a leading figure and this movement was responsible for his world-wide travels.

"He met the 'burning spear of Africa', Jomo Kenyatta, and the slain Tom Mboya. He dined with Prime Ministers.

"His seat on the Advisory Boards and the Urban Bantu Council was rarely challenged, and those that dared to, learnt that P.Q. could never be touched at the polls.

"But P.Q. Vundla was as unpredictable as the weather in Cape Town. If he got fed up with a Government law or decision, he grabbed a train and travelled to the Houses of Parliament to meet the Minister concerned and to express his views in no uncertain terms.

"His last act was to preside at a meeting of his organisation, A.S.S.E.C.A. This was on Sunday. He had great hopes for the organisation. He also had great hopes for the future.

"P.Q. is no more. But one thing is certain. He made his mark. South Africa will remember him for the manner in which he tried to save his country.

"Farewell P.Q. To me you were a friend and a father. We had our arguments but I admired you."

Philip was buried on the 21st of December. Over a thousand people attended the service and there was a two-mile long procession of cars and buses. Africans, Coloured and Whites came to pay tribute to him. Those speaking included William Nkomo, Bremer Hofmeyr, speaking on behalf of Moral Re-Armament in South Africa and Dr Ernest Claxton (former Principal Assistant Secretary of the British Medical Association) for M.R.A. in Britain.

Our family were very moved by a tribute from Mr Robinson of the City Council Non-European Affairs Department who spoke as a warm friend. A Coloured man stepped forward unexpectedly and asked if he might read a poem he had written. He was Don Mattera whom Philip had befriended ever since his days of violence as head of the Vultures gang. He said Philip had been as a father to him.

I think many people had this feeling that they had lost a father.

On the 5th April, 1970, a memorial service was held for Philip at the township of Moroka. Many friends spoke of the loss they had all suffered and some said that they knew they had lost a leader who could not be bought. One of his friends talked about Philip's "great faith which could move mountains."

This book gives some of the battles which Philip fought and which gave hope to our people that there is an answer for South Africa.

It will not just happen.

We will all need to change, and the root is the same for all of us – human nature, and it is a very rugged thing.

In South Africa we talk a lot about God, could we not live together as sons and daughters of God? I, for one, will try to do so.

Throughout his life P. Q. Vundla was at the heart of every struggle of the African people on the gold mining reef of the Transvaal. Strikes and boycotts were his stock in trade. Two days before his death he was still wrestling with officialdom, fighting the cause of African widows threatened with dispossession of their houses.

His life was dedicated to change. In the midst of struggle he found a new weapon in his battle. A profound change in his own life challenged the consciences of leaders and ordinary people in the many countries where his new vision led him.

When many believe that the choice in South Africa is between violence and the status quo, his life throws light on a new road which he believed might even at this late hour lead to a better day for all South Africans.

Kathleen Vundla comes from the royal family of the Batlokoa tribe. She trained as a nurse at the Crown Mines hospital. There she met and married Philip Vundla. Life was rough and tough for the wife of a revolutionary leader and mother of twelve children, but she stood by Philip through poverty, struggle and danger.
Together they found a secret that resolved the tensions to which their marriage was being subjected, and set their feet on the road of endless adventure.

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