

..GONIWE DAY..

20 JULY



UDF TRIBUTE

Issued By: NEUSA, P.O. Box 15833, Doornfontein, 2028.

The United Democratic Front takes this opportunity to pay tribute and to honour four comrades. MATTHEW GONIWE, FORT CALATA, SPARROW MKHONTO and SICELo MHLAWULI.

These men have paid the ultimate price for their part in the struggle.

Their brutal and tragic deaths have only deepened the resolve of our people, to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure a lasting justice and democracy in our country.



HE FOUGHT FOR FREEDOM

MATTHEW GONIWE was born in Cradock in 1947. At the age of 25, he and a colleague opened a school near Umtata. In 1977 Goniwe was sentenced to four years' imprisonment for teaching 'foreign ideologies'. On his release he was posted to Graaff-Reinet as a teacher.

Matthew spent 1982 travelling between Graaff-Reinet and Cradock. The community soon insisted that he come back to teach in Cradock.

In 1983 Matthew managed to get a post as acting principal in a school in Lingilihle. Together with other community leaders he set up a civic, CRADORA, and a youth organisation, CRADOYA.

In 1984 Matthew was told that he was being transferred back to Graaff-Reinet. He was not prepared to go and the community was not prepared to let him go. He, his cousin Nombulelo and Fort Calata who was also a teacher and community leader, were detained. The whole student population came out on boycott in support of their teachers. When they were released five months later, they helped to get the students back to school for

a short time in 1985. Soon after that national events swept the country and the Cradock students joined others in a nationwide boycott of Bantu Education.

It was at this point that the Department of Education and Training entered into negotiations with both Matthew and the community. They offered Matthew his post back if he would revive the community council by becoming the mayor of Lingilihle. Matthew was shocked that anyone could think that he would give up his principles to be party to such a deal. He declined the offer with full community support.

It was not long after this that the mutilated bodies of MATTHEW GONIWE, FORT CALATA, SPARROW MKHONTO and SICELO MHLAWULI were discovered in an isolated spot at Bluewater Bay outside Port Elizabeth. The last person to see them alive said that they had been at an executive meeting of the UDF in Port Elizabeth. As they prepared to leave for Cradock, Matthew had assured them that he wouldn't stop for anyone save a police roadblock.

Their deaths remain a mystery,
their lives an inspiration.



HE TAUGHT FOR FREEDOM

Matthew Goniwe was the kind of teacher that we in Neusa aspire to become. He saw no separation between school and the community and his students got good results. Because of this his students and their parents were prepared to make big sacrifices in support of Matthew and their other leaders.

In 1984, at the UDF National General Council, Matthew and Fort met with some Neusa teachers as well as unaffiliated teachers who were attending the council. It was largely due to Matthew's enthusiasm and confidence, that the teachers resolved that NEUSA should really become national.

Within a few weeks, requests for T-shirts and information were coming in from all over the Eastern Cape and Bloemfontein. Each time the request was in response to a suggestion by Matthew. We owe the rapid national growth of NEUSA to Matthew and his comrades.

FORT CALATA was equally responsible for the growth of NEUSA. He spent many hours of his time educating teachers about the need for a mass-based progressive teachers' organisation. He convinced the teachers that they should play an active role in the community as well as in the school. Fort himself was an executive member of both CRADORA and CRADOYA.

SICELLO MHLAWULI was the principal of a school in Outdshoorn. he led the teachers by example into forming a branch of NEUSA in the area.

SPARROW MKHONTO was a railway worker and chairperson of CRADORA from January 1985 up until his death.

HE DIED FOR FREEDOM

On July 20th 1985, over 150 buses filled with people from all over the country, made their way to the dusty township of LINGILIHLE.

Except for the SADF soldiers watching the funeral from the hillside, the white residents had cleared out for the weekend. They feared that the 'revolution' had finally come.

The rest of the residents of Cradock attended the funeral, joined by thousands of visitors who three weeks previously, hadn't even heard of this little township.

70,000 people wearing T-shirts from every organisation in the country, squashed together on the ground to pay their last respects to these four community leaders.

At noon, the UDF publicity secretary for the Eastern Cape, Stone Sizane announced that a State of Emergency had been declared.

It was on this day, the 20th July 1985, that a new era in the history of South Africa began an era of NEVER GIVE UP.