

To you comrades P Sibiya, S Ngubane, F Mnikathi, A Nkibande

by Mi Hlatshwayo

We say
 very well
always

We shall remember
your smiling and simple faces

there
 stark against
the midst
of our grim and resigned faces

We say very well
always

we shall remember
your smiling and simple faces

there
 stark against
our sorry faces
of regret and hopelessness

Your smiling and simple faces
that drove other men
to
 rape our unity
to
 raid our camps
and kill our pride

you - you

Your smiling and simple faces
meant sleepless nights
to bosses, rulers and their puppets

Your smiling and simple faces
gave hope to Sarmcol workers' struggle
to our liberation struggle

Your death now
comrades
proclaims our earthly triumph.

Sarmcol killings

The people of Mpophomeni, the striking Sarmcol workers and MAWU remember Phineas Sibiya, Florence Mnikathi, Simon Ngubane and Alpheus Nkabinde. "We will never forget you, we will never give up the cause you died for" are the words of the poster to commemorate their lives, what they stood for and what they did as leaders and activists in Mpophomeni.

Phineas Sibiya was chairperson of the Sarmcol shopstewards, a leader of the cooperative movement and a MAWU regional worker leader. Simon Ngubane was a Sarmcol shopsteward, a leader within the cooperative's cultural wing and leading performer in the Sarmcol play. Florence Mnikathi was a Sarmcol health committee activist and a daughter of one of the Sarmcol strikers. Alpheus Nkabinde was a youth activist in Mpophomeni.

On December 5 Phineas, Florence, and Simon were abducted from the township of Mpophomeni and brutally murdered. On that same night Alpheus was killed in the township. The entire community was shaken and together with the union struck with grief and anger. Union leaders alleged that those responsible for the killings were vigilantes led by Inkatha sympathisers and occupying the local community hall in Mpophomeni during that night. The Bureau of Information in a statement issued soon after the killings confirmed the involvement of Inkatha sympathisers in the killings. The police, perched on buses, and threatening to shoot tear smoke at the angered community, escorted the suspects out of Mpophomeni the following morning.

Police continued to make their presence felt in the community in