

# NO SURRENDER

The 'Citizen' of September 9 1986 reported: "Weapons . . . were found in a car in which four suspected ANC terrorists were killed in a shootout with police in Durban on Sunday night. . . The men were shot dead in a firefight with the police after being cornered. . . At the time the police, including members of the reaction unit of the security police, were investigating an incident in which a KwaMashu house was fired upon and attacked with three hand grenades . . ."

True, four MK combatants fell heroically that Sunday. What the "Citizens" deliberately forgets to mention is that they did not die alone. They took many boer soldiers and policemen with them. This is the battle in which Thabane Memela, alias Bridge Thwala, lost his life. Below follows the story as related by one member of the unit.

Mpandla, 20 cents and myself have been co-ordinating MK actions in the Durban area since the beginning of the year. Thabane is one of the comrades who were trained outside the country and sent to Durban. He joined our unit two weeks before this battle.

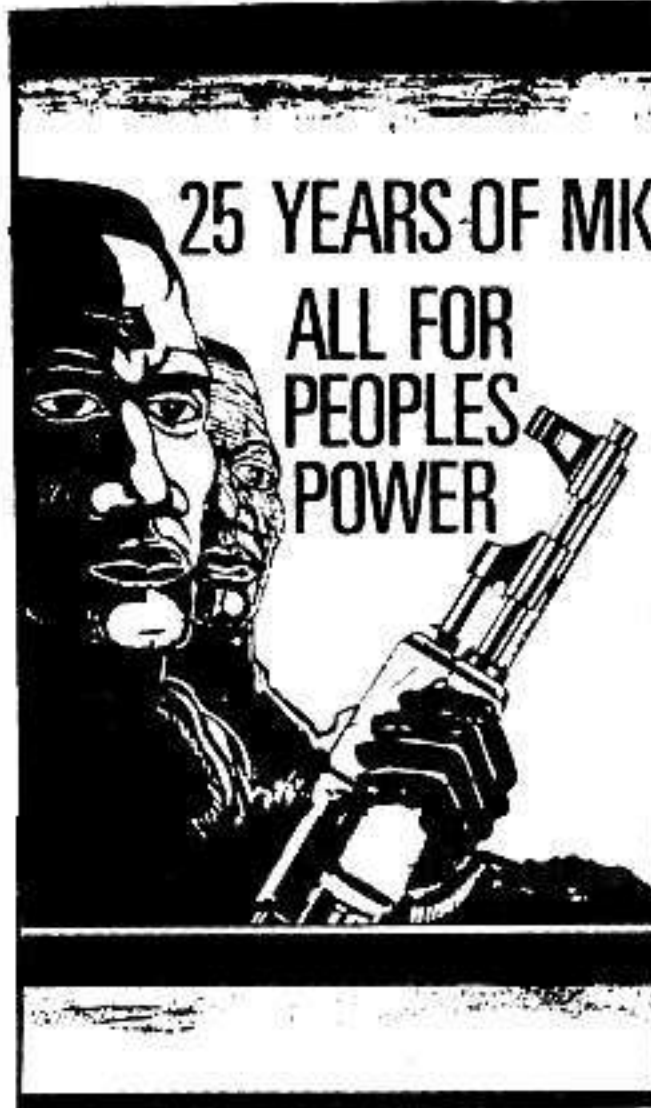
One of the main tasks we gave ourselves was to eliminate the notorious Inkatha leaders, viz. Sabelo, Shabalala, Mlotshwa and Bayethe. This is important so as to show the people that MK is capable of dealing with their tormentors. We then divided reconnaissance tasks among ourselves with the purpose of locating their hiding places.

Mpandla found Shabalala's hiding place and gave me all the details. We then assigned 20 cents to conduct a much more thorough study of the place and establish Shabalala's routine. After collecting enough data we decided to pull the mission out on Saturday, September 6.

I took Thabane and three other comrades from one of our units. We left for Shabalala's place in KwaMashu at 1900hrs and reached the place an hour later. He was not in the house at the time and we decided to wait for him. We were armed with 2 AK's, 2 Makarov pistols and 4 F1 hand grenades.

Shabalala's house was fenced by a high concrete wall and he had a big and vicious dog. In a way the place was security tight. One little disadvantage on our part was that we were not very familiar with the area, although we had already established our route of withdrawal. There is also a police station only a mile from the target. Which meant that we could not spend a long time within the radius after acting.

We waited till 2100hrs when a man drove in in a mercedes-benz. Before we could move into action a number of hippos drove past and we realised that we were not safe at all. Initi-



ally we had agreed that we would knock and force our way into the yard but later decided against it due to the security situation. We decided to hit from a distance and retreat.

We moved closer to the target and hurled the four hand grenades we had, backing them with pistol and sub-machine gun fire. After the attack Thabane told us that it was not wise to retreat with AK's all the way to Umlazi as they are not easy to conceal. They had to be left a place nearby. The problem with that was the place he had in mind was too near the target and could be raided. But due to the time at our disposal we agreed to his proposal on condition that the material would be removed not later than the following day.

We then divided ourselves into two groups of two and three. I and two others retreated to our meeting point, armed with pistols. Thabane and one had to rush to hide the AK's first. Later they safely joined us at the meeting point. Mpandla had organised where we would base till early in the morning when we would leave Kwa-Mashu.

We reached Umlazi at 0600hrs and decided that the material left in KwaMashu would be fetched that afternoon. When Mpandla came to collect me and Thabane to fetch the material I was somehow occupied at home and could not come with them. They then decided to take 20 cents and Mbongeni.

## SPOTTED

When leaving KwaMashu the blue cressida they were riding in was spotted by the police. That could have been due to the fact that the area was heavily patrolled by the police following the attack on Shabalala's house or some people could have seen the direction taken by Mpandla and the other comrade when they were going to hide the AK's the previous day. One more possibility is that Thabane could have been spotted by the police since he was known by them and wanted.

After their car had been spotted roadblocks were set up, while other police vehicles gave a chase. The first roadblock was set up between KwaMashu and Newlands. The comrades in the car had decided to fight back, true to the MK tradition of no surrender. Upon reaching the roadblock Mbongeni, armed with two hand grenades, was dropped to challenge the enemy while others continued. He hurled the hand grenades at a city police car with four cops, damaging the car and killing all four cops. Thereafter he was shot dead.

The second roadblock was set up under Umgeni bridge where Thabane, armed with an AK with two full magazines, was dropped. He fought till he ran out of ammunition and was finally hit by bullets fired from a helicopter. That is how he fell.

The third roadblock blocked the highway just after the quarry road turn-off. Even there the MK tigers could not be stopped. Instead they dropped 20 cents, also armed with an AK and two full magazines. He also fought till he ran out of ammunition. That is where he fell. Then the car, driven by Mpandla, was chased. At the Umlazi turn-off he decided to stop. He pulled out his pistol and also fought till he ran out of bullets. When he was trying to drive away a bullet fatally hit him in the forehead.

**PICK UP THEIR SPEARS!**