

# HEROES OF OUR REVOLUTION

## May Their Memory Never fade

### Semano Mosololi, Thelle Mogoerane and Thabo Motaung

- TEBOGO KGOPE

On the morning of June 9, the physical count in our ranks registered minus three. Three combatants who had loomed like Goliaths and blazed a trail of valour in their revolutionary wake did not show up at the roll-call. Three warriors *in the veritable tradition* of our fighting people laid down their spears. Umkhonto we Sizwe felt forlorn and sad. Sadder still by the manner of the parting.

Eternal glory to our heroes: Thabo Motaung, Thelle Mogoerane and Semano Mosololi, who perished by the scaffold holding aloft the banner of freedom and peace!

On that wintry day mankind was shocked by the cruelty of the regime that rules our country against our will. Mankind had protested, urged and pleaded against this cruelty. *The racists' answer was a murderous rebuff. Mankind was justly appalled.*

But in Umkhonto we Sizwe we stood crisp and solemn, in the well-knit ranks of their former detachments. Their cruel departure was not received with disbelief, nor with illusions in the fascist nature of the regime. Another outrage in the murder catalogue of the butcher boer regime is recorded. The perpetrators of this crime and countless others will one day appear before a people's court to answer for their bloody deeds.

We greeted this cowardly act with anger and let our indignation be known. Our mighty chorus of anger reverberated across our Motherland and echoed in the prison walls whence ignoble graves were being contemplated for noble men. Our loud pledge to redress this grave injustice, to avenge this crime, set fascist politicians on edge, got their generals barking, sent their judges hiding. For our dear comrades so cruelly wrenched from our embrace vowed to pay back.

There were tears for our martyrs... Our Motherland wept. She



wept as yet once more she sucked youthful blood so wantonly strewn. Mothers, fathers and children wept. Hearts wept. Celebrated ruins were being rushed for secret burial. But they were tears of resolution. Our heroes marched to the gallows upright, courageously. They spurned pity. They urged struggle. Fathers, mothers and children resolved to continue from where our martyrs left.

Let us call them as we did - Abbey, Seeiso, Dragon ... what were they made of, these bouyant, raging, fearless sons of our soil?

**TOWNSHIP**

They were the township element, the ragged boys who removed dustbin lids to scrouge for left-overs before they knew the lids would one day be used to fend off bullets. They are the lissom who whirled about the dusty streets in tattars, dodged knives, ducked bricks, parried blows in the seething township existence - and later ducked hot lead from barking muzzles.

They were the weary urchins who evened a thin blanket night-times over their brothers and sisters and locked together their warm bodies in mortal combat against the cold concrete floor; who barely caught sight of their fathers on week-days disappear and come back late at night with masks like death; who saw their kith and kin die from malnutrition and kwashiokor.

**RESILIENT**

They were the fortunate ones, the resilient ones who bore the screaming heat of crammed classrooms; who caught a glint through the fog that is Bantu Education; who said no to the fog, no to the wretched existence under apartheid and met with fists and fury the thunder of racist tanks. They saw their brothers and sisters no taller than broomsticks, no fatter than broomsticks, fall in the charged charging mass and vomit blood. These were young men who were steeled in the uneven combat of June 16. They were part of the heroism of these epic battles.

As we marked their untimely death we recalled that they were with us when we put the Matola heroes to rest, and we together sang in praise of our beloved Ruth as we laid her alongside the rest. Joe Gqabi, the Nyaoses, the Maseru martyrs, although their remains lie on foreign soil, we who struggled with them bid them fitting farewell. We touched their coffins, beheld their bloody corpses, dug their graves and buried them. But the celebrated ruins of the Moroka Three were made the property of the prison authorities.

We recited their obituaries from a distance...



**SEMANO MOSOLOLI (DRAGON):** Born on December 1, 1957, from working parents, he was the fifth child in a family of seven.

He grew up in Soweto and was in final year at Orlando North Secondary School when the Soweto Uprisings erupted in June 1976.

Semano was involved in the upheavals and he decided to join the movement when it became clear that the solution to the violence of the regime was revolutionary violence. He left the country in November 1976 to join the African National Congress and our people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe.



For him we shall only have fond memories.

After the initial training, Semano was selected for specialised training where upon he was assigned tasks in different centres until he was requested to the front because of his outstanding performance.

He joined Mogoerane's unit in June 1981, took part in all their operations until his capture soon after the Wonderboom police station attack.

Mosololi was a quiet and unassuming young man. He was highly disciplined and

a fine example of what an Mk soldier should be. Prompt to the call of duty, he was cooperative and never allowed his spirit to be dampened by the difficult conditions under which he found himself and the others.

For him we shall have only fond memories.

**THELLE MOGOERANE (SEEISO):** He was born in 1957, the second in a family of five children. His father was a worker and his mother a nurse. Thelle grew up in Vosloorus and was doing form IV at Mampoi Government school, Witsieshoek in 1976, and was involved in the upheavals at the school following Soweto Uprisings. Students set the school on fire and burned down the house of a notorious school principal. He was one of the leaders and was as a result hunted by the police.



May his fine example be an inspiration to us.

Mobilised into the struggle by the heroic days of June 16, Thelle strode into our midst at the age of 19 wearing an eternal smile, with eyes eternally probing, and a mind eternally searching. Everyone warmed up to this kind young man who was however firm as a rock.

He was a keen reader, sportsman and

devoted revolutionary. After his initial training he went for specialised training and was soon deployed to the front.

For years Thelle stayed in the country, fighting and perfecting the art of war against the fascists. From 1978 to 1981 he was engaged in action against the enemy. For only brief spells did he leave for the rear, and always when he was in the rear he yearned for the front. It was his life, his beautiful, hard life. From Moroka to Wonderboom Thelle was the beloved indomitable commissar. Exemplary and highly disciplined, such men as he, it is impossible to keep idle. Whenever a difficult task came, he invariably came to mind.

Mogoerane was captured on December 31 1981 with Mosololi. In the hands of the torturers, he still fought tenaciously and refused to be broken in spirit. *"They can kill my body, but my spirits are high"*, were his last words to his mother.

The chronicle of his brief life is the story of devotion, maturity, love and struggle. May his fine example be an inspiration to us.

**THABO MOTAUNG (ABBEY):** Uncompromising Mk commander. He was born in 1955, the third of nine children. Thabo's father was a painter and his mother a worker at a laundry. He was caught up by the June 16 Upsurges while doing Form V at Madibane High School. He spent the next 12 months in the heat of ensuing battles. When Thabo left the country he had enrolled for a journalism course at Wilgespruit Fellowship centre. He spent the next 12 months in the heat. He convinced himself and others, among them Fanie Stephen Mafoko (who died in the Silverton Siege) to join the ANC and learn superior skills to confront the enemy. They left in September 1977 to join our people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe.

The fire in Motaung was recognised instantly. Within eight months, he was called to the front and plunged in the thick of battle armed with courage and rifle.



May the fire in him enter hearts that beat for freedom.

This was a man you could not keep out of action or danger. He was fearless. All who worked with Thabo marvelled at his nerves of steel, and heart of a lion.

Quiet and firm, Motaung walked in and out of danger with the calmness and ferocity of a tiger. That much may be known, but little is known of the fact that he walked in and out of the claws of the devil itself with just as measured resoluteness. In 1979, immediately after the Moroka police station attack, he was arrested with a bag of pamphlets. Calm as ever, he went into the Protea police station assuming the legend of a misguided student, who had been duped by some old man in the street to distribute the pamphlets, a more rampant and lesser crime of course - which an itchy-fingered officer would be more willing to forgive if a carrot was dangled in front of him - than the unprecedented attack on Moroka. This is what Motaung did. He d a n g l e d a few ten rand notes, resi<sup>c</sup>

ed being fingerprinted, swore his innocence. The boer officer accepted this extraordinary fine, and Motaung walked out of the police station and back to the world of combat.

His calmness saved him and his comrades for a few more years of action. Thabo unleashed his tremendous capabilities during these years and was a veritable scourge to the butcher Malan regime. He could not be put down. Thabo was a keen thinker and sharp planner. He was made part of a broader planning machinery. But action was his element. Soon after his appointment he was assigned active control and direction of several units inside the country. With characteristic zeal, he steered them to action for some time.

But one of Thabo's men, who could no longer stand the rigours and risks of struggle succumbed to persuasion by elements of his relations to surrender to the enemy. This traitor, Lake Mpiyakhe (Moses Bafana Mbatha) betrayed Motaung and Suzman Mokoena. Others escaped by the skin of their teeth.

Motaung's boldness was probably his undoing. Although there were already indications that Lake was in the hands of the enemy, it was this traitor who lured him into a trap. Feigning injury, leg in plaster,

Lake the devil beckoned to Motaung, who strode towards him to render help despite warning from one comrade who was with him. The latter was shot three times by the former's accomplice, another traitor (Mosotho). He was brutally treated and tortured during interrogation. But Thabo still reached out from behind bars and kept touch with the movement he so loved, a movement which had schooled him, in his words, to hate apartheid and not a particular race.

Comrade Abbey ... forever riding on the wings of hurricanes. May the fire in him flee his tomb and enter hearts that beat for freedom!

These young men who were cold-bloodedly murdered by the racist regime were among the finest sons of our country. They yearned for equality. They yearned for peace. They strove to destroy the regime which practiced violence on them, to talk the language of the oppressor - the language of the gun. Their salvo rocked the purpled ease of the military regime, and ushered in the fierce tenacity of the new crop of Umkhonto we Sizwe combatants.

We salute these glorious harbingers of new warriors who sprang from Hector Petersen's grave. For their heroism, patriotism and love, they were put to death.

**MAY THEIR MEMORY NEVER FADE!**

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## DESPISED WHITE RACE

Racist Magnus Malan despises the intelligence of the South African whites, whose interest he claims to defend; to such an extent that, he thinks because they do not know where the African National Congress ... He can safely point at any place in Maputo as an ANC base and they will believe him; he thinks that they are so stupid that he can quote any figures about the ANC members who are supposed to be killed, and the whites will celebrate and praise him...

His gigantic hoax ended up being the massacre of two children, two women and the injuring of many innocent Mozambican civilians.

**Radio Freedom - Luanda**