

Mom's question: Where's my child?

by Sharon Chetty

At elite fighting unit Barney Molokoane had help from a young woman — his cousin Nokuthula Simelane — and had it been for her many of his missions may have been successful.

While a social science student at the University of Swaziland, Nokuthula Simelane hid their weapons, acted as courier, provided shelter and was the communication link between their Swaziland base and South Africa.

And then she disappeared.

The last her parents, Matthew and Christina, saw of her was in June 1983 at her home in Mzinoni township, Bethal.

She was 24.

"Nokuthula had finished her degree and was at home because she was looking for a job," recalled her mother.

"The security police was harassing her and she had a narrow escape after they came to our home one morning and we sided she should go back to Swaziland."

The Simelanes were confident that their daughter was all right as she lived with two aunts — Leonard and Richard Vilakazi.

Local citizenship

Nokuthula had dual Swazi-SA citizenship. Her uncles were prominent educationists and her father a former mayor of Mzinoni township.

They were well known and respected in Bethal and Swaziland, which helped her evade the police.

"Then one day Leonard phoned to ask if Nokuthula had arrived in Bethal.

"We did not know she was on her way because she did not say anything. Leonard said Nokuthula was going to stop at her aunt Wendy Mpama in Mbabane."

"Wendy then pointed us to an MK cadre named Mpho Mpau."

Mpau, then chief of staff in Swaziland, had sent her on two missions to South Africa, the Simelane's found out.

She was apparently sent to Vereeniging and was successful in delivering a message to an operative there.

Her next stop was at a house in Senoane, Swaziland, and that is where the trail ended.

NC man

We found out that an ANC man named Mma Nkosi lived in that house. Nkosi said that when he was working, he found Nokuthula at his house and gave her directions to the Union Centre.

"No one knows what happened next," said Mrs Simelane.

"The man Nokuthula was to meet was named Scotch."

"When he was called to Swaziland to count for her whereabouts, he disobeyed the MK bosses."

"Later they found out that he was a double agent and had been working for the police."

"For ten years we searched for our daughter but found nothing," said Mr Simelane.

"Then in August 1993 Mpho Mpau came and explained that he had sent her on two missions on September 9 1983."

"He confirmed that Scotch was a known police informer but they (MK) could not do anything until the ANC came into power and controlled the police force."

Mpau, now a pilot with the SAA, has not contacted them since.

The Simelanes say even the ANC



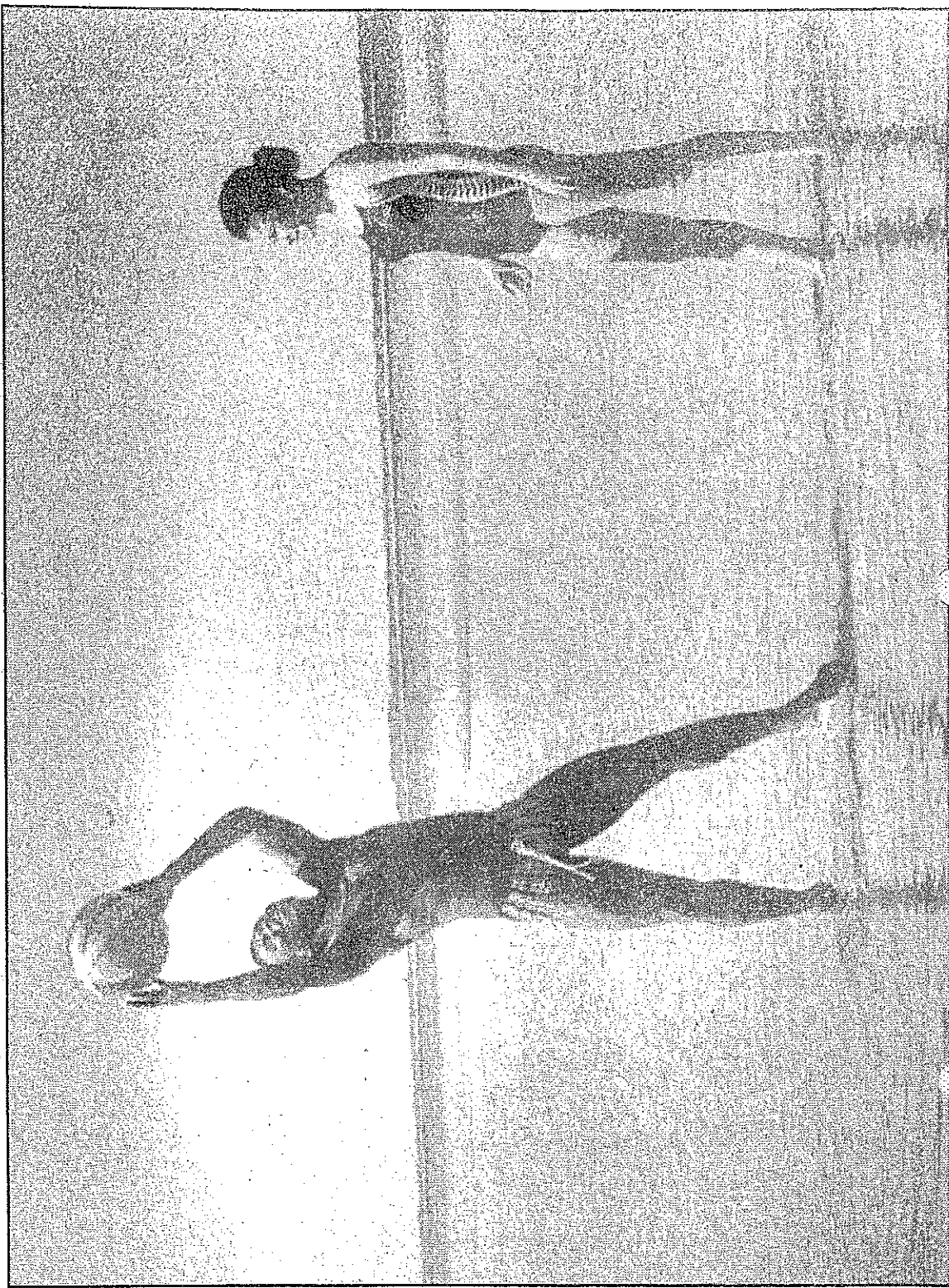
Share prices on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange

These were prices at the close of the market.
N.B.: The JSE does not operate on public holidays.
Prices courtesy of Frankel, Pollak, Vinderline Inc

Name	Buyer	Seller	Last	H	L
1. Nail	R1,25	R1,35	R1,35	R2,00	R1,30
2. Kilimanjaro	R3,00	R3,10	R3,00	R3,50	R3,00
3. African Life	R6,20	R6,40	R6,20	R7,95	R4,60
4. Metropolitan	R33,00	R34,50	R36,00	R37,00	25,75
5. Corp Africa	R1,10	R1,30	R1,20	R1,70	R1,00

Glossary:
Buyer: Price at which the share was bought. Seller: Price at which the share was sold.
Last: Last traded price on the share. H: Highest level share reached this year. L: Lowest level the share reached this year.

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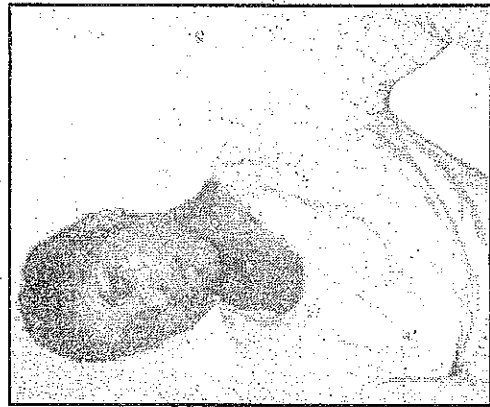


Barney with an unknown woman. The photograph was in an album found in a safe house.

refuses to accept liability for Nokuthula's disappearance... they said she was "a mere sympathiser and not a member."

"How can they dismiss her in that way? On every major mission... Barney came to the country, we would accommodate him," explained Simelane.

"The SAP put pressure on the Swazi police to deport her, but because of her dual citizenship she was left alone. Her uncle's house was attacked many times. A bomb was found there. They know that the last person to have contact with my daughter was an informer... they control the police now, why can't they go and ask him what happened," a bitter Mr Simelane said.



Missing since 1983... Nokuthula Simelane.

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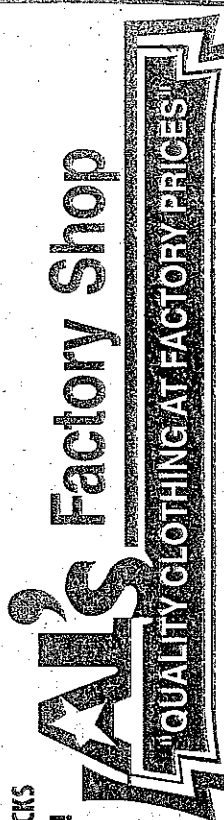
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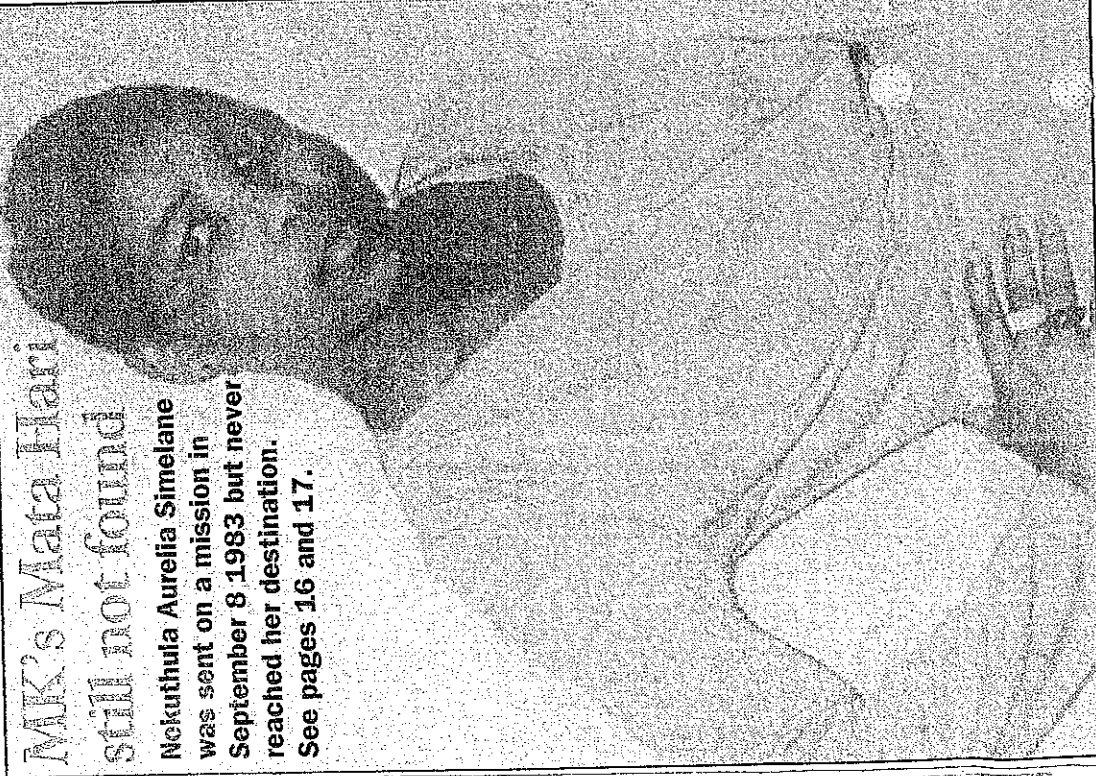
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MK's Mata Hari still not found
Nekuthula Aurelia Simelane was sent on a mission in September 8, 1983 but never reached her destination. See pages 16 and 17.

Missions in action

By Sharon Chetty

A TRACING COMMITTEE set up by the ANC says there are more than 300 Umkhonto we Sizwe cadres who "disappeared" during the struggle for liberation.

Speculation is that many of these soldiers were killed in combat with the old South African security forces and buried in unmarked or falsely marked graves inside or outside the country.

A committee "for the bereaved" was set up in 1991 by Mr Nelson Mandela and then consisted of four returned exiles.

Its task was to inform the families of cadres who had died in exile. In 1992 another committee was set up by the ANC

NEC to trace missing persons. A member of this committee, Patience Molekane, said yesterday a number of cadres had been traced, but no figures were available.

"For many of the people we just have names which they used in the camps. Their real names and families are hard to find," Molekane said.

She added that inquiries about missing cadres were still being regularly received at the ANC's Shell House in Johannesburg.

Molekane said her committee had sent a letter to outgoing police commissioner General Johan van der Merwe last April asking him to identify graves of MK soldiers who had died in action aged 18 to 25 in the old South African regime.

Van der Merwe allegedly did not respond to the first letter according to Molekane and a second request was made in December.

Molekane blamed the slow progress being made by her committee and the committee for the bereaved on "a shortage of information". She said there were only two people left on the tracing committee — committee members had left to find jobs elsewhere.

Sources outside the ANC, like the Durban-based Recoc, have hinted that a number of ANC cadres may well have been "disposed of" by their own people. Meanwhile, Eastern Transvaal police have confirmed that three MK cadres responsible for the November 1985 attack on the Sasol plant were buried in falsely marked graves in Piet Retief.

Barney Molokoane, Victor Khayiyana and Vincent Sekete were killed in a firefight with security forces when they tried to enter Swaziland at the Houtkop border post.

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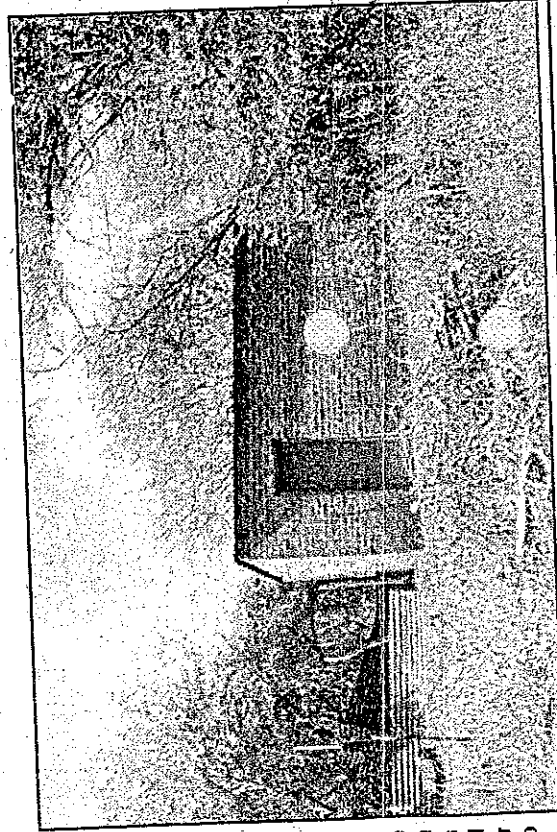
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Building the Nation

Cops trapped and killed MK cadre



By Sharon Chetty

POLICE ARRESTED AND KILLED an Umkhonto we Sizwe cadre 12 years ago and buried her without trace, a former security branch constable has admitted.

Nokuthula Simelane was on an MK mission in Johannesburg in September 1983 when she went missing.

It was later discovered that the man she was to meet at the Carlton Centre in Johannesburg was a police informer — but the trail died there and despite 12 years of searching by her parents, Mathew and Ernestina Simelane, everything remains a blank.

This weekend a member of a police security branch unit that operated out of Soweto, said Simelane had been arrested when one of their informers set a trap for her.

Simelane was taken to a farm near Thabazimbi in the North-western Transvaal and kept there for almost two months, he revealed.

He was part of a unit of nine men who gathered intelligence on activists.

They passed the information on to the C10 unit at the notorious Vlakplaas base which dealt with "terrorists".

'She was very beautiful'

Constable X, who prefers not to be named at this stage, said the black members of the unit guarded Simelane while the white members tortured her.

"She was very beautiful. But by the time they (the white officers) were 'finished' with her, she could not be recognised," he said.

Because Simelane was regarded as a "terrorist" she was kept in leg-irons and handcuffs and interrogated constantly, he said.

He described how one day the leader of the unit drove around with Simelane — in handcuffs and leg-irons — lying in the boot of his car.

"She was still alive, and lying crouched on the floor," he recalled.

Constable X had decided to speak about his unit's nefarious deeds, because, he was "haunted by the evils that were committed".

"My conscience says that this must be made public... everyone should know about the past," he said. He is prepared to testify before the Truth Commission.

Shot dead and buried

When he saw a picture of Simelane and an article on her disappearance in the *Sowetan* last week, he had no doubt that she was the captive he guarded.

The last time he saw her she was still alive and being held on the farm. After he was sent back to Soweto, he inquired after the woman.

"*Moentse baie vroe vranie*", was the reply he got from one of his superiors. Later he was told by a sergeant that the two white leaders of the unit had shot dead and buried Simelane in Rustenburg.

A *Sowetan* team accompanied Constable X to the farm in Northam, outside Thabazimbi, where he said Simelane was held.

The owners of the farm for 30 years, PC and Martie Welthagen, confirmed that they were related to the leader of the SE unit, but said they had lost contact with him.

However, they did confirm that the man, whom they knew worked as a *spoorer* (detective) with



MK cadre Mokuthula Simelane was killed by police 12 years ago and buried without a trace.

the security branch, used to stay at the farm frequently in the 1980s and that at one stage a young black woman was made to stay there.

Mrs Welthagen said that they were told that the woman was learning to become a policewoman and that she needed to keep away from people.

The couple, who are in their 70s, said their memories were fading and they could not recall exactly who was taken there.

The outbuilding which Constable X said was used as the prison, is a short distance from the main farmhouse.

There is a road leading directly to that cottage and Constable X says a separate access road was used by the policemen.

"We slept in sleeping bags on the floor. We used to wash at the tap outside."

"There's the place where we used to have braais," he said, pointing to a fire-scorched section on one side.

Welthagen said that the stuffy, one-roomed abode was built more than 20 years ago to house farm labourers.

No one was living there because the Welthagen's had stopped farming their land.

The names of the policemen involved in the security branch unit are known to *Sowetan*.

At least two of the white officers appear on a controversial list of 3 500 people who applied for indemnity shortly before last April's elections.

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