

5. AFRICA

Machel's Death: "Everything points to Pretoria's Involvement"

(a) "Radio Peace and Progress" in English for Africa 1630 gmt 24 Oct 86

Text of commentary:

The people of Mozambique are shaken over the tragic death of President Samora Machel and together with them the pain of the terrible loss is being felt by the public of independent Africa, by all friends of the African people, including the Soviet people. Appraising this sad tragedy one cannot help note that the catastrophe with the airliner in which the President was flying had occurred at a time when the most reactionary forces had taken up arms against Mozambique. These forces want to destroy the independence of the republic and put an end to the revolutionary gains of the Mozambican people.

The reasons for the catastrophe that occurred to the airliner have still not been determined and much remains unclear. But even today it is perfectly apparent that it could not have occurred due to any ordinary disruption. President Samora Machel and those accompanying him were flying with a plane that certainly was thoroughly checked. This is reaffirmed by the high authority enjoyed by the firm that manufactures the passenger planes used on international air routes. The safety on these planes cannot in any way be compared to that of the so-called concern shown to passengers who fly aboard various modifications of Boeing and DC (?planes). It is common knowledge that, on diverse occasions, due to serious defects the planes of these firms have been taken off from flights for long periods of time. It is also well known how often accidents had occurred on the planes of these manufactureres in flights from Paris to Istanbul, Nairobi or New Delhi, bringing death to hundreds of passengers who had trusted Western airlines.

In the light of these facts it is not surprising that the Soviet public pays special attention to news that quotes racist South Africa as the source and reports from there indicate that before the plane aboard which President Samora Machel was flying had crashed an explosion occurred in the central part of the plane's fuselage. The reliability of this report is confirmed by the fact that some passengers sitting in the front and back of the plane remained alive and one of these passengers declared that, just before the plane started falling he heard a noise that sounded like a gun had been fired. The impression was created that there was shooting aboard.

It is not accidental that the Pretoria authorities, with the help of all sorts of doubtful claims, are trying to confuse the matter. In particular, they claim the plane had allegedly crashed during a storm, although the inhabitants of the surrounding area declared that there wasn't even a small rain at the time. However, just before the tragedy, as noted by the French newspaper 'Liberation', the highway leading to the town of Komatipoort witnessed feverish activities by the South African troops. There are all indications that those political observers are correct who consider that those responsible for this criminal action should be sought among the South African military. Moreover, they recall that several days before the death of Samora Machel the director of the country's news agency, Carlos Cardoso, drew attention to the threats emanating from the racist Defence Minister, General Malan, and his threats were promptly taken up by the South African press. This propaganda hullabaloo, in the opinion of the director, was meant to prepare the ground for the killing of the head of the Mozambican state.

Today Pretoria is openly being accused of complicity in the tragedy. This tragedy, said the Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, was planned by South Africa and his opinion is shared by many African leaders. Moreover, one can hardly doubt the correctness of their opinion. It will be recalled that for several years already the Pretoria authorities have been pursuing a course of annihilating activists of the anti-apartheid movement, and not only in the country. Their tentacles have stretched to neighbouring countries where they are in emigration. We know quite a number of cases when bombs

sent in packages by post were the cause of death to prominent anti-racist fighters in Mozambique, Zambia and other countries. The South African rulers are following a road of state sponsored terrorism and this fact already needs no investigations and confirmation. What is needed is to repulse it.

(b) Moscow "World Service" in English 1400 gmt 29 Oct 86

Text of commentary by Viktor Ilyichev:

The tragic death in an air crash of the Mozambican President Samora Machel gave rise to grief of not only the Africans but also progressive people throughout the world. It gave rise to many questions as to what caused the crash. Viktor Ilyichev elaborates:

In the first place, why did the Presidential plane that was already approaching Maputo on its way from Zambia suddenly change its course and cross the border into South Africa, where it crashed a few minutes later? Furthermore, South African officials began to claim that in the region of the crash there were unfavourable weather conditions and poor visibility. However, according to the surviving passengers and people in the neighbouring population centre, the weather was clear. The chief of Mozambique's meteorological service, Sergio Ferreira, declared that visibility was good. Why did the Pretoria officials resort to falsehood? And here is another question. The South African policemen who arrived at the place of the crash in the dead of night gave no aid to the injured people who were bleeding to death. They only made sure that Samora Machel was dead, inspected the wreckage, searched the baggage and left, taking along files with documents, diplomatic bags and probably something else. Medics arrived only eight hours later. By that time few of the injured people survived. Probably this is what the Pretoria regime counted on, that there would be no survivors, that there would be no witnesses.

In short, everything points to Pretoria's involvement in the death of Samora Machel, whom the racists hated and feared, whom they threatened to kill because he bravely counteracted their policy of aggression. According to the Zimbabwean newspaper 'Herald', Pretoria's secret services set up a powerful radio beacon close to South Africa's border with Mozambique. Signals emitted by the radio beacon sent the Presidential plane off its course and served as a trap in its last flight.