

Mozambique

# Staff leaving university at alarming rate since coup

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from Douglas Morrison

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Staff have been leaving the Universidade de Lourenço Marques, Mozambique's only university, at an alarming rate since the coup in Portugal on April 25. Students from the university attending the National Union of South African Students' congress here have confirmed reports that the departure of staff has seriously affected the workings of the departments of medicine, geology and history and, to a lesser extent, mathematics, physics and botany.

Senhorina Yolanda Zambujo, an executive member of the Associação Académica de Moçambique, the students' association, said that a research project by the association had shown that about 50 per cent of staff in some departments had left or were intending to leave.

The Hospital da Universidade, the teaching hospital, had lost almost all the staff in the radiology departments. There were now moves to combine the university hospital with the Hospital Miguel Bombarda, the government hospital.

The situation there was so bad that patients had already been turned away and it was likely that wards would have to close. The authorities hoped that by combining the two hospitals a full range of services would continue to be provided.

Professor Correia Neves, the rector, said in a telephone interview that the university was functioning "normally".

The students said staff who left were afraid of the prospects of living under a Frelimo government or were supporters of the ousted fascist regime. Most were returning to Portugal, but the right wingers were going to Brazil, Rhodesia and South Africa.

It is only since the coup that the students' association has reemerged as a political organization. Senhor Jorge Madeira Mendes said that under the last rector before the coup, Professor Veiga Simao, they were allowed only to organize sport. Their radio station and newspaper were closed down and the equipment confiscated by the DGS, the secret police. At the instigation of Professor Simao, four student leaders were sent to the army and another seven were exiled to villages in the north of Mozambique where it was very difficult to find work.

Since the coup their equipment has been returned and with the general loosening of the DGS grasp students who had been intimidated and left the association were returning.

Professor Simao was removed from the rectorship after the coup but subsequently was appointed Minister of Education and later Portuguese Ambassador to the United Nations. The new rector, Professor Neves, was elected by the members of the university, unlike previous incumbents who were government appointees.

The students said there has been an increase in pressure for the academic year to be altered from its present European pattern to one similar to that in South Africa, where it runs from February to November.

The association has been active in the political sphere since the coup, Senhor Mendes said. It organizes talks to explain what Frelimo stands for, what the role of students should be, what independence would mean and the pros and cons of a referendum and elections. It has also been running a campaign to attract back academics and students who are studying in Europe or who left to escape the Caetano regime. The students feel very strongly that such people should return and contribute towards the establishment of a viable, independent Mozambique.

As a consequence of this activity, they have had their first experience of the right-wing backlash—on June 28 their canteen, which had Frelimo flags in the windows, was machine-gunned and leaflets were dumped accusing the students of being "agitators supported by Chinese Imperialists" and manoeuvred by Frelimo.