

After six years — a black pilot

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I CAN'T remember reading anywhere of President Samora Machel's reaction to the defection of one of Mozambique's fighter pilots to South Africa early this year, but an interview in the October edition of *Pace* gives some indication of his feelings.

Reporter Vusi Khumalo was at a Press conference at Gaborone during President Machel's recent State visit to Botswana.

'Apparently I was the only South African journalist there and was given the opportunity to put only one question to the Mozambican leader,' reported Khumalo.

The question: 'Lieut Bomba has been singing to the South African Press and, if I may use the expression, he's been a canary who could both sing and fly. In the light of his utterances to the South African white Press, particularly the fact that after six years of independence in Mozambique there has been no progress and that was why he left his country, what is the President's comment and what is the attitude of your Government?'

Khumalo reports that halfway through the interpretation of the question the President jumped up from his chair, pulled the ends of his military coat, adjusted his thick waist-belt, smiled slyly, shook his head insensitively, and then wiped his sweating face.

'When the interpreter had finished my question, Samora Machel had already shifted his chair backwards, left the table, and



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was facing me.

'He took off his dark glasses and peeped at me as if I was darker than darkness itself.

'He spoke: "Thank you for your question, friend. And now tell me, have you got a black pilot in South Africa.

'None,' I answered.

'Now you have one from Mozambique — and that is a result of development after six years.'

'After his reply the "feathers" hit the fan. The entire conference room burst into a rapturous din and laughter around me almost bust my eardrums,' wrote Khumalo.

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