

# A great man

Sunday Mail, 26 October 1986

SM 26/10/86  
WITH each passing day the killers of President Samora Machel are becoming more and more apparent. We are confident that eventually the whole truth will come out. But for the moment, given the extremely curious circumstances that led to the air crash on South African soil and the subsequent jittery and suspect behaviour of the Botha regime, it is unreasonable not to agree with President Kenneth Kaunda's view that the regime must be considered guilty of the crime until it is independently proved innocent.

President Samora Machel died a victim of vicious forces working to plunge our whole region into anarchy and generalised chaos in all spheres of life. The short-sightedness of the racist regime leads it to the suicidal conclusion that the creation of regional upheavals will ensure apartheid's continued existence.

But of course it is in the conditions of chaos and breakdown of order that revolutions flourish most resulting in the acceleration of change and the introduction of a new order. Racist South Africa is doomed to be a victim of its own blindness.

It cannot be doubted that whoever killed President Machel killed a man who had done his very best to secure some sort of peaceful co-existence with a very destructive neighbour. In a tireless pursuit of justice and the avoidance of violence Cde Machel even went to the unthinkable extent of publicly signing the Nkomati peace agreement with racist South Africa. But, as he himself said towards the end of his life, the regime never abided by the agreement and now he has been most cruelly sacrificed upon the bloody altar of apartheid.

We mourn the loss of a great son of Africa who sacrificed so much for the liberation of our own country. The people of Mozambique have lost not just their national leader, but a man who created a modern and free Mozambique out of centuries of Portuguese colonialism and unmitigated backwardness.

A distinguished freedom-fighter, a pan-African socialist, Samora Machel led his guerilla columns through the jungles until the colonial regime collapsed in defeat in 1975. Yet peace remained a distant goal both for him and his countrymen till he met his death.

True to his conviction in socialist internationalism and solidarity of all oppressed peoples around the world, Samora Machel gave his all in the heroic effort to extend the frontiers of freedom to Rhodesia, South Africa and beyond. Zimbabwe is free and he died in the forefront of the final struggle against oppression in racist South Africa. He died on the side of justice and we salute him.

What is to be done? The death of President Machel is a further confirmation of the reality of a state of undeclared war in this region — a war being fought in the dark chambers of intrigue and conspiracy. Woe unto those who relax their guard!

It may not be necessary to go back to the drawing boards, but it is imperative for the peoples and governments of the whole of the Frontline States to make a careful analysis of the situation. It cannot be just a matter of picking up the pieces and proceeding from where Cde Machel left. The enemy's strategy is clear. It is the tactics — brutal and terroristic — we must understand and counter.