

Sorrow over Machel's death turns to anger

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HARARE—When news first began emerging of the plane crash that killed Mozambican President Samora Machel, the mood here in Zimbabwe's capital was subdued. Stunned crowds merged on the downtown offices of the country's major newspaper to buy copies of the special edition of the Herald announcing Machel's death. Samora Machel was revered as a national hero, without whose unstinting support the Zimbabwean liberation struggle could not have been won.

The mood of sorrow and disbelief soon gave way to one of tension and anger, and a demonstration organized by University of Zimbabwe students erupted into a violent melee.

Hundreds of students first marched on the South African trade mission in the center of town—there is no full-fledged embassy here—but those offices are situated on upper floors of a relatively inaccessible building, so the students moved on to the ground-floor offices of South African Airways. It was there that the crowd began attacking in earnest, leaving windows smashed and the building ablaze.

The students carried placards denouncing apartheid and the South African government, but they also directed their anger at the government of Malawi (northeast of Zimbabwe bordering on northern Mozambique) for its support of the South African-backed insurgents that are devastating Mozambique. One placard labeled both South African President P. W. Botha and Malawian Life-President Hastings Banda as "United States robots," while another vowed "Blood for blood."

The crowd swelled to more than 1000 after hundreds of youths joined students, then moved on to attack both the Malawian High Commission and the Malawi Airways offices, which were both seriously damaged. The students burned the Malawian flag and a portrait

of Banda and attacked scores of private cars and a few diplomatic vehicles as the crowd exhorted passing motorists to chant anti-apartheid slogans. By then the uniformed police had been reinforced by riot police with dogs and tear gas, and the crowd was dispersed.

Western media reports emphasized a handful of attacks on whites who apparently rebuffed exhortations to join in the slogans and revolutionary songs, but made no mention of the fact that white university students were involved in the demonstration. The demonstration was criticized in some quarters here for "a lack of political discipline that certainly would not have been condoned by Samora." On the other hand, others were encouraged that the traditionally inactive and largely apolitical University of Zimbabwe students had at last been galvanized by the regional political situation.

PROTEST AT U.S. EMBASSY

Some 50 students were ultimately arrested, and the rest then regrouped at the Mozambican embassy, where officials hastily convened a kind of memorial service for Machel. Student leaders charged that South Africa was hoping to create another Western client state in Mozambique, and many urged the government to institute mandatory national military service, pledging to join the 12,000 Zimbabwean troops already helping to guard the oil pipeline from Zimbabwe's eastern border to the Mozambican port of Beira.

Afterward, the crowd moved down the street to the U.S. embassy, but as it is one of the most heavily guarded buildings in town, little damage resulted when students faced off against armed U.S. Marines. The U.S. State Department, however, issued a sharply worded protest to the Zimbabwean government, arguing that the police did not intervene soon enough. The U.S. statement implied that the Mugabe government had orchestrated the

demonstration. South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha also sent a formal protest, and appealed to the Zimbabwe government to protect the staff and premises of South Africa's commercial offices in Harare.

Tensions had been escalating over the week preceding Machel's death, and in meetings of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party members in Harare's largely black low-income areas, residents had begun seriously discussing preparations for war, to protect Mozambique as well as to deal with Malawi.

The stepped-up South African rhetoric against Mozambique in recent weeks (see story, this page) has had its counterpart with regard to Zimbabwe. The external service of Radio South Africa launched a disinformation campaign against Zimbabwe in October, apparently as part of a countdown to sanctions that come into force Nov. 1. For example, Radio RSA warned listeners that Prime Minister Robert Mugabe would soon get rid of all white representation in Parliament—omitting to mention that the Lancaster House independence agreement itself mandates an end to the separate white voters' role in 1987.

Similarly, recent Zimbabwe government criticism of a small business weekly, *The Financial Gazette*, for promoting the anti-sanctions campaign of the British government, was denounced by RSA as the death-knell for press freedom in Zimbabwe.

The volatile mood in Harare following Machel's death should be seen in the context of the overwhelming cynicism about the cause of the crash. It is hard to find a Zimbabwean—young or old, black or white—who believes it was a straight-forward accident and news reports of condolences sent by South African leaders to Frelimo were met with disgust. National news broadcasts meanwhile feature reports of evidence that the presidential plane had been shot down.

In the words of an editorial in the *Zimbabwe Herald*, "The most likely cause of the crash remains a direct South African attack, but even in the unlikely event of Pretoria having no hand in the tragedy, President Machel is a casualty of apartheid as surely as if his plane had been hit by South African missiles, shells or bullets."