

Tribute to a standard of a legend!

- Without party mobilizations, without circulars in public institutions, without public buses, without shirts and caps, without water and soft drinks, thousands of people went yesterday to the emblematic Independence Square to pay their last tribute to Azagaia, the rapper who became popular through his songs of social intervention. It was the greatest popular tribute in memory in recent years.





While the funeral took place in the Town Hall, the most genuine tribute took place outside, where thousands of young people recited the most combative lyrics of Azagaia. With fists in the air, the youths shouted “Thieves...out; Corrupt...out; Assassins...out; Scream at me for these people to go away”, the incisive refrain of the lyrics “A Marcha”. And as it couldn’t be helped, the crowd also vibrated with the chorus of “Power to the People”, another lyric that directly confronts the power of the day.

With its back to the crowd, the statue of Samora Machel seemed to be the only one present in Independence Square uninterested in Azagaia’s last farewell. A farewell that, ironically, took place in the same place where, 36 years ago, the body of Samora Machel was laid to rest after a historic homage. At the time, Edson da Luz was just a two-year-old baby who was enjoying his early childhood in the border town of Namaacha, 80 kilometers from the capital Maputo.

Azagaia, the hero of the people who built his trajectory on the opposite side of political correctness, was allowed to enter the City Hall when he no longer represented any “danger” to politicians. His revolutionary voice was forever silent. His eyes that saw what many didn’t see were glazed over. In life, it was unthinkable that Eneas Comiche, a mayor averse to the most peaceful demonstrations, would authorize an Azagaia show in Independence Square. To sing “Power to the



People” or to ask the fans to shout with him to “these people go away”.

Lying in the coffin, the legend was accompanied by speeches from the occasion, from the family who, in the voice of Jorge Rungo, pointed to an epilepsy attack as the cause of death; the brothers who praised the courage of “Mano Edson”; the daughters who thanked their father for his education and attention; the friends who remembered him as the messenger of the oppressed people; civil society (represented by Prof Adriano Nuvunga)

who spoke of Azagaia ostracized and humiliated by the system; and the Government, represented by the Minister of Culture and Tourism, who underlined Azagaia’s contribution to culture.

After the speeches were read and the final tribute was paid in Independence Square, the family mourned the body and finally, the coffin descended the stairs of the atrium of the Municipality before a strong ovation from thousands of fans who were waiting for the legend outside. It took a lot of effort from

the security guards and the master of ceremonies to prevent the crowd from obstructing the funeral procession. Everyone wanted to see and photograph the young man who sang and enchanted the people for the last time.

One of the most emotional moments was when Azagaia's music was finally heard loudly: almost everyone present, all young and old, repeated in unison the lyrics of "A Marcha", while the protocol packed the coffin in the trailer of the funeral home. In the air, in addition to the clenched fists, one of Azagaia's hallmarks, hundreds of mobile phones recorded for posterity the most natural and spontaneous tribute to an icon who made himself outside the usual and comforting political corridors.

And because there was a need to free the space from the Municipality, the funeral procession began its trajectory down the avenue that bears the name of Samora Machel and towards which his bronze statue is facing. Without being able to wave to the people he talked about so much at the rallies there in Independence Square, the First President of Mozambique at least had the opportunity to watch, as a mute witness, the departure of a hero of the people who dispenses with official decrees.

The funeral procession seemed to run normally until shortly after Robert Mugabe Square, where a contingent of the Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR) was positioned with armored vehicles. The aim was to prevent the crowd that accompanied the urn to the Michafutene Cemetery from taking the street next to Ponta Vermelha (the official residence of the Head of State) and continuing along the Julius Nyerere, the avenue where the Presidency of the Republic is located.

In fact, the route planned for the funeral procession involved passing through the main centers of political power... and Azagaia's appeal was to the "people in power". The Government did not minimize this risk: faced with the crowd of young people following the funeral procession, State security mobilized agents from the UIR (which formed the first security cordon) and personnel from the Casa Militar, the force responsible for protecting the Head of State. The Julius Nyerere branch, which crosses the Presidency of the Republic, was surrounded by armed soldiers, including an armored vehicle. The same scenario in the Ponta Vermelha area.

Faced with the intransigence of the Police, Azagaia's widow had to leave the car to ask for passage. "What have I done to you? What harm have I done to you? I just want to bury my husband, please. Control the population but let them through. Why can't we pass? Let



me bury my husband with dignity", appealed Rosa da Luz. The Police did not demobilize but allowed the car with the ballot box to move on. The crowd even had to back off and follow Avenida de Moçambique to the

Michafutene cemetery, where the remains of the popular rapper lie.


More than a tear-dropping moment, the tribute was a true celebration of the life of a legend...because legends never die.



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