



tricontinental
on the march

"Portuguese" Guinea: United Front Against Imperialism

Luis Cabral

Luis Cabral, member of the Political Bureau of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, recently visited the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, where he was received by the Executive Secretariat.

During his visit to OSPAAAL, the revolutionary leader made a detailed analysis of the present state of the armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism in his country. Cabral also referred to the growth of the revolutionary armed forces, made possible by the political awakening of the people of Guinea-Bissau, and by the work the PAIGC is accomplishing in the social, political, and health care fields in the liberated zones.

In conclusion, he answered questions put to him by the members of the Executive Secretariat of OSPAAAL, concerning the aid that US imperialism, Zionism, and NATO are giving Portugal in its repression of the national liberation movement in the Portuguese colonies of Africa; and concerning the present position of the colonialist troops.

In the current issue, *Tricontinental* publishes an extensive résumé of the PAIGC leader's interesting interview.

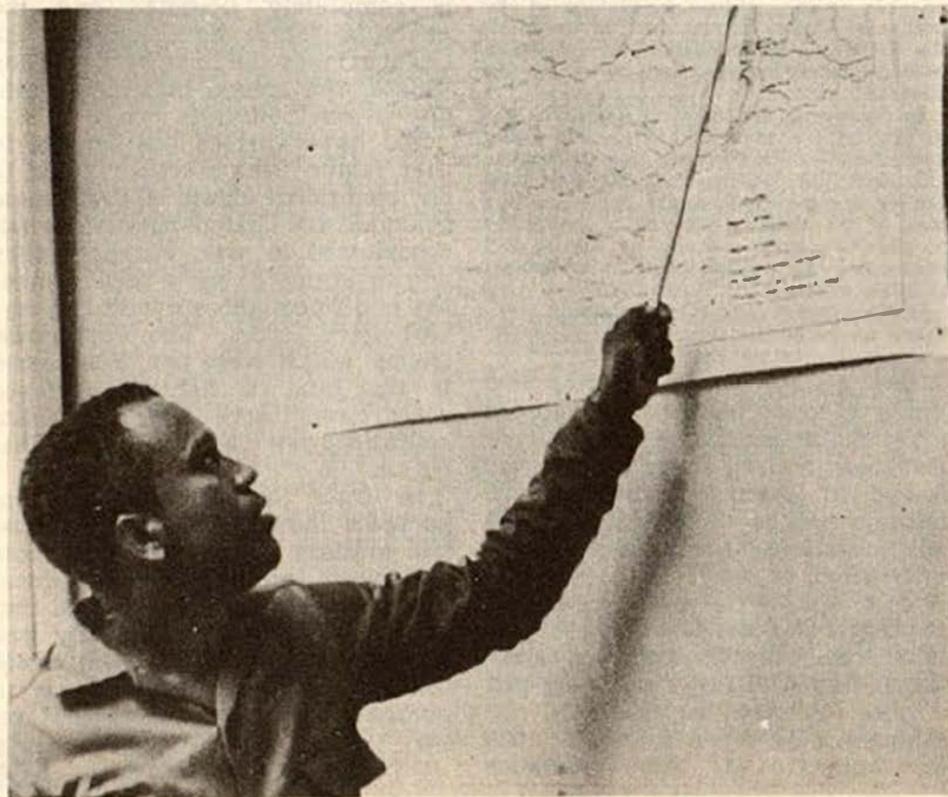
Today WE CONTROL more than two thirds of our country. One of the main characteristics of the struggle last year was that our enemy was forced to abandon more than 20 military posts. There are people who sometimes wonder whether the evacuation of these military posts is not simply a new colonialist strategy. But we know for a fact that when the Portuguese established these military posts they had a plan. At the beginning of our struggle they were forced by the development of the guerrillas

throughout our territory to establish more than 140 posts. They have increased the number of men in Guinea from 2000 to 35 000, and if they are forced to abandon these military posts today it is precisely because, with the organization of our people's armed forces, the small occupation posts established throughout our territory to occupy our country are incapable of resisting the continuous attacks of our armed forces. Therefore, in order to safeguard their forces, they have been forced to retreat and to defend certain communication lines that are vital to their continued presence in the country.

In the eastern part of the country, there are posts in Madina, some of which we have occupied. That region is completely liberated and the guerrilla forces have crossed the Corubal river and have even reached Bafatá, the second most important city in our country.

We have carried out attacks in that region, which was the fief of the traditional chiefs of Portuguese colonialism. That population is not accustomed to war, but now they are beginning to show their sympathy and to collaborate with the revolutionary forces. The Portuguese troops, which were not accustomed to this kind of fighting, suffered great losses there during the first operations we carried out in that region.

In order to understand the importance the seizure of the Madina-Boé military camp had for the revolutionary movement in Guinea-Bissau, you have to understand that in Madina-Boé there is only one highway and the Portuguese established a military camp there to guarantee their entry into that re-



gion. That was Camp Beli which was precisely the first camp liberated. We occupied that highway and attacked Camp Beli for 12 days. The Portuguese colonialists withdrew and the only remaining military camp was the one in Madina-Boé. Madina was attacked last year more than 200 times; and after 5 p.m. the Portuguese soldiers would enter shelters to await the attacks. A Portuguese newsman spent Christmas Eve in the Madina-Boé military camp and, if we read the article he wrote, we can see why the Portuguese had to abandon that post. You have to know that in the last days of their stay in Madina-Boé, the soldiers did not leave the camp and even had to relieve themselves in the trenches. The airmen who brought their supplies did not leave the plane, but rather dropped the supplies.

The Portuguese troops waited until nightfall to get their supplies and mail. We remember one case in which one of our comrades who was there killed a dozen Portuguese, as well as a pilot who had left his plane. It reached the point where the soldiers didn't even go out to pick up their wounded. Life became impossible for the Portuguese in Madina-Boé. Then they prepared to evacuate, but the comrades were informed of what was happening around the Madina camp and set up an ambush in Cheche: four vehicles were destroyed and more than 50 enemy soldiers were killed in the last attack in Cheche.

Later the Portuguese abandoned Madina and left everything there. All the shelters were full of food and medicines. They returned by plane and bombed it for a few days, but it was clearly a great victory for us against the Portuguese

troops.

We have forces operating on a regular basis in Bissau. We also have forces that are advancing toward the coast. This region has a population that is openly hostile to Portuguese domination and this year the colonialists have carried out large-scale bombings to terrorize us.

There are regions in other parts of the country that we have controlled for six years; there we find schoolchildren who have never encountered the Portuguese. Our enemies make their presence known chiefly by acts of terrorism against the population. As our Secretary-General, Comrade Amílcar Cabral, has said: "The Portuguese in our country have changed from colonial masters to terrorists who hide in their underground shelters and carry out acts of vandalism and terrorism against the population."

During these years, we have reinforced our political organization. We have established Party committees in the villages and we have also improved our political work among the population, and we can say that the victories in the area of awakening the people's revolutionary consciousness are as important as our military victories.

We can describe our country today as an independent state, administered by our Party, where there are foreign troops cornered in some areas.

We believe there are certain traits that are characteristic of an independent state. In our country, the majority of the people live in regions that we control and they are organized on the basis of village committees. A group of villages makes up a regional committee and,

in accordance with geographic limitations, certain regional committees make up a zone. There are inter-regional committees in the North and the South that coordinate the activity of all the zones. These people are completely independent and administer their own affairs. The army guarantees their security.

Naturally, within the framework of the present war, there is also a police force, made up of village militia. On the international level, we are still not legally recognized, despite the fact that the UN recognizes our right not to be Portuguese.

This means that the majority of our people are not willing to be considered Portuguese. Naturally, we have to think of giving our people a nationality on an international level. We are studying this, but there are complex problems.

We are now fighting to liberate our country from foreign forces, strengthening our organization in the liberated areas. We are learning to govern ourselves, since life in the liberated areas is a huge school for our people.

The independence of our country is characterized by a very interesting phenomenon — the independence developed from the villages up to the national level. I was able to show some foreign newsmen who were in our country that the villages were already independent, that they solved all the problems of social life and that the more important things were solved by the higher levels of the PAIGC but that these also originated at the village level.

After we held our Congress in 1964, we decided to create schools, health centers, and stores to supply the population. And today, five

years after the Congress, we can say we have increased the school population more than six times over what it was during the colonial period. Every year we organize seminars to improve education and at this very moment there is a team of comrades meeting to prepare textbooks for improving education in the liberated areas.

We have field hospitals in the North and in the South of our country, as well as health centers in different regions and nurses who are mobilized within Army units. In the neighboring countries we have hospitals where we send the most seriously wounded. In spite of all the difficulties we have in the medical field — due more than anything else to lack of supplies — we can say that we have improved the health of our people.

In the field of supplies we have established a national enterprise: the people's stores, which can be found in all the regions of the North and South and which operate on a system of barter between produce and staples. You understand that there are not enough commodities for the entire population, so goods are distributed according to the importance of the villages and according to the possibilities that we have for obtaining supplies from neighboring countries.

Concerning the incorporation of people into the revolutionary armed forces, we can say that, before beginning the armed struggle in 1963, the Party sent cadres to the countryside and to the mountains to mobilize the population and to prepare them.

When we began the armed struggle, it was the people's wish that we do so, to respond to the violence of the Portuguese who, because of

our activities in the villages, had begun to repress the people.

We began with sabotage actions, ambushes along the highways and, at the same time, we were preparing the people in the countryside to join our guerrilla units. These units were more or less autonomous and began to operate first in the South and later in the North of the country. The number of guerrillas has increased considerably, as have the arms. The Portuguese have fallen back to their encampments and we have had to begin the struggle in other regions.

Thus we took advantage of the guerrilla units that already had a certain amount of battle experience and we established regular units of the revolutionary army that were sent to other regions where there were no guerrillas. Those who remained in the villages stayed as reserves for the army. Our armed forces have developed rapidly in accordance with our ability to arm our combatants, and the proof of this lies in the fact that the Portuguese have sent in 35 000 men and our combatants control more than two thirds of our country.

Another thing that has strengthened our army a great deal (and the best place to learn to fight is in the actual battle) is the increase in the numbers of men involved and also in the quality of the struggle.

The resistance of the African people to colonialism is an historic fact. In our country, for example, it took the Portuguese more than 50 years to pacify us and, even then, there were still regions that were not paying taxes when we undertook the armed struggle. That means that this new phase of modern organized struggle corresponded to

the aspirations of our people and above all to the aspirations of our youth. This is the reason that our youth has joined the struggle for national liberation so enthusiastically. We have large reserves for our army; we have our people's militia, which is already armed to a great degree and which also constitutes a reserve for our army.

This support of our youth for our armed struggle can be illustrated by the following: Last July, I was in an area where I met with the children in a school. One of the boys took the floor and said: "Our older brothers now have the weapons to fight against the Portuguese, but we want to tell the Portuguese that we are here and that we can already handle the weapons and within two or three years we will also be soldiers."

Regarding the role played by US imperialism, Zionism, and NATO in support of Portugal as a colonialist force in Africa, I would like to remind you that the Secretary-General of PAIGC, Comrade Amílcar Cabral, once said that Portugal could not even manufacture toy airplanes for children and that, obviously, if they were not given the means to bomb our towns, they couldn't do it.

The bombs used against us belong to the North American army. All the communications the Portuguese have are British made. The warships are French, and most of the arms are Israeli.

Portugal has a strong alliance with Israel. This is natural because, just as the Arab people are struggling for the liberation of Palestine, we are fighting against the Portuguese for the liberation of our

country. The same phenomenon is occurring today throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America. What is happening in Palestine is also happening in South Africa, in Angola, and in our own country. The same enemies form a front to continue dominating and repressing. It is the oppressed peoples who are now fighting for their liberation.

Israel's action is not limited to giving the Portuguese the means they need to destroy our people. Israel is also trying to sabotage our struggle by using small groups of people originally from our country who call themselves nationalists and who, nevertheless, are agents of Portuguese colonialism. These people are sent to Israel and we have reports of Israeli-trained agents trying to infiltrate our ranks. We are vigilant. If anything is true, it is that every victory of the Arab people, of the Palestinian people against Zionism is also a victory for our people, for our liberation struggle.

With the development of the liberation struggle in Angola, Guinea, and Mozambique, the Lisbon government was forced to offer the Portuguese colonies to the imperialist powers in order to receive the aid necessary to make war against our people. Thus we witnessed the rapid entry of foreign capital into Angola, Guinea, and Mozambique after 1962. But in our country we did not give the Portuguese time to do this and even the contracts signed with Standard Oil for the exploitation of oil in our country could not be put into effect. This is why the Portuguese could not open the doors of our country to Zionist capital.

As I said at the beginning, the

Portuguese had great difficulty in establishing themselves in our country, but one of the reasons that they were able to conquer our people, in addition to the modern weapons they had, was the fact that they utilized the tribes against each other. For example, they used the Fulanis against the Papelis and the Mandingos, also the Balantas against the Mandingos. When we began to mobilize the people for armed struggle, that was the first problem we came up against. It was necessary to explain to the people why the Portuguese had conquered our country and how they had been able to establish themselves on our territory. This does not mean that these conversations put an end to all tribal problems. The problem has continued but the Party is always vigilant and every time there is any problem we manage to overcome it. We are sure that the possibility of divergencies of this type will diminish more and more, above all in our schools, among the youth, and among the men in the militia. These problems are always raised very frankly and we get the people to discuss these questions.

Thus at a meeting in which I spoke with the children of one of the liberated areas a young boy said: "The only bond that existed between the different ethnic groups in our country was that the Portuguese exploited all of us in the same way; but today all the people are united in the struggle for liberation and no force will be able to break that unity."

We may add that the most important force in our national liberation struggle is the fact that we have managed to unite our people in the struggle against Portuguese domination.

The Will of Ho Chi Minh

IN THE PATRIOTIC struggle against US aggression, we shall have indeed to undergo more difficulties and sacrifices, but we are sure to win total victory.

This is an absolute certainty.

It is my intention, when that day comes, to make a tour of both North and South to congratulate our heroic compatriots, cadres, and combatants, to pay a visit to our old people, our beloved youth, and children.

Then, on behalf of our people, I will go to the fraternal countries of the socialist camp, and friendly countries in the whole world, and thank them for their wholehearted support and assistance to our people's patriotic struggle against US aggression.

Tu-Fu, the well-known Chinese poet of the Tang epoch, wrote: "In all times, few are those who reach the age of seventy."

This year, with my 79 years, I count myself among those "few" people. My mind is still lucid though my health is somewhat weakened in comparison with previous years. When one is on the far side of 70, health deteriorates with age. This is no wonder.

Who knows how long I can continue to serve the revolution, the fatherland, and the people?

That is the reason I leave these few lines in anticipation of the day when I shall go and join venerable Karl Marx, Lenin, and other revolutionary elders. In this way, there

will be no surprise for our compatriots in the whole country, the comrades in the Party, and our friends in the world.

First I will speak about the Party: thanks to its close unity and total dedication to the working class, the people, and the fatherland, our Party has been able, since its founding, to unite, organize, and lead our people in an ardent struggle, and conduct them from victory to victory.

Unity is an extremely precious tradition of our Party and people. All comrades, from the Central Committee down to the cell, must preserve the union and a united belief in the Party as the apple of their eye.

Broad democracy, regular and serious criticism and self-criticism are the best ways to consolidate and develop union and unity of mind in the Party. Genuine affection should prevail among all comrades.

Ours is a Party in power. Each Party member, each cadre, must be deeply imbued with revolutionary morality, and show industry, thrift, integrity, uprightness, total dedication to the public cause, exemplary selflessness.

Our Party should preserve an absolute purity and should remain worthy of its role as the leader and loyal servant of the people.

The Working Youth Union members and our young people as a whole are of excellent character, anxious to volunteer for vanguard tasks, undeterred by difficulties, striving for progress. The Party must give much attention to their education in revolutionary morality, and train them as heirs to the building of socialism, both "red" and "expert."