

AMILCAR CABRAL:

Theory of Revolution
and
Background to his Assassination

by

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I

Theory of Liberation

The death of Amilcar Cabral means the death of a man who gave hope; who gave hope not only to the people of Guinea-Bissau, but also to all who are suppressed throughout Africa. He was an untiring guerilla leader and an intelligent organizer, yet his outstanding achievement was that when he recognized that there was a breach to be closed he stepped into it. This breach - which must be blamed for the fact that nearly all African countries after reaching national independence remained anything else but free and independent - was the absence of a theory of liberation. Such a theory was needed to prevent the national elites, after having reached national independence with the support of the people, from taking over the positions of the foreign masters and continuing exploitation, and to prevent the elites not integrated in the countries' productive processes from basing their power on their function as intermediaries between the reactionary strata of their countries and imperialism.

For Cabral the fight for national independence went hand in hand with continuously creating, criticizing and revising a theory of liberation, as part of what he called "the struggle against our own weaknesses."¹ "This battle against ourselves," he said, "is the most difficult . . . (it) is the expression of the internal contradictions in the economic, social, and cultural (and therefore historical)

reality of each of our countries;" and he continued: "The ideological deficiency, not to say the total lack of ideology within the national liberation movements, which is basically due to ignorance of the historical reality which these movements claim to transform, constitutes one of the greatest weaknesses of our struggle against imperialism, if not the greatest weakness of all."

In Guinea-Bissau none of the pre-conditions existed on which the revolutions in Europe and Asia were based: there was no large proletariat, no developing working class and no rural population deprived of their land. Thus no successful revolutionary strategy could be developed on the basis of prior revolutionary experience and Guinea-Bissau was forced to create a strategy that was based on the conditions as they prevailed in the country itself.

Cabral's first efforts towards national liberation date back to the year of 1953 when he tried, under the guise of a legal sporting organization, to initiate clandestine activity. This failed to win other workers for struggle just as did his next attempt with a small group of workers. The mobilizing group had very few members, and these were workers whose influence on the other workers was minimal.

Cabral realized that without a very reliable knowledge of the social structure of the population as well as of the people's needs and desires neither mobilization nor the carrying through of a politically right liberation struggle were possible. He had the opportunity of obtaining this knowledge when he, in his capacity as agricultural engineer in the service of the colonial administration, conducted studies to prepare a population census. During this period, his activity did not remain restricted to the census; with his sharp analytical capacity he examined the internal structure of the different socio-economic zones in order to determine the possibility of winning the societies, burdened with tradition and colonial rule, for the fight.

From the analysis of the social structure of the country Cabral learned that there was no class which, because of its history and social prestige, would be in a position to accomplish the revolution on its own. On the other hand, he also recognized that the material interests and aspirations of the different groups were greatly diverse. All of these groups had to be united against Portuguese colonialism, but at the same time it

was necessary to organize them in such a way that the conflicts existing between them could be solved. This necessity convinced Cabral that it would be imperative to build up a party as well as fighting. In 1956 six "assimilados" - among them Amilcar Cabral and his brother Luis Cabral - created in Bissau a core organization - the PAIGC - designed to spread their ideas to other parts of the population.

To begin with, Cabral was faced with the question as to which social stratum his party should be relied on in order to continue the fight. Most peasants in Guinea could not read or write and they had almost no direct relation with the colonial power aside from paying taxes. Moreover, the peasants did not feel directly affected by the presence of the Portuguese since Guinea-Bissau - unlike Angola and Mozambique which are settlement colonies - is a trading colony and therefore they had not been deprived of their land. In view of these conditions and of the difficulties that would have to be overcome in convincing the peasants to fight, Cabral came to realize that in the specific case of Guinea-Bissau the peasants did not represent a revolutionary force, nor would they be in a position to take over the administration after the destruction of colonial rule had been accomplished.

The colonial situation did not allow the formation of a significant vanguard class - a class of conscious workers - which was aware of the importance and the correct aims of the liberation struggle and which was able to distinguish between true national independence and fictitious independence. "Only a revolutionary vanguard, generally an active minority, can be aware of this distinction from the start and make it known, through the struggle, to the popular masses." As regards the bourgeoisie, Cabral said: "There is no economically viable bourgeoisie, because imperialism prevented it being created." And he added: "What there is, is a stratum of people in the service of imperialism, who have learned how to manipulate the apparatus of the state - the African petty bourgeoisie: this is the only stratum capable of controlling or even utilising the instruments which the colonial state used against our people ...". This petty bourgeoisie enjoyed privileges which raised them above the mass of the population. But on the other hand they found themselves confronted with colonialism day by day, feeling each day the humiliation of discrimination.

In Cabral's opinion, this stratum had two possibilities: "The petty bourgeoisie can either ally itself with imperialism and the reactionary strata in its own country to try and preserve itself as a petty bourgeoisie or ally itself with the workers and peasants, who must themselves take power or control to make the revolution." He thus saw for a section of the petty bourgeoisie - that part which is in contact with the colonial administrative apparatus - a possibility of rehabilitation by a kind of suicide; for, if a revolution took place, the petty bourgeoisie as such would disappear and lose their privileges. Or the character of the party and the conduct of the struggle in the revolution might allow the petty bourgeoisie to assume power. The immobilizing petty bourgeoisie tends towards a bourgeois attitude - as do the peasants - a tendency which might crystallize the fight. This danger must be reduced. Cabral proposed how this could be done:

We can reduce it only by constantly reinforcing the participation and control by the mass over the whole liberation movement. When we began there were just six of us in Bissau - two workers and four petty bourgeois. Later, as the workers in the urban centres joined, the group was partly transformed. And today the majority of the party leadership comes from the peasant element, and the majority of our comrades in the struggle are peasants, and in all our liberated regions the peasants are armed. At the beginning, our man was a very great man when he entered the village with a gun; with a weapon he was a privileged person. Now a weapon means nothing; all the villagers have them.

In the beginning, however, the PAIGC did not see the correct strategy for mobilizing the peasants. Only after they had gained more experience and had undergone unrelenting self-criticism did the PAIGC succeed in solving the peasant question. Indeed, after it had been determined that the party would first have to rely on the petty bourgeoisie, the question still arose as to which stratum of this heterogeneous group this reliance would have to be placed. A thorough analysis of these groups led to the conclusion that the dockers and transport workers in the urban area were the leading and most homogeneous part of the petty bourgeoisie:

These people proved highly conscious of their economic importance and they took the initiative of launching strikes without any trade union leadership at all. We therefore decided to concentrate all our work on this group. This gave excellent results and this group soon came to form a kind of nucleus which influenced the attitudes of other wage-earning groups in the towns - workers proper and drivers, who form two other important groups. Moreover, if I may put it this way, we thus found our little proletariat.

But this strategy proved unsuitable when, in 1959, during a strike at the docks of Piguity, the Portuguese forces of repression killed 50 workers and injured several hundred. Cabral did not hesitate to exercise self-criticism: "The party was following a wrong course ... the lack of experience had led us to thinking that we, by means of strikes and other peaceful measures, could fight in the towns." And the party began to understand two things: first, nationalism based on economic demands could not lead the battle any further and therefore had to be replaced by a revolutionary nationalism aspiring to the assumption of power; second, because they had realized that the peasants could not be used as the initiating revolutionary force, the party had neglected to search for a suitable strategy for mobilizing the peasants. The scope of action of the petty bourgeoisie was very limited and to a high degree isolated from the mass of the people on the country. In this connection, Cabral made a distinction between the revolutionary and the physical forces: "... physically, the peasantry is a great force in Guinea: it is almost the whole of the population, it controls the nation's wealth, it is the peasantry which produces." It, therefore, appears to be inevitable to coordinate these two groups, eliminating the contradiction existing between them.

In order to pursue the new strategy and to transform the party according to the new objectives, the PAIGC moved to Conakry. In a special school 1,000 cadres, consisting of wage-earning people, members of the petty bourgeoisie, merchants and peasants, were trained. An important part was played by the recruitment of young people who came into the towns from the countryside and, in accordance with African tradition, were living with relatives, even if they did not find work. Life in the towns permitted them to make comparisons which increased their willingness to

take part in the battle. This group proved to be extremely dynamic and of great value to the party for eventually mobilizing the peasantry since it was in constant contact with the rural population.

This new strategy, forged from practical experience, turned the PAIGC into an instrument capable of accomplishing national integration. Conflict between the petty bourgeoisie of the towns and the rural people was eliminated at the same time that the various ethnic groups formed a nation. A nationalist movement, conceived and led at the beginning from above, i.e., by an elite containing members of the petty bourgeoisie, had turned into a revolution that is presently being supported by the mass of the rural population.

It was these social changes which made the PAIGC the strongest force in the country and which was able, by the mid-1960s, to alter the balance of forces in the country. Within three years after the beginning of the armed struggle, more than two-thirds of the country and population were administered by the PAIGC. In these liberated areas the colonial power and its consequences were increasingly being removed and a new political, social and economic life was taking their place, which no longer permitted man to be exploited by man. This is the process which Mario de Andrade called "creative destruction."

It is this aspect of the liberation struggle in Guinea-Bissau (as also in the other Portuguese colonies Angola and Mozambique under the leadership of MPLA and Frelimo, respectively) that distinguishes it from all the nationalist movements that reached formal independence in former years. "This process of liberation," Cabral said, is "showing Africans it is possible to transform one's life; it is possible to fight the great colonialist-imperialist powers in our continent. Our struggle is part of the making of African history."

History has shown that a battle for liberation is not complete as long as the national productive forces of production are not liberated at the same time. It was the lack of a theory of liberation which led the majority of African nationalist movements to limit themselves to fighting an anticolonialist battle without realizing that an independence which is only formal cannot free their countries from foreign domination. This type of foreign domination, that of neocolonialism, maintains control of the national productive forces. The policy of neocolonialism,

according to Cabral, "is the policy of aid, and one of the essential aims of this policy is to create a false bourgeoisie to put a brake on the revolution and to enlarge the possibilities of the petty bourgeoisie as a neutralizer of the revolution." Cabral viewed colonialism and neo-colonialism as having in common the essential characteristics of imperialist domination: "the negation of the historical process of the dominated people by means of violent usurpation of the freedom of development of the national productive forces." Thus, national liberation can only be "the phenomenon in which a given socio-economic whole rejects the negation of its historical process. In other words, the national liberation of a people is the regaining of the historical personality of that people, its return to history through the destruction of the imperialist domination to which it was subjected."

II

The Background to the Assassination of Amilcar Cabral

The death of Amilcar Cabral was the outcome of his success. Cabral succeeded in creating a theory of liberation that was based on practical experience and has proved true in practice. This constituted a danger for Portugal and also for the imperialist camp which was not restricted to Guinea-Bissau, but threatened to spread to other African countries.

In view of this danger, it was in the interests of both the Lisbon government and imperialism to liquidate Cabral and the PAIGC. The first attempt in this direction was the invasion of the Republic of Guinea in late 1970. The idea suggests itself that after the failure of this invasion the Portuguese colonialists made new plans which have now resulted in the murdering of Amilcar Cabral. The invasion of the Republic of Guinea and the assassination of Cabral are one single complex issue where the interests of Portuguese colonialism and of imperialism converge.

1) The reasons for the initiative of Portuguese colonialism

1969 was a year of decisive successes for the revolutionary liberation movement of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC), which in Guinea stands against the military superiority of a 30,000 man strong Portuguese army. In this year, with the exception of a few isolated towns, liberation was

completed in the south of the country. But even more important was the liberation of the region of Medina-Boe, which led to the collapse of the Portuguese Eastern Front and thus introduced the attack on the west, i.e., the liberation of the entire colony. These defeats of the colonial army made the Northern Front, including the town of Bissau, the decisive sector in a colony which is already largely liberated.

This situation explains the numerous NATO missions which visited Guinea-Bissau in 1969, and Portugal's decision to defend the Northern Front at all costs and with all means.

Theoretically there were two possibilities for Portugal: a big military counter-offensive or a political offensive. In the given circumstances, however, the large military offensive was not a viable choice, since Portuguese troops were also needed in Angola - against the MLPA - and Mozambique - against FRELIMO. The fact that FRELIMO beat back the "Gordian Knot" offensive shows that Portugal is in fact incapable of mounting such a major action successfully. Thus Portugal was left only with the possibility of a political offensive by attacking the neighbouring countries of Senegal and Guinea, which support the PAIGC, with two aims in mind: first, following Israel's example of attacking Lebanon to stop it from joining forces with the Palestinian resistance fighters, and creating enmity between the peoples, and secondly, to induce the governments of these neighbouring countries not to act as a "Hinterland" and reserve area for the PAIGC.

So Portugal started by attacking Senegal, but not without the knowledge and advice of France, Senegal's "protecting power." The Senegalese border village of Samine was bombed in December 1969; airplanes flew over the town of Ziguinchor, distributing leaflets threatening bombardment unless Senegal broke off all connections with Guinea-Bissau. This tactic was initially unsuccessful, but later, as Portugal continued its attacks, it did have an effect on Senegal's attitude. Senghor appealed to the United Nations and called for French talks with Portugal. When this led to no result, Senghor closed the PAIGC hospitals in Senegal, blocked the passage of arms and reinforcements and even subjected medicines and food for the PAIGC to strict controls.

At any rate, this reaction on the part of the Senghor government was not unexpected: in 1969 Senegal produced a three-stage "peace plan" for Guinea-Bissau, according to

which Guinea-Bissau should, after a period of internal autonomy, achieve independence within the framework of a Luso-African community. PAIGC opposed this plan: it reminded Senghor that decisions over Guinea-Bissau and its relations with Portugal were taken by the PAIGC, and stated that it considered this "peace plan" to be neo-colonist. In this connection it is worth remarking on the existence of a "Front for Guinean Independence" in Dakar, Fling, and that its leader Pinto Bull has twice been received by Salazar in Lisbon and pronounced himself "satisfied with the talks."

In the Republic of Guinea, on the other hand, Sekou Toure acted differently, sending troops with great determination to the frontier with Guinea-Bissau to repel the Portuguese attacks. Portugal began these attacks against Guinea in 1969. In August of 1970 the Republic of Guinea protested in front of the United Nations General Assembly at Portugal's violation of its air space. In September, mercenaries were arrested who had been trained in Guinea-Bissau by the Congo mercenary Schramme for operation in the Republic of Guinea. In October, in Gambia, the two mercenaries Samba Dialla and Boubacar, both resident in Bissau, were arrested together with 38 Guineans who had been trained there and who were later to have gone to a military camp in Guinea-Bissau and prepared the attack on Sekou Toure from there. Both mercenaries were in possession of walkie-talkies with which they were to contact a Portuguese ship in Gambian waters.

In spite of these threats the Sekou Toure government continues to support the PAIGC, whose headquarters are in Conakry. Because Portugal's efforts in the Republic of Guinea had not met with the same success as in Senegal, Portugal had an interest in Sekou Toure's fall, since Guinea is now the only reserve base for the PAIGC.

Powerless against the liberation struggle of the PAIGC, Portugal sought more help from its allies. Marcello Caetano, Salazar's successor, expressed himself clearly in one of his first speeches in November 1968:

The majority of the population of Guinea is fighting against terrorism on the side of the regular units. But it seems that in this area terrorism is finding a much larger and more effective support, especially from the Soviet Union, as in other provinces. It is certain that a concerted and accelerated effort is being made there for which

neither arms nor other aid are being spared. And the reason for this special interest is no secret: those responsible do not conceal the fact that Guinea serves as a point of departure for an attack on the Cape Verde Islands, which are in a key position as regards the connection between the North and South Atlantic and even that between its two banks. At a time when the Russian fleet in the Mediterranean is growing from day to day and Russia is trying to set up military support points, nobody can remain unaware of the importance of the possession of the Cape Verde Islands in the hands of those friendly to Russia. Europe would then be surrounded.

These days, the security of countries cannot be defended on their borders. Nations are enclosed in large areas, whose fate they share. The freedom and independence of the countries of West Europe is not only decided in Europe itself, but equally so in Africa. That is why we must defend Guinea. Certainly in our interest, but also in the interest of West Europe and even of America.

This is a "broad hint" addressed to the imperialist powers and especially to NATO, and the cry for help was listened to, since it corresponded to the interests of Portugal's allies.

In spite of this assistance, Portugal did not succeed in halting the advance of the liberation struggle. In 1972 Frelimo troops in Mozambique extended their activity from the north to Vila Pery and are thus fighting in two-thirds of the country. In the same year the two movements of MPLA and FLNA coordinated their activities against the Portuguese colonialists thus increasing their striking force.

This development alarmed the white minority regimes in southern Africa which, by mutual consultation and assistance, try to maintain control of the situation. Rhodesia's Prime Minister Smith went to Lisbon and South Africa sent 4,000 soldiers to the Rhodesian border.

But in Guinea-Bissau the struggle for liberation is still more advanced. A "Confidential Report of the Portuguese General Staff" presented in 1970 stated:

Overseas, in a general way, the native populations continue to tend towards subversion, especially when it proves effective, or when geographic conditions make actions by our troops difficult or impossible. The indigenous population on the periphery of the largest urban centres, generally detribalised, continue to show themselves as very susceptible to enemy propaganda. The European population continues to demonstrate overt support for the war, but only co-operates against subversion when its material interests are directly in danger.

The psychological situation is precarious, in the metropole as well as overseas.

General Spínola, the Commander-in-Chief of Guinea-Bissau, in a radio statement which he made in Bissau in July 1971, spoke of "an unjustified climate of apprehension in the capital of the Province." The despair of the Portuguese colonialists reached its climax when Cabral, at the end of last year, announced the declaration of the independence of Guinea-Bissau for the next few months.

In his New Year's Message for 1973 Cabral stated more precisely:

In the course of this year and as soon as possible and convenient, we shall convene the National Assembly of the People of Guinea to accomplish its first mission in history: the proclamation of our State, the creation of an Executive for that State and the promulgation of a fundamental law - the first Constitution of our history - which will be the base of the active existence of our African nation. (p. 3)

From the military point-of-view, Portugal is no longer in a position to stop the struggle for liberation of the people of Guinea-Bissau, and the Portuguese colonialists are aware of the fact that the matter at stake is not Guinea-Bissau alone, but also the other colonies which are economically more profitable. The Commander-in-Chief of Mozambique, General Kaulza de Ariaga explained this relation in his Lessons of Strategy in the Course of High Command: "Naturally, as our troops are dying in Guinea, and as we are spending a lot of money there, I do not take losses

into account, and don't consider that such an amount is spent only in defending Guine. Actually, if that was so, I should find it unacceptable, but a man who dies in Guine is indirectly defending Angola and Mozambique."

In view of this development, the statements of Sekou Toure gained in credibility. He has charged that Portuguese colonial authorities persuaded a member of the PAIGC, Inocente Camil, to assassinate Cabral by falsely promising that upon liquidation of the PAIGC they would grant independence to Guinea-Bissau. Naturally, Portugal hastened to avert her innocence. A government official stated in Lisbon: "To have political opponents murdered is not our way of overcoming difficulties." The most recent history proves the contrary: in 1965 the leader of the Portuguese opposition, General Humberto Delgado, was murdered in Spain by the Portuguese secret police PIDE; in 1969 the President of the liberation movement of Mozambique, Eduardo Mondlane, was assassinated in accordance with the plans of the Portuguese colonialists. It is also a matter of course that a fascist government will never be able to understand that a movement carried and supported by the people cannot be stopped by removing one of their leaders.

2) A British secret document - the strategy of imperialism

To be able to interpret the events of Guinea, it is necessary to examine the general policy pursued by the imperialist powers in Africa. Here a confidential document, produced by the British Conservative Party before it took over power is representative for all of these powers. Extracts are printed here.²

We suggest this policy in order to avoid events which would be regarded by history as tragedies:

1. *The Cape Route*

Due to the closure of the Suez Canal, control of the Cape Route countries is necessary so safe transportation along this route is assured.

General Points:

a) *The increased economic and strategic importance of this route due to the closure of the Suez Canal.*

b) *For the Western allies, the Suez Canal has become practically useless because large cargo ships, oil tankers are too big for it.*

c) A large percentage of NATO trade takes place along the Cape Route.

d) The route leads to South Africa, one of Great Britain's most important trading partners.

e) Oil transportations from the Near East to Europe and North America go along the Cape Route.

f) Because it gives access to Asia, Australia and New Zealand the route is of strategic value.

Threats to British interests:

a) Armed attacks (not necessarily wars) could occur upon the South African coast and inland, without any immediate retaliation being implied, as in the NATO-areas.

b) Because the route is particularly vulnerable as a non-NATO area, wars, for example inspired and supported by communists and directed against Angola, Mozambique, Port. Guinea, Rhodesia and South Africa could threaten its safety. The Russians and perhaps even the Chinese could easily station warships in Zanzibar or Cape Verde. This last possibility could be realized if the communist inspired opposition in Portuguese Guinea is successful.

Suggested Necessary Measures:

a) In the political sphere, the first step will be the reinstatement of contact with South Africa on the basis of common interest, improvements and trade between the two countries and the selling of arms to South Africa. At the same time, the ending of sanctions against Rhodesia.

Otherwise the danger exists that South Africa which is politically isolated, will thereby be forced to become neutral. This would mean the loss of the Simonstown fleet base.

b) Support of the African states which maintain a positive attitude towards Portugal, South Africa and Rhodesia.

c) *Renewal of the Simonstown Agreement.*

d) *Joint South African and British naval exercises.*

e) *Use could be made of the British-Portuguese alliance in order to reach a defence agreement in the Southern Atlantic. In this context, particular thought must be given to the harbours of Beira (Mozambique), Lobito (Angola) and also the harbours of Cape Verde.*

f) *The furthering of an alliance between Britain - South Africa - Brazil - Argentina.*

Furthermore:

Strengthening of the British presence along the Cape Route by

- 1) *Air force in the region,*
- 2) *Atomic submarines for the support with South Africa,*
- 3) *A floating base for vertical take-off aeroplanes.*
- 4) *The security of Portuguese Africa.*

At present the most direct threat to the security of the Cape Route comes from Portuguese Guinea. This colony is only small but important on the one hand because of Cape Verde, its fleet base Sao Vicente and its base for airborne operations, Sal, and on the other hand, because when regarded in connection with the other Portuguese colonies, it gains a vital strategic significance.

The British boycott in arms sales (Portugal needs above all helicopters and amphibious vehicles) strongly prejudices Portugal's war efforts. This boycott is against the interests of NATO. Were Portugal to pull out or to be pushed off Portuguese Guinea the following would ensue:

1. *A psychological advantage for the nationalist powers in Angola and Mozambique.*
2. *The harbour at Bissau and the airport at Bissalaoa would fall into the hands of the Russians.*

3. *The stability of numerous states in West Africa would be threatened by the setting up of a pro-Russian government in Bissau.*

If Portugal were to lose its colony Guinea, the PAIGC and the Soviet Union would present a threat to the Cape Verde Islands;

a) *Many inhabitants of Cape Verde work in Guinea: this encourages PAIGC supporters and would tend to general emigration to Guinea and to an independence.*

b) *It is not unthinkable that the Russians would help the PAIGC in the event of a landing a la Castro in Cape Verde.*

c) *It is certain that the Russians plan to gain influence through the PAIGC in the Cape Verde Islands under the pretext of "liberation."*

General Conclusions:

There is nothing to indicate that Portugal cannot keep its colonies of Mozambique and Angola for ever. Neither can one conclude that the present political situation in Portugal will change.

British policy should aim at decreasing tensions in southern Africa and at recognition of the relationship of the independent African states with Portugal and Portuguese Africa.

The British diplomats in these states, with instructions suitable of their status should work in this way.

In the future Britain should not condemn Portugal in the Security Council for having defended herself against armed attacks.

Portugal is very weak in the naval sphere. Bearing in mind the significance of the Cape Verde Islands, England should give up her present attitude towards her Portuguese allies and support Portugal, particularly in the region of Sao Vicente.

3) The prevention of economic independence in African countries

With the political strategy of the imperialist powers as a background, the existence of a great deal of scheming in West Africa, among other places in the Republic of Guinea, can be understood. The governments of the Cape Route countries must be kept under control. This is achieved by their economic dependence. If these countries were to attempt to achieve economic, and therefore political, independence, then the imperialist powers would try to overthrow their governments.

Kwame Nkrumah's overthrow occurred in 1966 exactly on the evening before the completion of the Volta project, which gave Ghana considerable economic independence. It is interesting that on the night of Nkrumah's overthrow, the U. S. Ambassador in Accra was seen together with Afrifa, one of the organizers of the putsch.

The invasion of the Republic of Guinea is also connected with steps taken towards economic independence. Since 1960 the imperialist powers have been disturbed by Guinea's 3 year development plans, which could eventually lead to economic independence. In 1960, Federal Germany had reached an agreement with Guinea concerning the construction of a railway line between Conakry and Kankan. This line was never built.

Sekou Toure was always a cause of anxiety for the imperialists. His "no" to de Gaulle caused among other things the attempted putsch of 1965, which was organized by French diplomats. At the end of September 1970 Sekou Toure announced that an action against him, which was to be carried out by the above mentioned mercenaries from Guinea-Bissau, was being planned for the end of October. At the same time, he accused Portugal before the U.N. General Assembly of planning attacks upon Guinea and of violating Guinean airspace with military planes. It was at this time that the invasion of Guinea occurred.

The project which enabled Guinea to achieve a certain amount of economic independence and which was therefore the reason for this plot is the Boke project. It includes the construction of a mine and a town in Sangaredi, as well as that of a railway line, a harbour and a town in Kamsar. The bauxite resources in Boke are regarded as the richest in the world. Each year they yield 8 million tons of bauxite. Through this project the Republic of Guinea will become the second largest exporter of bauxite in the world.

Sixty-five percent of the taxable profits will go to Guinea. Forty-nine percent of the Boke mine belongs to Guinea and 51% to the Halco Mining Incorporated, a consortium in which up to 16% of the total investment of 3 U.S. firms is distributed. Halco invests around \$100 million, and the World Bank guarantees a credit of \$64.5 million. The reason for the involvement of U.S. organizations in this project is not in the least that they want to help Sekou Toure. The involved foreign parties hope to make corresponding profits out of these investments, and furthermore they speculate that a government such as Sekou Toure's which opposes itself to imperialist control, will not stay in power for ever, a reason for their involvement in the attempted overthrows. Also, the U.S.A. fears that were investments not to come from the American side, Sekou Toure could turn to the socialist lands, which is in fact already the case, as projects are being carried out with China's support.

The assassination of Cabral is another link in this series of plots, insofar as he was the leader of a revolutionary party whose accession to power would lead to true independence. The imperialist camp regarded this as a danger to the Cape Route, particularly because such a kind of independence would create the best possible conditions for carrying out the PAIGC's goal of liberating the strategically important Cape Verde Islands. In October last year the Secretary General of NATO, Luns, explained that 75% of the oil and 44% of all other raw materials for the member countries of NATO cross the Atlantic and he concluded: "Free and unhindered passage in the Atlantic is consequently a matter of life and death to us all." It thus turns out that the convergence of the interests of the Portuguese colonialists with those of the imperialists - should their participation in the assassination of Cabral be proved - means that the Portuguese will not be subjected to any reprisals, as was the case after the invasion of the Republic of Guinea.

4) Concluding reflections. The new U.S.-African policy

The above mentioned cases of Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Republic of Guinea as well as the assassination of Cabral show what difficulties an African government causes itself as soon as it tries to become economically, and therefore politically independent from the imperialist powers. The latter profit from the dilemma in which the African governments find themselves - they want to answer

their peoples' need for a better standard of living, and yet they do not possess the necessary capital for development investments, and are therefore forced to turn to foreign capital. The danger arises when the African governments begin to nationalize capitalist enterprises, or when the capitalists become anxious about the politics of the African states. Armed intervention is only one step away from this situation!

The conclusion to be drawn is that it is necessary to break off all connections with the economic interests of the imperialist powers, to actually give the power to the people, and to arm them for defence against foreign intervention.

Because of the relative weakness of the African states compared with the large imperialist powers, this policy cannot be pursued successfully until a political and military bond exists, which provides for a common defence and prevents the possibility of the governments being overthrown individually, one after another.

It is in this context that we should regard the sixteen day journey in 1970 of the U.S.A. State Secretary Rogers. The U.S.A. is trying out a new policy of involvement in Africa. The Rhodesian foreign minister described the plans as "realistic" which tells us quite enough about them. At the same time, Nixon stressed the fact in a speech that the U.S.A. "could not accept a progressive change in southern Africa, if it were arrived at by force." As this new policy declares that the U.S. will help her friends in Africa to help themselves, if ever they are threatened by outside powers, it can be recognized as simply a reissue of the doctrine which was used to justify U.S. interventions in Asia (Vietnam, Laos, Thailand), Latin America (Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Cuba) and in Africa itself (Congo).

America's intensified interest in Africa could have been caused by three different considerations:

1. In the whole world, opposition is growing to America's economic dominance, and these nationalist developments are leading to investment difficulties for the U.S.A.
2. Competition amongst the imperialist powers is becoming fiercer, because Japan, Germany, and Italy are increasingly taking over the African market.

3. Not to be underestimated are the new connections between the militant organizations in the U.S.A. - especially the Black Panthers - with the freedom movements and progressive governments in Africa. This could lead to greater support for the liberation of Africa - a liberation especially from Pretoria, Salisbury and Lisbon; which as far as the U.S. is concerned, could encourage the blacks to take up arms on the home front.

This new line explains why, at the 23rd session of the U.N. General Assembly the problem of decolonization was demoted to second place on the agenda and why the Americans, who until then had abstained from voting on resolutions against the white governments in Africa, now suddenly voted against pro-African resolutions. This new line also explains why the Wall Street newspapers have recently been recommending firms to increase investment in Africa, especially in countries rich in raw materials like the Republic of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Angola. In order to ensure the safety of these investments, to control the strategically important Cape Route and to liquidate the danger that the presence of anti-imperialist powers in Cape Verde should neutralize the Azores NATO base, the imperialist powers in Africa must try to keep the governments under control. Here the interests of the Portuguese colonialists coincide with imperialist interests in wanting to militarily suppress the PAIGC on Guinea-Bissau.

It is undoubtedly correct to link all these events with the assumption of power by the Conservative Party in England, with the visit paid to Africa in February 1970 by Rogers, who followed the NATO conference in Rome with a visit to Lisbon in May, also with the one-week talks between the Portuguese Foreign Minister, Rui Patricio, and Rogers in the U.S.A., and with the presence of the governor of Guinea-Bissau in Lisbon directly before the invasion of the Republic of Guinea.

The topicality of the interest the imperialist camp is taking in Africa was demonstrated by the Azores treaty between Lisbon and the U.S.A. concluded last year. The U.S.A. agreed to authorize Export-Import Bank loans to Portugal up to \$400 million, a total equivalent to four times all the ExImBank's assistance to Portugal since 1946.

Footnotes

1. The quotations are taken from
"The Weapon of Theory," address delivered to the first Tricontinental Conference of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America held in Havana in January 1966, in: A. Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea*, London 1969; or
"Brief Analysis of the Social Structure in Guinea," condensed text of a seminar held in the Frantz Fanon Centre in Treviglio, Milan, from May 1 to 3, 1964, in: A. Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea*, op. cit.; or
"A Question and Answer Session Held in the University of London, 27th October 1971," in: Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea, (ed.), *Our People are our Mountain - Amilcar Cabral on the Guinean Revolution*, London 1972; or
PAIGC, Message du nouvel an du camarade Amilcar Cabral, Secrétaire General du Parti, Janvier 1973; or
"A Brief Report on the Situation of the Struggle in Guinea" (January-August 1971), in: *Our People are our Mountain*, op. cit.
2. This "top secret" document was published by the magazine "Africasia" (Paris, July 20, 1970, p. 16 60 21). It was prepared by an ad hoc committee under the chairmanship of the deputy Sir Frederick Bennett for the "Conservative Commonwealth and Overseas Council." It consists of a more general part composed by the committee and a special treatise about the Portuguese colonies, submitted by Patrick Orr, a member of the committee.

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