

The State of Guinea-Bissau appeals to all the independent states of the world to grant it *de jure* recognition as a sovereign State, in accordance with international law and practice. It expresses its decision to participate in international deliberations, particularly within the United Nations Organization, where our people will be able to make their contribution towards the solution of the fundamental problems of our times, in Africa and in the world.

Boe Region, September 24, 1973

THE NATIONAL POPULAR ASSEMBLY

#### INDEPENDENCE OF GUINEA-BISSAU

This summer I was fortunate enough to be able to go inside Guinea-Bissau with the PAIGC (the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde), the movement which has led the struggle for freedom. I was struck by the strength and efficiency of the movement which for some time has been operating effectively as a government for the majority of the people in that country.

The new government is not in exile. The P.A.I.G.C. has had external headquarters in both its southern and northern neighbors. But the real movement is in the country. It was the first meeting of the popularly elected People's National Assembly which, on Monday the 24th of September, 1973 at a place called Madina Boe, in the eastern region of Guinea-Bissau, proclaimed the new Republic of Guinea Bissau. The P.A.I.G.C. has established a network of administrative institutions inside the borders of their country - schools, hospitals, teaching centers, a court system, etc. which are serving the needs of the people.

1973 has been a tragic and testing year for the PAIGC. On January 20, Amilcar Cabral, who was founder and the inspired leader of the PAIGC was cruelly assassinated in a Portuguese plot to split the party and destroy the liberation struggle. My visit confirmed my conviction that the Portuguese plan had misfired badly and had in fact led to an intensification of the

people's struggle. The movement, its leaders and its people were inspired by the necessity to re-double their efforts in order to make up for their tremendous loss. I even visited what had been an important Portuguese military base in the southern region, a place called Guilege which the PAIGC captured in late May.

A short while before he was killed, Cabral had announced that during 1973 the PAIGC would proclaim the existence of the state. This was not seen as a "Declaration of Independence" because they were already operating as an independent entity - but as a formal proclamation calling on the countries of the world to recognize the reality of this independence. Twelve days before his assassination, Cabral wrote a pamphlet putting the proclamation of the existence of their state in perspective. He said, "The situation prevailing in Guinea-Bissau since 1968 as a result of the national liberation struggle...is comparable to that of an independent state part of whose national territory is occupied by foreign military forces..."

Now, despite the loss of Cabral, the PAIGC has carried out the planned proclamation. The struggle to establish this state has been long and hard. Formed in 1956, the PAIGC worked in the few towns of Guinea-Bissau until it was driven underground after the brutal Portuguese killing of fifty striking workers on the docks at Pidjiguiti in the capital of Bissau in 1959. The movement then embarked on a careful campaign to win the adherence of the mass of Guinea people who are peasants. A training center was established and about 1,000 people, under the tutelage of Cabral, were prepared for an active struggle for freedom over a two year period. In 1962, mass sabotage of Portuguese installations began. In 1963 the armed struggle was initiated. By 1968 virtually 2/3 of the country was under the control of the PAIGC. Now only the few larger towns and heavily militarized bases in scattered parts of the country are still controlled by the Portuguese. In 1972 the PAIGC organized the first election in which the people of Guinea-Bissau had ever had a chance to participate, and a National Assembly of 120 members was chosen. This is the legislative body which just met to proclaim independence.

I was deeply impressed by what I saw of the nation-building activities of the PAIGC in the midst of conflict. I visited two of the five boarding schools of the PAIGC. Altogether there are about 15,000 students in PAIGC schools. Only a fraction of this number were in school under the Portuguese.

The discipline and the organization were almost entirely in the hands of the students themselves. There was a staff of well-trained teachers to supervise. There are no discipline problems because the children are bound together by the common effort and they know how fortunate they are to be able to attend school.

I saw some of the "People's Shops", which are scattered in the forest throughout the liberated areas. Here the people are able to trade what they themselves have such as rice and the skins of animals for shoes, clothing, soap, sugar and other items. There is a sophisticated system for estimating exchange values. One square meter of crocodile skin, for example, is worth two kilos of rice. The consumer items for exchange come from friendly countries such as Holland, and Scandinavian and East European nations. Everywhere I went I saw impressive evidence of Cabral's contentions that indisputably, Portugal no longer exercises any effective administrative control over most areas of Guinea-Bissau... It is evident that the people of these liberated areas unreservedly support the policies and activities of the PAIGC which after nine years of armed struggle exercises free and *de facto* administrative control and effectively protects the interests of the inhabitants despite Portuguese activities. The PAIGC have a song which says, "We control the land...the Portuguese have only the sky." The main risk to the people in Guinea is from bombs dropped from the air.

The Portuguese are fighting colonial wars in two other territories of Africa - Mozambique and Angola. With their effective loss of control of Guinea-Bissau, the most apparent explanation of their attempt to still hold on there is the fear that to leave would have an effect on their ability to maintain morale for their ongoing struggle in the other two territories.

Now that the PAIGC has proclaimed the existence of their state some seventy to eighty African, Asian, Latin American and some European countries will almost certainly recognize it with little delay. [*They have.* -Ed.] There is no question in my mind that the new independent Republic of Guinea-Bissau ought to be granted international recognition. It has *de facto* control over most of the country and the strong support of the majority of the population. Is it too much to expect that the U.S. will be prepared to anger its NATO ally, Portugal, by granting recognition to the new State? The U.S. will not be able to side-step this issue very long. The new Republic will undoubtedly apply for membership to the United Nations before

too long, and the response to this application will be a closely watched public test for those who claim to oppose continued colonial domination in any area of the world.

- George M. Houser  
*Executive Director*  
*American Committee on Africa*

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE ROLE  
OF MUSLIMS IN TANZANIAN POLITICS

The conflict between the world of Christianity and the world of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa is, if not as old as in the Mediterranean, at least as troubled; and Tanzania provides a good example of an area with sizeable groupings of Christians, Muslims and traditionalists. Probably because the Europeanized elements predominate politically, in addition to the fact that the country seems to look more toward the Western world than to the Middle East for its cultural inspiration, no writer, to my knowledge, has considered Islam a critical influence on the development of Tanzanian nationalism. Admittedly, it is difficult to get an exact measure of the role that religion plays in the politics of nations, and the sizeable Muslim population in the country (about 1/4 of the total population, and slightly more than the Christians) does not appear to exert any visible political influence in terms of its voting patterns.

It seems to me, however, that it would be wrong to completely ignore the Muslim factor in Tanzanian politics. Not only did the Muslims play a considerable role in the pre-Independence nationalist movement, but also recent indications appear to suggest that the question of religious affiliation is far from being a dead political issue. The view expressed in this paper has been partly influenced by recent conversations with four persons: a Zanzibari Muslim, an Asian Muslim who lived in Kenya and Tanzania, a Christian from Malawi who taught in Dar es Salaam, and an American linguist who spent