



REVOLUTION IN GUINEA

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Guinea and Cabo Verde against Portuguese colonialism

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The absurdity of our situation

The situation of our peoples, like that of the other peoples dominated by Portugal, seems absurd. The fundamental rights of man, essential freedoms, respect for human dignity—all these are unknown in our country. While the colonial powers in general accept the principle of self-determination of peoples and seek, each in its own way, to resolve the conflicts which oppose them to the people they dominate, the Portuguese government obstinately maintains its domination and exploitation of 15 million human beings, of whom 12 million are African. While the overwhelming majority of the African peoples, in spite of the contradictions and difficulties which they face, are beginning the peaceful construction of progress, our peoples, because of the Portuguese colonialists, are obliged to go on living in the most extreme misery, ignorance and fear.

The Portuguese colonialists try, in vain, to convince the world that they have no colonies and that our African countries are 'provinces of Portugal'. The Portuguese are pursuing, arresting, torturing, killing, massacring, launching a colonial war in Angola and feverishly preparing for a new war in Guinea and Cabo Verde.

And yet the situation imposed on our peoples by the Portuguese colonialists is not as absurd as one might think. Obviously violence and lies have been, and still are, the main weapons of any colonialism. But when the colonising country has a fascist government, when the people of that country are largely illiterate, and neither know nor enjoy the fundamental human rights and have a very low standard of living in their own country; when furthermore the economy

of the metropolis is under-developed, as is the case in Portugal, then violence and lies reach an unparalleled height, and lack of respect for the African people knows no limits.

In the last thirty-five years, this situation has become considerably worse. Caricatures of the Portuguese economic and political systems, new forms of oppression and repression have been brought into action, and our people have begun to live in a veritable state of siege. For a long time, the fascist-colonial government of Portugal succeeded, by combining silence, cynicism and hypocrisy, in preventing world opinion from knowing the crimes of the Portuguese colonialists. It must not be forgotten that the temporary success of this policy of silence was largely due to the complicity and assistance of certain economic powers in other countries, which had and still have the strongest interest in 'conserving' the Portuguese colonies.

We are no longer concerned here with unmasking the Portuguese colonialists, whose monstrous behaviour is today evident to the whole world. We wish only to recall that the denunciation of the Portuguese colonial crime was the work of the peoples of the Portuguese colonies themselves, as the result of a systematic revolutionary plan carried out by African patriots in the international field. Faced with the strongest resistance, and even hostility, of some Western circles, these African patriots, aware of the strategic necessity of isolating the Portuguese colonialists even from their own allies, spared no efforts to accomplish this historic mission.

The certainty of our total victory against Portuguese colonialism, on an international level, is today evident. It was consecrated by the vote of the United Nations General Assembly on December 14th, 1960, which confirmed by an overwhelming majority the resolution of the Trusteeship Council demanding information from Portugal about the situation of the peoples which it dominated. Even taking into account the formal, moral character of this victory, it represents a great step forward in our liberation struggle, for we have managed to isolate our enemy.

No power can shake us from our determination, nor prevent

the rapid and total elimination of Portuguese domination in our countries.

However, to free themselves from foreign domination is not the only desire of our peoples. They have learned by experience under colonial oppression that the exploitation of man by man is the biggest obstacle in the way of the development and progress of a people beyond national liberation. They are determined to take an active part in the building of a new Africa, truly independent and progressive, founded on work and justice, in which the creative power of our people which has been stifled for centuries will find its truest and most constructive expression.

We are conscious of the fact that our victory will not be easy. We have many centuries' experience of the nature of our enemy and of its particular characteristics in relation to the other colonial powers. Although it is isolated, we should not forget that it still has at its disposal forces of destruction far superior to our own and that, overtly or covertly, it is aided and supported by other forces hostile to the freedom and progress of the peoples of Africa.

The essential characteristics of our time. The death-throes of imperialism. The case of Portugal.

Imperialism, or the monopolistic stage of capitalism, has been unable to escape from its own contradictions; by use of force the victorious powers of the first world war set about a new sharing-out of the world, characterised mainly by the reinforcement of the colonial position of England and France and by the exclusion of Germany from direct exploitation of so-called backward peoples and countries.

In the final phase of this conflict, the victory of the October Revolution and the definitive implantation of socialism on one sixth of the world's surface came as the first major blow to imperialism.

Deprived of sources of raw materials and surplus profits, German financial capital, in alliance with Italian and Japanese capital, tried to solve the problem by taking the shortest road—the colonisation of their own European neighbours. The second world war was the result of the

antagonisms which characterise the development of imperialism, but it came to influence very decisively the destiny of the other peoples of the world, particularly those of Africa.

At the same time as the strengthening of the socialist camp, another essential characteristic of our time, came the awakening of the dependent peoples for the liberation struggle and the final phase of the elimination of imperialism had thus begun. While the final resolution of this new conflict may take a shorter or a longer time, there can be no doubt that, even more than the class struggle in the capitalist countries and the antagonism between these countries and the socialist world, the liberation struggle of the colonial peoples is the essential characteristic, and we would say the prime motive force, of the advance of history in our times; and it is to this struggle, to this conflict on three continents that our national liberation struggle against Portuguese colonialism is linked.

Faced with the power of the main imperialist nations, one is forced to wonder how it was possible for Portugal, an underdeveloped and backward country, to retain its colonies in spite of the redistribution to which the world was subjected. Portuguese colonialism managed to survive despite the sharing-out of Africa made by the imperialist powers at the end of the 19th century because England supported the ambitions of Portugal which, since the treaty of Metuen in 1703 had become a semi-colony of England. England had every interest in using the Portuguese colonies, not only to exploit their economic resources, but also to occupy them as support bases on the route to the Orient, and thus to maintain absolute domination in the Indian Ocean. To counter the greed of the other colonialist powers and to defend its interests in the Portuguese colonies, England found the best solution: it defended the 'rights' of its semi-colony. That is why, for example, Portugal granted to a private enterprise controlled by English interests sovereign rights over an area covering 17% of the total territory of Mozambique.

In fact Portugal has been no more than the sometimes envious guardian of the human and material resources of

our countries, at the service of world imperialism. That is the real reason for the survival of Portuguese colonialism in Africa, and for the possible prolonging of our struggle. Thus to a greater extent than the presence of other powers in Africa, the presence of Portugal has been, and still is dependent on the presence of other colonising powers, mainly England.

The African revolution. Victories and failures. The evolution of Africa.

It is sufficient to look at the political map of present-day Africa to recognise that the African peoples have already won some great victories. But it is also sufficient to have followed closely the main events in this struggle to recognise that numerous and great mistakes have been made. The year 1960—the year of Africa—is rich in examples of both the victories and the failures of the liberation struggle of the African peoples.

Once again, the heroic people of Algeria have accelerated the advance of history. Several peoples have seen their aspirations confounded by a nominal independence. The peoples of South Africa, like those of our own countries, of Angola, Mozambique and the other Portuguese colonies, continue to be subjected to the most violent exploitation and the most barbarous colonial repression. The practice of African solidarity reveals some hesitation and even improvisation which our enemies have been able to exploit in their favour. Perhaps the most important, and certainly the most dramatic of the failures (and also of the errors) is the case of the Congo, tragically crowned by the assassination of Patrice Lumumba. In reality these failures and errors have taught us many important things. One can say that the year 1960, and more particularly the Congo drama, has given back to the African his human dimensions.

Victories or failures, we must not forget that not one of our enemies has been really and totally conquered and driven out of Africa. The fascist-colonialist Portuguese are continuing to massacre our peoples in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique; the fascist-racists of South Africa are daily strengthening their hateful apparatus of apartheid; the

Belgian colonialists have returned to the Congo from which they had been driven out; the British imperialists and colonialists are using every twist of imagination and cynicism in an attempt to maintain their complete domination over East Africa and their economic domination of the West African colonies; the French imperialists and colonialists are killing defenceless people in Algeria, exploding atomic bombs on African soil, trying to create a new geographical, historical and technical absurdity—the 'French province' of the Sahara—and increasing their economic domination over some of our African peoples; the American imperialists are emerging from the shadows and, astonished by the weakness of their partners, are seeking to replace them everywhere, with varying degrees of subtlety.

Our enemies are determined to strike mortal blows against us and to turn our victories into defeats. To attain this goal, they use the most suitable instrument—African traitors. And here is a reality that is made more evident by our struggle: in spite of their armed forces, the imperialists cannot do without traitors; traditional chiefs and bandits in the times of slavery and of the wars of colonial conquest, gendarmes, various agents and mercenary soldiers during the golden age of colonialism, self-styled heads of state and ministers in the present time of neo-colonialism. The enemies of the African peoples are powerful and cunning and can always count on a few faithful lackeys in our country, since quislings are not a European privilege.

However, if we want to neutralise the delaying actions carried out by our enemies and their lackeys, we must strengthen the methods of action and the vigilance of the African revolution. Let us be precise: for us, African revolution means the transformation of our present life in the direction of progress. The prerequisite for this is the elimination of foreign economic domination, on which every other type of domination is dependent. Our vigilance means the rigorous selection of friends, a constant watch and struggle against enemies (both internal and external) and the neutralisation or elimination of all factors opposing progress.

At present the first difficulty—that of winning political autonomy—has already been overcome, despite the remnant

of a few zones of classical colonialism whose days are numbered; the greatest difficulties concern the winning of economic independence, the struggle against neo-colonialism. The positive balance-sheet of the year 1960 cannot make us forget the reality of a crisis in the African revolution which, far from being a mere growing pain, is a crisis of knowledge. In several cases, the practice of the liberation struggle and its future perspectives not only lack a theoretical basis, but are also to a greater or lesser degree remote from the concrete reality around them. Local experiences in the conquest of national independence, national unity and the bases for progress have been or are being forgotten.

Our fundamental problem now is to resolve the main contradictions between the interests of our peoples and the interests of the Portuguese colonialists. This means rapid and total elimination of Portuguese domination in Guinea and Cabo Verde, in a life-or-death struggle. We count on the support and concrete assistance of the African peoples, and especially of neighbouring countries.

While the struggle for national independence is our main concern, we should nevertheless envisage, beyond the liberation struggle, the problem of the future of our peoples, of their economic, social and cultural evolution on the road to progress.

In relation to Africa, we are for fraternal collaboration between the African peoples, against narrow nationalisms which do not serve the true interests of the people. A geographic, historical and even ethnic analysis of Africa shows that new forms of economic, political and social existence are developing on the continent. Through contradictions, and even through conflicts, these new and still embryonic forms will become progressively defined in their structure and perhaps in their originality.

We are for African unity, on a regional or continental scale, insofar as it is necessary for the progress of the African peoples, and in order to guarantee their security and the continuity of this progress.

Our enemy. Isolation and contradictions. The struggle of the people of Angola and of the other colonies.

Our peoples make a distinction between the fascist-colonial government and the people of Portugal: they are not fighting against the Portuguese people. However, the objective situation of the large popular masses in Portugal, oppressed and exploited by the ruling classes of their country, should make them understand the great advantages for them which will flow from the victory of the African peoples over Portuguese colonialism.

It is the educated circles in Portugal, and especially the progressive democrats, who have the task of helping the Portuguese people to destroy the virulent remains of the colonialist, enslaving ideology which in general determines their negative attitude towards the just struggles of the African peoples. To do this, however, these educated circles must also overcome their own imperialist mentality, composed of prejudice and ill-founded disdain for the value and the real capacity of the African peoples. In fact, Portuguese democrats will remain unable to understand the just claims of our peoples until they become convinced that the theory of 'immaturity for self-government' is false and until they realise that oppression is not and will never be a school of virtue and aptitude.

We must reaffirm clearly that while being opposed to all fascism, our peoples are not fighting Portuguese fascism: we are fighting Portuguese colonialism. The destruction of fascism in Portugal must be the work of the Portuguese people themselves: the destruction of Portuguese colonialism will be the work of our peoples. While the fall of fascism in Portugal might not lead to the end of Portuguese colonialism—and this hypothesis has been put forward by some Portuguese opposition leaders—we are certain that the elimination of Portuguese colonialism will bring about the destruction of Portuguese fascism. Through our liberation struggle we are making an effective contribution towards the defeat of Portuguese fascism and giving the Portuguese people the best possible proof of our solidarity. This factor is a cause of pride to our peoples, who hope for the same solidarity from the Portuguese

people, through the strengthening of the struggle against fascism.

If the Portuguese opposition was capable of unity within itself, could accept openly the principle of self-determination and independence for our peoples—as certain sectors of it already have done—and could guide the Portuguese people into direct action against fascism, we would be prepared to envisage an alliance of our forces with the democratic and progressive forces of Portugal, with the aim of simultaneous elimination of Portuguese colonialism and fascism. This common struggle against the same enemy forces would create the basis for friendship and future collaboration to serve the interests of our peoples and those of the Portuguese people.

With regard to the United Nations, despite the resolutions favourable to our struggle which the solidarity of the peoples of Africa and Asia and of the progressive forces of the world have had adopted, that organisation has shown itself incapable of resolving disputes between colonised peoples and the colonial powers.

The hypothesis of a change of position or the decay of Portuguese colonialism is just an opportunistic dream, or the result of a false analysis of the nature of Portuguese colonialism. Thus only one way remains: to prepare ourselves as well as we can to destroy within our countries the main forces of Portuguese colonialism. Our peoples have formed a united front for the struggle against Portuguese colonialism with the peoples of the other Portuguese colonies. The conference of the Nationalist Organisations of the Portuguese Colonies (CONCP) held in Casablanca in April 1961 and the creation of a permanent organisation for the co-ordination of our common struggle have been the most recent manifestations of this unity.

The Portuguese government is conscious of one reality: no power in the world will be able to prevent the total elimination of Portuguese colonialism. The dialectic of colonial repression has proved that today no colonialist aggressor can overcome peoples who are determined to win their freedom.

Conscious of the fact that the liberation of our countries depends mainly on the action of our own peoples, on their unity, their capacity for organisation and preparation for the struggle, we are firmly determined to develop our fight.

The situation of our countries. Prospects for the struggle.

The resistance of the people of Guinea and Cabo Verde has never ceased to manifest itself, in revolts, passive resistance, mass emigration to neighbouring countries, and total refusal to pay the taxes of Portuguese domination. Since the days of slavery, innumerable revolts have expressed the people's hatred for Portuguese domination. Mainly at S.Tiago, S. Antão and S.Vicente, in demonstrations, strikes and revolts, the people have arisen several times against the masters of the land and against foreign domination. Our struggle is carrying on from there.

In Guinea, after the massacre of Pijiguiti Quay (Bissao, 3 August 1959), in the course of which Portuguese soldiers and civilians shot down dozens of striking Guinean workers, a wave of repression and terror organised and commanded by the PIDE (political police) made the life and the struggle of the Guinean people even harder. At the same time the colonial administration, by increasing the export of rice at the expense of the majority of the Guinean people, managed to create a new weapon of oppression—famine.

Very recently, apart from police and military repression, the colonial administration has been using non-violent tactics—presents, bribes, invitations to Portugal for the 'traditional chiefs', scholarships, special radio broadcasts for the 'natives', fostering dissidence and quarrels between the different ethnic groups—with the aim of winning over part of the population and 'dividing to rule'. The colonial administration has been disconcerted by the firm determination of the Guinean people, after the failure of a few preliminary 'meetings' to justify the Portuguese presence.

To ensure the support of certain powers, the Portuguese government grants extensive facilities to non-Portuguese capital for the colonial exploitation of the natural resources (oil, bauxite, etc.) and the manpower of Guinea.

Furthermore, it wants to have NATO military bases installed in Guinea and the Cabo Verde Islands in the hope of strengthening its means of repression.

The Portuguese government is still in the process of drawing up an urgent plan for sending thousands of families of Portuguese settlers to Guinea, in the belief that increasing the European population will slow down the development of our liberation struggle. This while in the Cabo Verde Islands the Portuguese government once again let about 10,000 people die of famine in 1958-1959. The Cabo Verdian population, which in only six years (1942-1947) lost 30,000 to 40,000 inhabitants struck down by famine, is always at the mercy of the so-called 'agricultural crises' and subjected to the 'displacement' of thousands of its children as contracted workers for the Portuguese plantations in other colonies. Unemployment has reached catastrophic heights, particularly in S.Vincente, where hundreds of workers have been sacked by English companies.

The peasants, who constitute the majority of the population—and the totality in the agricultural islands (S.Tiago, S. Antão, S.Nicolau, Fogo)—live at the mercy of the rains, while the pseudo 'economic development plan' is nothing more than a mystification, a source of enrichment for the colonial authorities.

The massive clandestine emigration to Senegal is clear proof of the desperate situation in which the people of Cabo Verde are forced to live. This situation, which is comparable to that of Guinea, has become virtually insupportable with the accentuation of police repression.

In Guinea, agricultural production, the sole base of the economy, founded on mono-cultivation of ground-nuts, is sinking progressively lower. Thousands of peasants are abandoning their homes and seeking peace and the indispensable necessities of life in neighbouring countries. Thus, thousands of Balantes are entering the Republic of Guinea, while ground-nut growers are settling in the Republic of Senegal.

In the urban areas, where repression is greatest, the work of state and private enterprises has been suspended. Hundreds of workers have been dismissed without justification.

Numerous enterprises, above all in the rural areas, have given up their activities altogether, strangled by the monopoly of the CUF (Companhia Uniao Fabril)—the true master of Guinea—or pushed by fear of the consequences of our liberation struggle.

Thus the political situation is becoming more tense each day. Guinea is living today in a state of siege, with all the settlers armed and the indigenous population subject to frequent provocations by the army and the colonial police. To fight the rising tide of our liberation struggle, the Portuguese colonialists are constantly reinforcing their army. Almost every week boats arrive from Portugal to unload soldiers and war material.

About 350 African patriots are in PIDE prisons, and several hundred have been deported to the concentration camp on the island of Galinhas; in Bissao they are beginning to say that the postal service will soon stop working, since a large proportion of the employees are either in prison or have fled to neighbouring countries. The same applies to the National Overseas Bank, for the economic crisis has, and can have, no solution. In Cabo Verde, where misery reaches the limits of despair, particularly in the less favoured islands, more than a hundred young people have been arrested in Mindêlo and Praia and deported to the concentration camp of Tarrafal. Repressive security measures have been decreed against intellectuals enjoying great popularity.

But our struggle has won a victory of even greater importance, in the unity of Guinean and Cabo Verdian patriots resident in Guinea, within the PAIGC and the front which the PAIGC has created. The Portuguese colonialists, who have always tried to separate the Guineans from the Cabo Verdians, have been thrown into confusion by the solid unity of all the Africans. Today the prisons are full of Guineans and Cabo Verdians, and the struggle for the complete elimination of Portuguese colonialism has strengthened the ties of history and of blood which unite our two peoples.

Whatever the forces of the enemy, our victory over Portuguese colonialism depends mainly on ourselves, on our

own militants. We must be conscious of the real forces at our disposal and base our revolutionary work on the popular masses.

However, it is obvious that the concrete aid and support of our neighbouring countries can play an important and decisive role if their leaders so wish. We are sure of the solidarity of all the African peoples in our struggle. We are conscious of the fact that our struggle for national liberation does not only serve our own peoples: it also serves the fundamental interests and the progress of all the peoples of Africa and of the world.