

Liberating Portuguese Guinea from within

AMILCAR CABRAL
interviewed by
FRENE GINWALA

GINWALA: *Mr. Cabral, you have been reported as saying that the struggle in Portuguese Guinea has now entered a new phase. Could you perhaps elaborate this?*

CABRAL: Really the struggle in my country is now in a new phase. First because we have liberated enough part of our territory to create new problems. In these liberated areas, which we estimate at about 40% of the country, we have now new problems; we have problems for the administration of the country, we have problems for the education of the people and also for establishing commerce — the internal commerce, and we have also problems of health and of social assistance in general. During last year we did a great work in this field according to the resolutions of the Congress of our party. On the other hand — in the military field we have created our guerrilla army last November. This army enabled us to extend the struggle to all the non-liberated areas. We think now of new phases of the fight and we are preparing to develop this fight until victory against the Portuguese forces.

GINWALA: *When you say you have liberated large areas, just how much is this?*

CABRAL: About 40% of the country and the population is about 350,000.

GINWALA: *Now the Portuguese have denied, the Ambassador in London, I understand, last week denied you had liberated anything at all. Do you have any comment on that?*

CABRAL: You see, first, the Minister of Defence of Portugal himself already in 1963 told in a press conference in Lisbon that we controlled 15% of our country,

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and we asked the people to see the papers of Portugal that the Portuguese journalists told the truth about our country. We understand that the Ambassador in London doesn't know the situation in our country.

GINWALA: *I see. I'd like to go back a bit into the history of your struggle and your party. I believe it was founded in 1956. Did you start an armed struggle immediately?*

CABRAL: We had several phases of the fight. After the creation of our party, and we created our party underground because of the surveillance of the Portuguese, we began the political work; first in the towns. But in 1959 during a strike of dockers, Portuguese troops killed many people, and we understood in this time that it was not good to fight... non-violent, and in the towns also. And we began the work in the countryside. We organised peasant people and in August 1961 after the beginning of the struggle in Angola, our party declared the passage to direct action; sabotage, economic sabotage principally. In 1963 we begin with the general armed fight. These are the phases of our fight.

GINWALA: *Now, where did you train your troops and your guerrillas and where did you get arms for your struggle?*

CABRAL: Our people were trained in the forests of our country. We utilised only the conditions of our country to prepare for our struggle and the people that trained these soldiers were African military coming from the Portuguese Army.

The first arms we got were the arms that these people took for us from the Portuguese Army. Also we tried all the underground possibilities to get arms. Actually after the creation of the O.A.U. we received arms from the African countries in general.

GINWALA: *Now, what support do you expect from Europe? What support do you want from Europe?*

CABRAL: First, political support, that is to say we don't believe that the European people and the governments of Europe are alive to the fascist government of Salazar. Second, we hope that all kinds of organisations and also governments can supply us in the fundamentals that we need, like articles of primary necessity — clothes, medicals things, salt, sugar, milk and so on. In this time of our struggle it is more important for us to get economic help than, even weapons.

GINWALA: *Who does one give this economic help to? Do you have a government in exile?*

CABRAL: No, we don't have a government in exile, because our party is against this. Our party always thinks it is the development of the struggle that determines our political comportment. And now we realise that we have in our country a state, we have all the instru-

ments of the state in the liberated areas. We are now studying the procedure to adopt for the creation of an organ parallel to the party, to lead this state, but the headquarters of this organ will be necessarily inside our country and this organ will enable us to have easier work in the international field.

GINWALA: *But this organ hasn't been set up yet?*

CABRAL: At this moment we have created some committees parallel to the party for the administration of the country and in a few months we create this organ.

GINWALA: *So of necessity the help you can get in Europe would be from individuals and organisations and not from governments?*

CABRAL: It depends on the government. We believe that all people living in peace and freedom will help us, and if there are governments interested to help us we will receive help with satisfaction.

GINWALA: *How much help are you getting from African countries?*

CABRAL: You see in our party we think that the fundamental help comes from our people and that other help is good and is enough. We expect from other people the help they can give, not the help we need. Until now the Committee of Nine of the O.A.U. have given us considerable financial help and material help. Other states like Algeria, Ghana and so on gave us also help.

GINWALA: *It strikes me, Mr. Cabral, from what you said that your movement has a very fundamental difference from most of the nationalist movements in Africa in that it is very firmly based in the country itself. It's not an exile movement, is this true?*

CABRAL: You see, our party since the commencement, the beginning of our political struggle, we established this principle — a fight of a people is their affair, is the own people to this fight, and like all sentiments is inside, is the interior development that determines all other things. We refused completely to be an exiled movement.

GINWALA: *Where are your leaders?*

CABRAL: All the leaders are inside the country, only four leaders are generally out, but going and coming back inside the country.

GINWALA: *Now, you as Secretary-General, are you normally based outside Portuguese Guinea?*

CABRAL: Until the armed fight, yes, but after the armed fight I am normally based inside and the President of our party is in house arrest in Bissau, the capital.

GINWALA: *So, when you leave, after your travels in Europe, you will, in fact, return to Portuguese Guinea.*

CABRAL: Yes, to Portuguese Guinea, immediately.

GINWALA: *Thank you Mr. Cabral.*