

We print below a shortened version of an informal talk which Amilcar Cabral gave to a small group of people in New York during October, 1972, including members of the Southern Africa Committee.

As English was not Cabral's home language, we have edited the transcript slightly, but in essence it records what he said to us that memorable evening.

For me it is a pleasure to be here with you, friends of our people in the struggle, people that we view as our brothers and sisters. This meeting helps us to know better what constitutes our dream of America—all kinds of people, simply seated on the floor with the heart and the head, dedicated to the marvelous adventure of man in this controversial planet, very simply man and woman. Our hearts, maybe more than our heads, have the same rhythms of pulsation.

And now I am bringing you the salutations of my comrades, of the leadership of the party and of our fighters—of our people in general.

I have to tell you also that maybe we are utopians, we dream too much, but what can men do without dreams?

We consider, in our spirit and our vision, that something new is coming in this country. We're confident that a nation is being born in this country. For many years, people lived back-to-back, not only because of your internal problems, but also because of your international problems. You are now, step by step, facing one another. It's very nice, really, it's very nice.

In my country today, there is something like this. Our struggle has performed a miracle. People, who for centuries have been back-to-back, now they are face-to-face. Not only face-to-face, but in the arms of one another. It's a great change, and is the best hope I have for your country, principally your grandchildren. Respect for people, this is our hope for your country. And also that each day more there will be more people feeling what you feel, in relation to other people in the world, and particularly, with our own people.

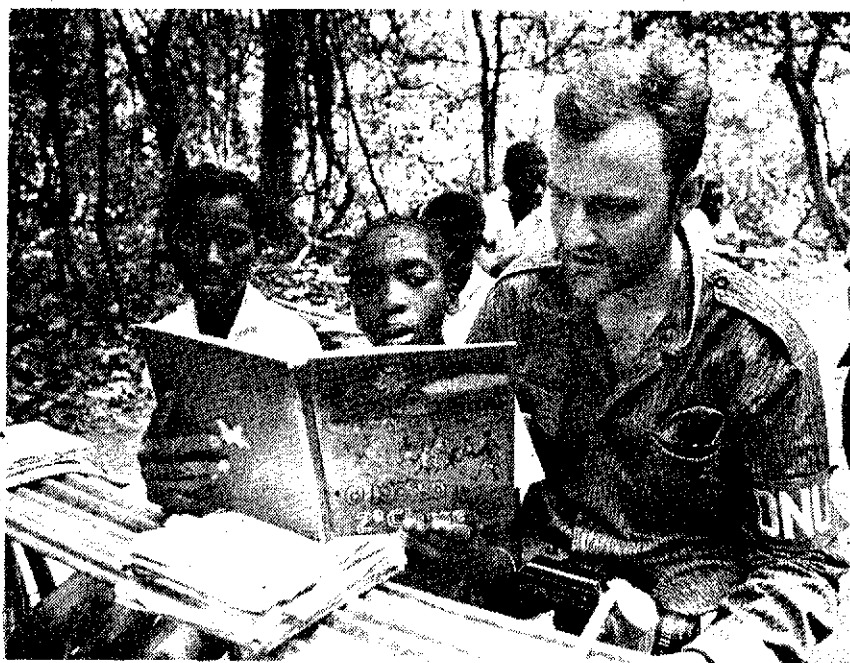
Since two years ago, there have been many changes in my country. Not only because we have liberated more areas. When you have arrived at the step that you are going to liberate the towns, the fight develops more slowly. First of all, in our condition, we have a very small country, not many people. We are concerned with the problem that we can not have too many of our people killed. And, until a certain level, we don't want to destroy too much of our country until we are sure we can gain. Convinced of this, we're going step by step, creating all the necessary conditions to take our towns without too many losses, human and material losses. But if it's necessary to have many losses, we'll do it also, because there is no other way.

The Urban Centers

But during these two years I can tell you that one of the principle aspects of the evolution of the situation is a big change in the urban centers. I told you last time that the Portugese colonialists, through their famous governor Spinoia, were implementing what we call the politics of blood and smiles. But now they are finishing with smiles. After all this time, the people of the urban centers, particularly the people of Bissau, Bafata, are each day devoted more to the fight and to the party. We can tell you that we now control the life of Bissau more than ever. And we've begun to create this insecurity. We think this is a very great achievement in this fight, and we are now preparing to give the means to the people in the urban centers in order to defend our own lives and material riches there when the final battle will arrive. It's very important, you see.

Proof of that is that during the last six months, hundreds of young people have abandoned the town, including their studies in Bissau, to come and join us in the countryside in order to put themselves at the disposal of the struggle. We even had to take some security measures to avoid any kind of infiltration.

Our relations with the Cape Verde Islands now are better than ever. We have been waiting for new developments, and yesterday, we received a message from our comrades that there have been riots between the



A 3-member U.N. mission visited the liberated areas of Guinea (Bissau). The Swedish representative is seen with 2nd grade students at the Aerolino Lopez Cruz boarding school located in the Cubucave Sector.

Photo: United Nations



PAIGC militants

Portuguese authorities and the people in Praia. It's the capital of the Cape Verde Islands, on Santiago Island. They declared a state of emergency for seven days. They arrested many people. But the message in the end is, that you can be sure we are still strong in our position [in the Cape Verde Islands], and we are ready for all kinds of problems with the Portuguese colonialists.

First General Elections

We think that in Guine also the political position is stronger. We achieved one of the most important realizations in the framework of our struggle—the first general elections in our country. The creation of our regional councils, and of the first national popular assembly for our country. I can tell you we didn't dream of doing this. It was not the result of the dream of Cabral. It was a need coming from the results of the struggle. A need also to impose on us in the party [PAIGC] some limits to our own action, some possibilities of control on us. Because, if in the framework of the development of the liberation struggle, you don't create simultaneously something to help you always do good things, maybe you are creating the conditions for your own defeat. And the best way to stop yourself is to create conditions for the people to stop you.

In another way, we think we have to be quiet with our [party's] principles. We want our people to take, step by step, in their own hands the authority for their own lives, you see, their own lives. For that, the party is not enough, in our opinion. It is too dangerous, the fact that in our historical condition we have to have only one party. It is necessary to create some organ, some instrument in order to give to the people this *real* consciousness that they are the master of their own destiny.

The Economy and Education

Naturally, we have no problems in the economic field. Our production has been good. This year, maybe we have some problem. I am speaking of Guine because there is some lack of rains until September. But if during this month of October there is enough rain, we can assure you the satisfaction of the cities in the matter of the needs of rice. You know that we are great eaters of rice.

We can tell you also that with the help of some countries, and first of all some socialist countries reinforcing the help in the humanitarian field, but principally with the help of Sweden, now we can better supply our populations through the People's Shops. We can tell you that this organization is better than two years ago, not only in the amount of articles and goods, but also in the structure of the organization.

We sent some people last year to some European countries to study. We have now nearly 500 young people, girls and boys, studying in the universities, doing medium technical studies and professional studies. And our secondary school in Conakry, and our pilot schools in the south and the east and the north are better now than before. And we have many books elaborated by ourselves.

Visit of the U.N. Team

You have another very important achievement. That was the visit of the special mission of the United Nations to our country. We invited these people in order to give to the United Nations new concrete elements to facilitate their work against the Portuguese colonialism.

The visit was very important, and it was another check of the political consciousness of our people. Our people consented and sacrificed in order to allow this visit. Never have the Portuguese dealt such a kind of aggression against our liberated regions as they did during the U.N. visit. We

have recorded pictures of peasants before these people during the bombings. People decided to do their best so that this visit would be a great success. And it was a great success, really.

Naturally it was very difficult for these people of the United Nations—you can imagine what difficulties there are, marching for one week and less. And our good friends of the United Nations were not so accustomed to such a kind of diplomacy (laughter). And they had some difficulties. But it was a great achievement for them. They showed a good conscience for their responsibilities. But never have the Portuguese done such a great aggression. They moved about 15,000 people they already had in the south. They bombed.* They made many assaults with helicopters. And the [Portuguese] minister of "overseas provinces" was in Bissau waiting for the captured members of the United Nations team, or their bodies. But our people reacted very well to all this aggression.

You can imagine the political and juridical consequences of this visit.**

Military Developments

In the military field, we've done many interesting things. In order to attack Bissau, and it was a very important thing, and more than just military. Politically also. To show our people there this thing—and that they have to do something more because we are able to destroy Bissau. The attack was very efficient because the political work in Bissau has accelerated very much, after these rockets hit Bissau. It was a very great work for our fighters because the Portuguese had defended Bissau very well.

We attacked Bafata during these two years three times, maybe four times, yes, four times, but the first time for me was better because our fighters entered inside Bafata and kept their position for more than three hours there.

We attacked also Gabu, the important town in the eastern region. We entered many times inside Gabu, and destroyed planes and helicopters in the airport.

We attacked the airport of Bissau. It was very good because the Portuguese are always afraid. When they hear "Boom," you see (laughter).

Another great achievement also in the political field is that now the Portuguese are not on a good footing with the traditional chiefs of the Fula Tribe. I told you last time that we had some difficulties with some traditional chiefs of the Fula tribe, but now they are in complete agreement. And we have very good contacts with these people, each day more. Even in the zone of Pirada, the northern region, the Senegalese border, many of these people give their weapons to our fighters. This is a great thing in the political evolution of the country.

Yes, the party claims today that all the people [are in] the party. If you told some people you are not of the party, they would be furious. But at the same time it is necessary to create something new in order to develop what we can call, in the classical language, the "practical democracy" in our country. We decided to create these regional councils and the national assembly. Prior to this, we developed a great discussion in the meetings of the people for one year. But even with this base, I can tell you that we never supposed that the people would respond with such an enthusiasm to this question of elections for this national popular assembly.

The assembly will have, and is now, one hundred twenty people. It's too much for a small country like ours. But we're not thinking of paying the salaries of our representatives, our "Congressmen" (laughter). Eighty of these people have been elected from the masses—workers, peasants, the majority are peasants, and artisans and other

people. And forty from the party cadres. Two-thirds masses, one-third party cadres. The same in the framework of the regional councils. These people have been elected by each sector—each sector elected their representatives to the regional council. And, at the same time, these representatives are candidates for the national assembly. In the regional council meeting, these same elect one-third of their members for the national assembly. This is our democracy for elections in our country.

QUESTION: I was wondering if we could hear a little bit about your analysis of the Portuguese tactics.

CABRAL: Yes, there is some evolution in the Portuguese position. The "solution" for Angola and Mozambique is each day more Rhodesianization which follows what the Portuguese did about [announcing] those so-called states. When they speak about states, they never speak about Guine and Cape Verde, but principally about Angola and Mozambique. There were in the Portuguese government people fighting for the Europeanization of Portugal, claiming that Portugal is a European country. These people, called "liberal" people or technocrats, have very recently been expelled from the government—some young people, very good people, colonialists like the others, but good people in any case. And now there are the racists, the ultras, who are leading all, and their way is to keep my country for some time more, and to try to impose this new situation for the perpetuation of the domination of white minorities on Angola and Mozambique. Recently many Italian people are arriving in Angola—Italian settlers, and they are establishing agencies all over Western Europe to recruit people to the zone of Cuanza [Angola], Zambezia [Mozambique] and so on, because their plan is to put one million people in Southern Africa. The program is to increase the white population and to do everything to not allow the black population to increase.

That is the strategy. Portugal is a country which is losing population. Today the biggest Portuguese colony is France (laughter). There are 800,000 Portuguese in France. About 200,000 young people were ready [to be drafted] for the colonial war, but they have been escaping. But the people of Portugal now seem to be more active in trying to struggle against the colonial war. In the last two weeks they [blew up] a boat with Portuguese military material [on it] for my country. It was very symbolic because the boat's name is Cape Verde. The people coming from the colonial war have now created, in Portugal, an underground party of the veterans of the colonial war *against* the colonial war.

Last year I quoted a secret report of the Portuguese about what they call Section 15, psychological warfare, in which they declared that for two or three years more they cannot get more officials for their army, because people do not want to go to the military academy. They said that each day more the "detrified people," which is to say the people in the towns, this is Portuguese language it seems, are against them and for the liberation movement.

They are also trying their best to be associated to the Common Market, but offering to it the privilege of having colonies, you see. But until now the Common Market did not decide to take them in as a member, but they are an associated member. They signed the elements some days ago.

In my country they now have a great stock of herbicides, defoliants and so on which they didn't use last year. It is difficult to use them in my country. It is not easy like in Angola simply because of the great extension

of our country that is cultivated with rice, and on rice it is not so easy to do it [use herbicides] as with cassava, manioc, but they will try to do it.

About these African units. It is true that the Portuguese create some, but in my country not too much. But they do create some African military units, and even in the aggression against the Republic of Guinea [in 1970, after Cabral's last visit to the U.S.], the great part of the troops they used were African. Actually, as a matter of fact, it was Guineans from the Republic of Guinea, but also some black people from my country, and naturally a great group of specialized Portuguese troops. They attacked the zone of our [PAIGC] office and warehouse [in Conakry]. But the fact that they used these people and were defeated was a very good thing for us because then they have had more difficulties recruiting people into these African units. Also many of the people of the Portuguese Army are deserting to join us. We have now an opportunity to do great work in this field against the Portuguese. And they're doing their best to convince America to create a military base in Cape Verde. And we are sure that they will ask for more and more material, napalm and other things. But you see, fortunately, on the other hand, war has its limits also. Napalm has a limit of utilization in the condition of my country, and the Portuguese have their technical limits. I'm not being too optimistic in this matter, but we feel that Portugal has its limits, and the Western countries supporting Portugal are not too interested in creating too many problems.

I think this is what I can tell you generally about the prospects and tactics of the Portuguese colonialists.

QUESTION: I wonder if you could tell us something about the increasing role that South Africa is beginning to play.

CABRAL: Dos Santos [Marcelino Dos Santos of FRELIMO] spoke today [at the U.N.] about this problem, not only about South Africa and Mr. Vorster,

but also about this Smith [of Rhodesia]. After the beginning of the struggle in Manica and Sofala province in Mozambique, Smith made a statement saying that the Rhodesians are ready if Portugal asks them to send troops in to help Portugal. But [already] they are collaborating effectively with Portugal in the field, in the air, and so on. The planes that bomb some parts of Mozambique come from Rhodesia and the patrol of the Zambezi [River] is made by South African, Rhodesian and Portuguese planes. Following the information from Marcelino Dos Santos, they [the Mozambicans] have killed South Africans and Rhodesians in Mozambique. It is an effective cooperation. You see that some days ago Smith came to Lisbon, and spent his holiday in Madeira, the Portuguese island in the Atlantic. He went to Lisbon to meet Caetano. Now it's perfectly clear that there is a cooperation between them. It's the same thing, you see, only one struggle on three fronts.

Now, South Africa knows very well that if Mozambique and Angola are free, they will be in a very bad position. What do they have to do: their best in order to avoid the liberation of Angola and Mozambique. And Portugal wants the same. They have to collaborate. Now it is for us to collaborate also with the African force in general and with other forces that want the real liberation of Africa. ■

*Approximately three months after the U.N. visit, the Portuguese colonialists completely destroyed the Areolino Cruz Boarding School in the Cubucare sector of Guine. The U.N. team had visited this school, and witnessed the determination to educate the people even while the liberation struggle goes on.

**In effect, the U.N. visit denied, for its part, Portugal's claim of sovereignty over Guin