

guerrilheiro

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(FOR AMILCAR CABRAL)

A small part
of the mountain shifted,
today;
it seemed to go
a little to the west;
merely shadowed
by the usual cloud,
I told myself.

We weren't
really expecting it,
though I know
we should have been
on the look-out,
knowing how insistent
things are
in the punishment
capital and murder inflict,
and knowing that any paid hand
can hold a gun,
especially
when your kind of offence
is total liberation,
now;
and, of course,
you were just about
to make your final moves
through the bush
and across the water.

I can hear the su-su,
brutal as ever:
"He made too free
with the ideas and the fight.
He had to be stopped
at dead of night.
We did it
when he was alone.
No witnesses.
Right?"



But the rest of the mountain,
bulging, there, in the dark,
saw the bullets slice into you;
they pierced us, too;
they've gone so far
inside the slope
that they've shaken
the interlocked layers
down to the furnace
at the core;
the shaking must continue;
it has already reached
the outstretched hand;
more and more of the mountain
will come forward;
Bissau will change.

Andrew Salkey

Cabral assassinated

20th January

On 20 January 1973 Amilcar Cabral was murdered outside his home in Conakry. The assassins also captured a number of PAIGC members, including Aristides Pereira, and set off to sea in three small boats: the embryo of a PAIGC naval unit. When they 12 hours later were caught by ships from The Republic of Guinea, the group was on its way to Bissau, headquarters of the Portuguese colonial administration in Guine.

The assassins were a small group of Guineans, who some time earlier had 'deserted' from the Portuguese side. They had there received naval training, and worked in that capacity with PAIGC. They managed to avoid the usual security checks, though Luis Cabral (a member of the PAIGC executive) has since said that they were under suspicion at the time of the murder.

According to confessions made by the group, the assassination was instigated by the Portuguese, who had promised 'full independence' for the mainland on two conditions: that Amilcar Cabral was eliminated and that the nationalist movement, PAIGC, was destroyed. If these conditions were met, the Portuguese army would withdraw completely to the Cape Verde Islands, handing over the mainland to an African government in which the group members would get important positions.

A DDRESSING the third Conference of the African Peoples, in Cairo, March 1961, Cabral said:

"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."

It is clear that the murder was carefully planned, but before the colonial regime could find an African collaborator it had to go so far as to offer to remove itself.

An inquiry into the assassination, established by President Sekou Toure and chaired by Luis Cabral, is now investigating all aspects of the act. Later, the assassins will be tried by a court set up by PAIGC. Aristides Pereira, a militant and leader of PAIGC since the 1950s, has been elected Secretary-General of the movement pending a full meeting of the Supreme Council of the Struggle.

Excerpts from

PAIGC communique

22nd January

The PAIGC, as the driving force of the great liberation struggle waged since 1960, has seen its influence and effectiveness constantly increasing.. The PAIGC, confronted by the ignoble crime committed against the person of its great leader, Comrade Amilcar Cabral, and conscious of the fact that international imperialism and Portuguese fascism were the real instruments of the assassination of the man responsible before all others for the struggle waged to secure a happy future, addresses its profound indignation to the traitors against the nation who served as their reckless and ignoble agents. The PAIGC solemnly reaffirms its strong determination to avenge the ignoble killing by exterminating the colonialists and their corrupt agents on the sacred soil of the motherland. Far from discouraging the struggle the killing only serves to strengthen their hatred of the colonial domination and thereby it provides inspiration for speeding up the movement for emancipation of the peoples...

The PAIGC pays glowing tribute to the man who was its founder, its organiser, its guide and whose exemplary conduct throughout the whole of the war will serve as a guiding light and point of reference to all revolutionary militants in Africa.

The PAIGC thanks the fraternal countries of Africa for their compassionate attitude; it thanks the progressive countries of the world, all the mass parties and organisations who have been kind enough to share in its mourning and who once more have confirmed their full and complete support for the liberation struggle the PAIGC is waging and its victorious outcome which will not be long in coming.

The PAIGC thanks, in particular, the people and Government of the Republic of Guinea for having arrested the criminals used by imperialism against Africa and for having given to the fighters of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde full responsibility for judging the case concerned with this monstrous crime. The PAIGC declares in the name of the fighting people of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde that it will assume and fulfil its duty, in meting out to the criminals just punishment for their crime. PAIGC reaffirms its faith in the fraternal peoples and Governments of the African continent, particularly the neighbouring states, whose active solidarity is still needed...

Down with Portuguese fascism, down with international imperialism. Long live African unity and solidarity; long live the PAIGC. The struggle continues.

'We strengthen our battle...'

Nine days after his assassination over 600 people attended a memorial meeting in London to honour Amilcar Cabral. Messages of condolence from political organisations were read, and Cabral's voice, recorded during his 1971 visit, was heard. Speakers included Abdul Minty, Basil Davidson and the Tanzanian High Commissioner, G.M.Nhigula. In the final speech Oscar Monteiro, FRELIMO's representative in Algiers, said:

"It is a clever tactic for the colonialists to make people believe that the murders are the result of internal contradictions when they are in fact the results of machinations arranged, financed and encouraged by them."

... "In this crime we can see not only the hand of Portuguese colonialism but also the long arm of imperialism: it was not by chance that the last meeting of NATO in Bonn held a few months ago discussed in some detail the Cape route, in which the Portuguese colonies and South Africa play a strategic role which it was considered necessary to place under the NATO umbrella. It is not by chance that Marcello Caetano on every conceivable occasion raises the strategic importance of the Cape Verde Islands to the West."

"Our struggle brings us into direct conflict with an enemy with many faces and many methods. This is why our reply to these crimes is essentially a political one. It is a strengthening of our political vigilance."

.. "It is typical of the Portuguese colonialists, and of re-

actionaries on all fronts, to think they can halt the struggle for popular liberation by murdering individuals. They do this because they are unable to understand that men represent human feelings, the efforts and successes of an entire people, and form the symbol of an unbeatable determination by a people and a party to go on to final victory."

... "They are sadly mistaken if they think they can halt the victorious spirit of the people of Guine and Cape Verde by murdering Amilcar Cabral, just as they were mistaken in thinking they could stop the struggle in Mozambique by murdering Eduardo Mondlane."

... "But the parallel does not stop there. There, as in today's example, the Portuguese colonialists have tried to make people believe in their innocence - mixing virtuous denials with hateful cynicism. It has taken several years for clear, material proof of direct participation by the agents of Portuguese colonialism in the assassination of Mondlane to be collected."

"During the seventies, during our years faced with an enemy

trained in the tactics of psychological warfare, subversion and corruption, perfected by its American imperialist masters in Vietnam, any struggle for national liberation is inevitably a struggle against counter-revolution. Every crime therefore demands a strengthening and deepening of the struggle."

... "We say all this, not in any spirit of vengeance. We want this to be understood quite clearly: this abominable crime in no way incites us to a blind hatred of the Portuguese people. We think it is due to Amilcar Cabral's memory to remind everyone that his assassination and any other crimes that the Portuguese colonial regime may commit will not make any of our movements deviate from our fundamental principles; our struggle is directed against the system of colonial domination

and exploitation, but not against the white man as such and still less against the Portuguese people."

... "At this moment you will only hear our voices express our determination. But we assure you that far away you will hear each day more clearly the echo of our battle, of our arms, and of our will. You will hear of defeats which the enemy will be less and less able to hide. And you will know that the African liberation fighters really know how to honour the memory of Amilcar Cabral, the memory of Mondlane, the memory of Luthuli and the memory of many, many unknown men and women, worthy children of their people who have fallen in the struggle for national liberation."

"By strengthening our battle, we shall have made their sacrifice meaningful."

"VIVA AMILCAR CABRAL"

for a great comrade

The response of many individuals and organisations around the country to the assassination of Cabral was to organise immediate activities of protest against the Portuguese government and in support of PAIGC. Apart from the 300-strong London Vigil at the

Memorial Fund set up

At the memorial meeting in London the establishment of the Amilcar Cabral Memorial Fund was announced. It now stands at over £400, half of which was collected at the meeting. The fund will provide financial assistance to education and health projects of all three liberation movements.

Portuguese embassy on the day after the announcement, there was a vigil and petition in Newcastle, while in Manchester the Portuguese consulate was occupied for several hours.

Memorial meetings have so far been organised in Oxford, Hull, Manchester, Reading, Newcastle and Brighton, and messages of condolence sent to PAIGC from many other places as well. Hundreds of people signed the condolence book, which was kept by the Tanzania High Commission.

In Dublin, which Cabral visited in 1971, the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement organised a memorial meeting.

AMILCAR CABRAL



'No crime, no force, no manoeuvre in word or deed by the criminal Portuguese colonial aggressors will be able to stop the march of history, the irreversible march of the African people of Guine and the Cape Verde Islands towards independence.

Forward, comrades and compatriots in the heroic struggle for national liberation!'

Amilcar Cabral,
New Year Message January 1973

'Comrades, keep up your offensive actions. The whole of progressive humanity is on our side.'

PAIGC
22 January 1973

