

## GUINEA-BISSAU: "More War Than Most" -- Part II, Organization of a Movement

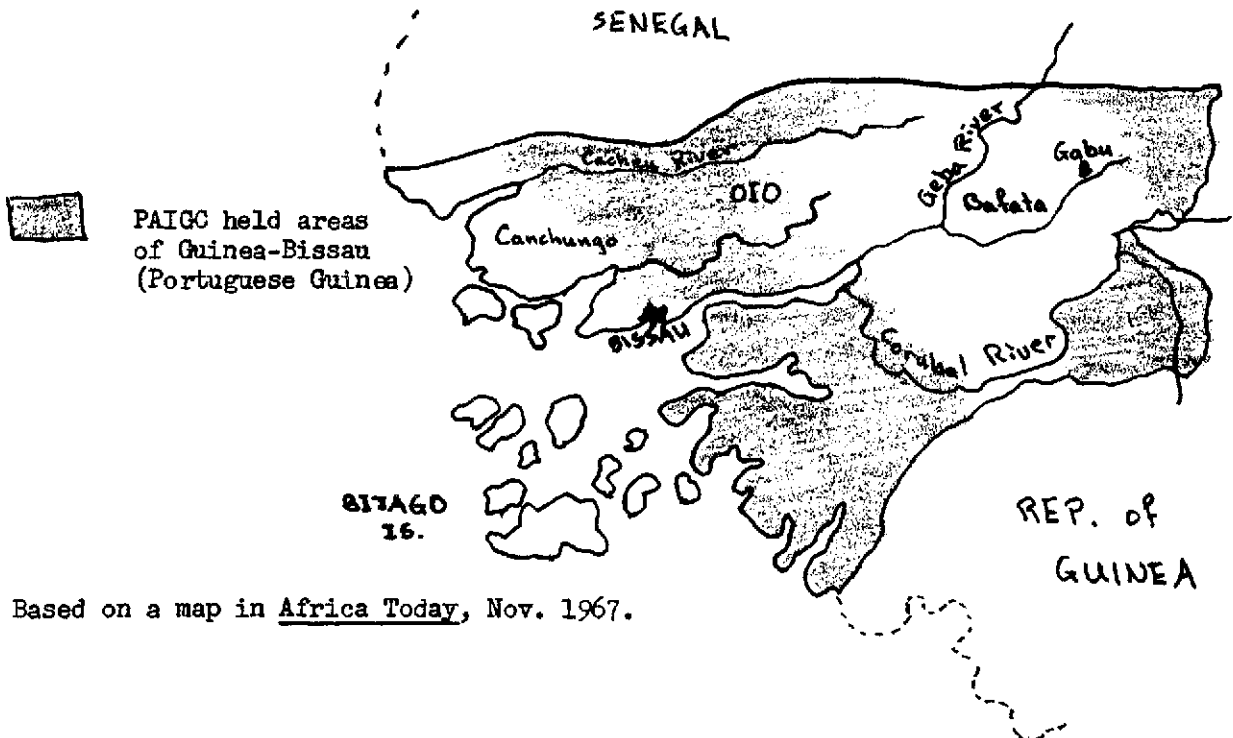
The major political and revolutionary factor in Guinea-Bissau is the Partido Africano da Independencia de Guine e Cabo Verde (PAIGC). I. Willism Zartman has produced the most recent, thorough, and readily available analysis of the growth of nationalism and the PAIGC (a condensed version appeared in Africa Report, November, 1967). Zartman points to four general conditions present in Guinea which bound together in a nationalist movement, the small urban or island (Cape Verde) elite and the masses. These were: (a) a political, national consciousness resulting from educational and external contacts; (b) a social consciousness resulting from the inequities of the Portuguese colonial system, particularly in urban areas; (c) the traditional animosity towards Portuguese power, especially in areas of first and greatest penetration, i.e. along the coast, among the Balantes and Bijagos; and (d) economic dissatisfaction.

In the historic development of the nationalist movement four stages can be discerned over the last fifteen years. It is interesting in view of the recent political crisis over the Olympic-South Africa question that one of the major turning points in the early days of movement was the vaning in 1954 of an African Sports and Recreation Association, which numbered among its members both assimilados and Africans. A number of leaders were forced into organizing clandestine groups, and in September, 1956, after several earlier attempts at the formation of political parties, the PAIGC was created under the leadership of a Lisbon-trained agronomist, Amilcar Cabral. Only a year later the Portuguese introduced the PIDE (Policia Internacional e Defesa do Estado) into the territory. During this

initial period, the PAIGC leadership directed its organizational efforts towards the urban labor population, during which time a series of strikes occurred. In late July, 1958 a port shutdown in Bissau led to violent Portuguese repression; the slaughter of 50 dockstrikers ("the massacre of Piquiquiti quay") and the subsequent arrest of African nationalist leaders.

At a meeting in Bissau in September, 1959 the PAIGC set forth a new plan of action which grew out of its urban experience. The party decided to organize/educate the rural population in areas where Portuguese colonial control was less entrenched, as well as to maintain the underground organizational complexes within the cities. Thus the movement was broadened to a national level, marking the second stage of development. This effort at preparing the peasantry for revolutionary activity has been lauded by the French author, Gerard Chaliand, in his book La lutte armee en Afrique, and compared favorably to the lack of socio-psychological preparation for warfare in Angola (see John Marcum, "Three Revolutions," Africa Report, Nov. 1967). The 1959 PAIGC program also called for the reduction of social and ethnic cleavages among the population and the wider coordination of the party with other anti-Portuguese nationalist movements in Africa.

In August, 1961 the PAIGC announced the beginning of direct action, thus opening a third phase, with the first major guerrilla attack occurring in the beginning of 1962. The party during 1961 had been plagued with more arrests, the growth of rival groups and the continued rejection by Lisbon of all demands for a negotiated independence. Interacting with these events, PAIGC cadres opened sabotage attacks in June, 1962 against Portuguese lines of communication which bloomed late in the year into full-scale guerrilla activity aimed against the military and economic symbols of Portuguese power, and to the creation of nationalist "free zones" (a "free zone" is defined by Zartman as "regions where free movement is denied to the Portuguese and enjoyed by the nationalist movement" in spite of Portuguese garrisons and fortified hamlets). Fronts were opened up by the PAIGC in the Southern region between the Geba River and the Guinea border in early 1963 and a second one in July near the Oio forest between the Geba and Cacheu Rivers (see map). A year later two more open regions were established in the northeast Gabu region and in the northwest Manjak populated area between Senegal and the Cacheu River. In mid-1965 the southeast Boe region was also liberated. Thus by August, 1966 the PAIGC had isolated the Portuguese in the central east region near Bafata and the coastal west Canchungo area near Bissau.



Based on a map in Africa Today, Nov. 1967.

The PAIGC held its first party conference in February 1964 near Como Island. There it was decided to construct a more centralized military organization. The rebel military forces were divided into (1) guerrilla forces, (2) a militia and (3) the Armed Revolutionary Forces of the People (FARP). This conference marked the passage from two years of guerrilla warfare to an open military period which allowed armed clashes with the increasing numbers of Portuguese troops. By 1965 Portuguese forces had mounted to 16,000 while PAIGC fighters were estimated at 10,000. (Basil Davidson estimates in his London Times article of January 10, 1967 that there are 3,000 FARP forces and 6,000 guerrillas; Portuguese forces at present being over 20,000.) In the new PAIGC military structure, commanders were designated responsible for troops and operations rather than for certain territorial areas, while the administrative/political control remained in the hands of zonal leaders.

Experience and increased power in the "free zones" came in the wake of a series of Portuguese offensives from 1964-66, under the new Governor of the territory and military commander, Gov. Arnaldo Schulz. In early 1964 the Portuguese attacked Como Island and after a 75-day seige were repulsed by PAIGC forces. In May of the same year the Portuguese tried to cut off the party's activities from the Guinea border, but FARP attacked southern Portuguese posts. These Portuguese forays continued until January, 1966 with other raids occurring in the Oio PAIGC region. But the Portuguese maneuvers were repulsed or evoked counter-attacks and ambushes by the nationalists. Gov. Schulz was recalled in October, 1965.

Thus up to the present the party has theoretically traversed through four major phases: 1952-1959 is cited by Zartman as a reform period; 1959-60 is the period of nationalization of the movement; 1962-64 is the guerrilla stage; and from 1964 to the present is the military stage. The task ahead for the PAIGC is to defend its liberated areas which encompass from one-half to two-thirds of the rural area and to counter the massive build-up of colonial troops and air power. Inherent in this process is the implementation of the alternate political and economic systems in nationalist regions. Recent military activity on the part of the PAIGC forces has been the shelling of cities, and on February 28 the mortar shelling of the Bissau airport outside the city (PAIGC Communique, March 5). Other communiques claim that the "rebels" have killed 300 Portuguese troops in December and January (and even Lisbon admits the death of 34 of her soldiers - Suzanne Cronje, Washington Post, Feb. 22, 1968). The Portuguese have been forced to concentrate on air attacks with their NATO supplied Sabre and Fiat jets through the bombing of African villages with phosphorous bombs and napalm; and the upgrading of its psychological warfare tactics (i.e. through the erection of colonial controlled strategic hamlets, granting amnesty for Africans, and exacerbating tribal antagonisms). These techniques have not assured Portuguese success, for even after the erection of strategic hamlets, the PAIGC forces have been able to liberate and evacuate the villagers from the hamlets.

Amilcar Cabral has described the war as one of attrition; a process of eating away at remaining Portuguese strongholds; continually harassing; constantly attacking the Portuguese forces when they attempt to reach back into liberated areas. There is evidence of steadily growing power in the hands of the African nationalists (one such index is the amount of gasoline used by PAIGC vehicles. In 1965 only 75 gallons were used per month, while today according to a recent Christian Science Monitor article, 10,000 gallons are used each month.) The PAIGC is faced with time; time to counter the revitalized Portuguese airpower with anti-aircraft operations; time to continue to organize in the free zones. PAIGC arms and goods (medicines) are supplied by Czech and East German sources; training for troops from other eastern countries. (Appeals to western nations were rejected.) Beyond its organizational and military ability, the PAIGC is blessed by its geographic position, surrounded by "friendly nations". But also it can now control its own organization from headquarters within Guinea-Bissau. (Atlas, February, 1968.) The Portuguese do not improve the situation by such incidences as the bombing of Guinea (Conakry) villages about which Guinea delegates have complained at the United Nations.

As a nationalist movement the PAIGC is, as described by Zartman, "optimistic and pragmatic." (In the next issue: Portugal's "friends" in Guinea-Bissau.)