

Revolution in Southern Africa cannot be stopped now. Despite the assassination and incarceration of many of the movements' leaders; despite the support for the white supremacist governments by international capital; despite NATO arms and over 150,000 Portuguese troops in Africa; and despite the enormous South African war machine whose presence is felt in all the territories of Southern Africa, the wars continue and progress.

Sources:

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people's war in africa

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"There is no point to our struggle if our only goal is to drive out the Portuguese. We want to drive them out, but we are also struggling to end the exploitation of our people, both by whites and by blacks." These are the words of Amilcar Cabral, leader of PAIGC (African Independence Party of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands), spoken to a group of peasants in a liberated village of Guinea-Bissau.

Gerard Chaliand, a French writer and revolutionary, traveled with Cabral through the free areas of Guinea-Bissau in the summer of 1966. In Armed Struggle in Africa: with the Guerrillas in "Portuguese" Guinea (Monthly Review Press, 1969, \$5.50), he reports his observations on the nature and extent of the armed struggle in that country and generalizes from the experience of PAIGC to expand the theory of guerrilla warfare. Previously the models have come from Latin America and Asia. Chaliand asserts that Cabral has now added an African model.

PAIGC initiated armed struggle in Guinea-Bissau only after years of preparatory political work undertaken in light of the conditions particular to Guinea. This, Chaliand feels, is extremely important and an essential factor in their success to date. There was psychological mobilization of the peasantry, political agitation and indoctrination to convince tribal chiefs to break ties with the Portuguese, and political reconnaissance to determine which areas and peoples were most conscious of existing oppression and would be most easily organized against it. Middle and high level cadres were given military and political training during this period. The middle level cadres were drawn from the peasantry so they could use their knowledge of the local language and customs to appeal to the needs and desires of their people. Higher ranking cadres often received training outside of the country, but it was always geared to the existing realities of the location in which they would operate.

Weapons were obtained and guerrillas and commandos well trained before the military thrust of the revolution was launched. When the armed insurrection by PAIGC did begin, the attack was swift and successful. It has to be, according to Chaliand, to

assure the peasantry of their safety and thus win their full participation in the struggle.

After gaining control over an area, intensive political work is necessary to draw peasants actively into the revolution. Descriptions of this process and the new kinds of structures and relationships which are being developed are among the most illuminating parts of the book and, to me, the most inspiring aspect of the liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau.

A man called Chico, political commissar for the northern interregion, explained to Chaliand the nature of their political work:

Political work means getting people to learn about the party and explaining why we exist and what we want. We explain what colonialism means. At first, we explain that Guinea isn't Portugal and that we can govern ourselves without heavy taxes, and blows, and fear of the Portuguese. We explain that what's happening here isn't an act of God, and that it's already happened in a lot of other countries. We have to show our people that the world doesn't end at their villages. Our problem is to make them understand the present level of the struggle, the fact that the struggle doesn't concern just their village but all of Guinea, and that it's not simply a national but an international struggle. We have to make them aware that in order to advance, THEY must guarantee the struggle's continuity, THEY must take charge of their own destiny by solving their problems on the village level, developing production, sending their children to school, and holding frequent meetings.... We also have to give the fighters political training. The essential principle is that no difference must be created between the fighters and the people for whom they're fighting.

Chico then repeated an answer he had given to an old man who complained of hardship:

Since the day you were born, how much have you put together to leave your children? You're not going to leave anything, because the Portuguese have taken it all. The only inheritance you can leave your sons is freedom, and that's a great deal, because they can obtain everything else by working.

A village chief elaborated: "We hold meetings to explain our fight for freedom. We tell the people that there will be no more racial or sexual discrimination, and that we'll all be brothers." What is occurring in Guinea-Bissau is a massive cultural revolution affecting the roots of the society, from its religious beliefs to the role it gives its women. Chaliand reports that, by the end of 1966, over half the country had been liberated; food production had increased; and many villages had been organized to provide the Party with food, information, and often their sons, in exchange for freedom and protection from the Portuguese.

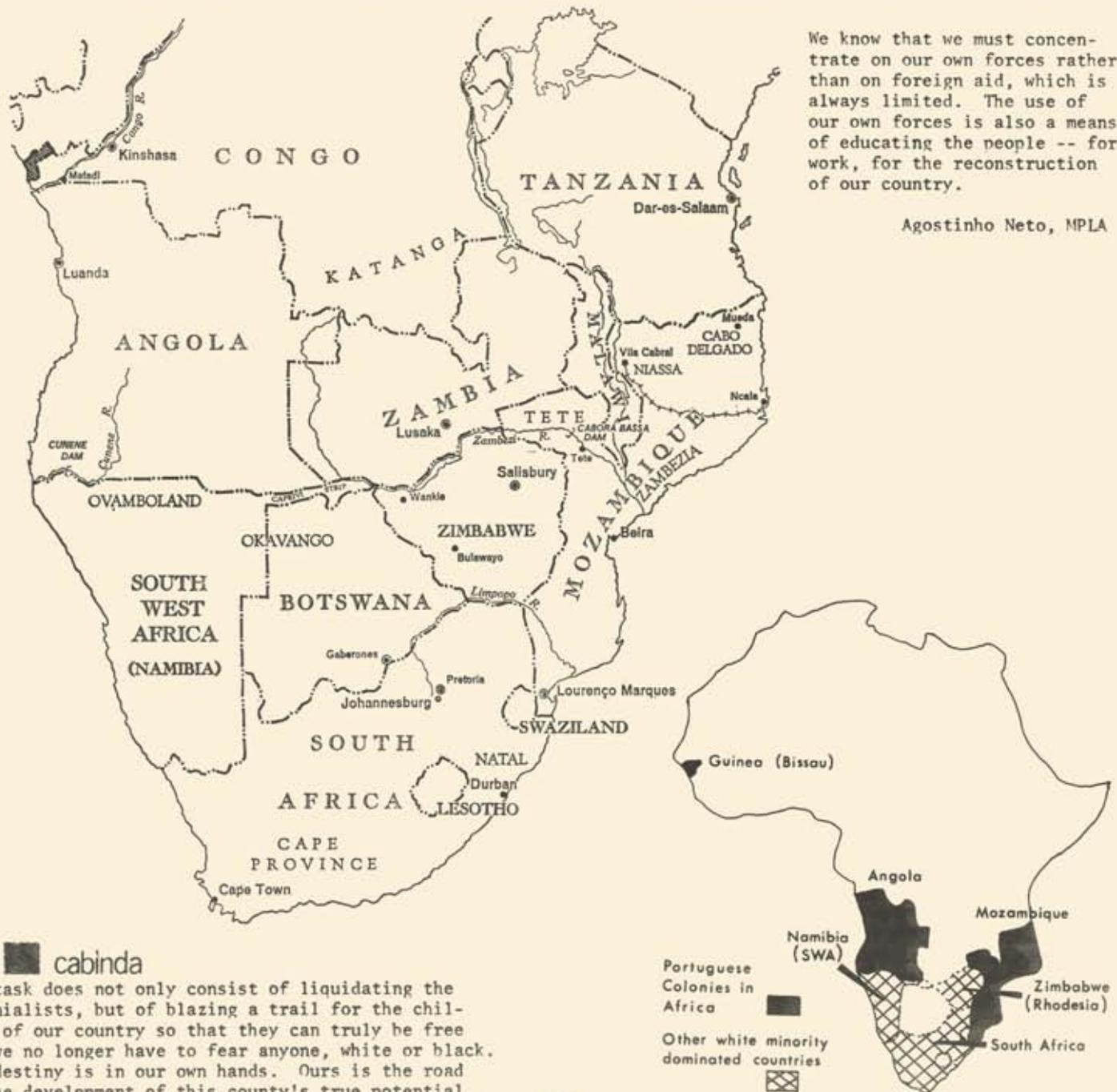
The sequence of events in the Guinean experience differs substantially from the Cuban model so often studied by revolutionary groups, particularly in

Latin America. In Cuba, the guerrillas provided the focus of the movement initially by engaging in armed insurrection before extensive political work with the population had taken place.—Political institution-building did not occur until after the enemy had been defeated militarily.

In Guinea-Bissau the military and political aspects of the revolution complement each other and are carried on simultaneously. A new kind of society is being created throughout much of the country not as a result of the defeat of the Portuguese but as a part of that process.

We know that we must concentrate on our own forces rather than on foreign aid, which is always limited. The use of our own forces is also a means of educating the people -- for work, for the reconstruction of our country.

Agostinho Neto, MPLA



Our task does not only consist of liquidating the colonialists, but of blazing a trail for the children of our country so that they can truly be free and we no longer have to fear anyone, white or black. Our destiny is in our own hands. Ours is the road to the development of this country's true potential.

Amilcar Cabral, PAIGC