

UCLA

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies

Title

Tributes to a Fallen Comrade

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4vf0v6ws>

Journal

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies, 3(3)

ISSN

0041-5715

Author

Davidson, Basil et al.

Publication Date

1973

DOI

10.5070/F733016414

Copyright Information

Copyright 1973 by the author(s). All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author(s) for any necessary permissions. Learn more at <https://escholarship.org/terms>

Peer reviewed

TRIBUTES TO A FALLEN COMRADE

If we must die -- let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die -- oh, let us nobly die,
So our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!

Oh, Kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;
Though far outnumbered, let us still be brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one death-blow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but -- fighting back!

Claude McKay

[As part of our tribute to Amilcar Cabral, we carry, in the following pages, statements from a number of well-known individuals and organizations who desire to express their grief at the cowardly assassination of our brother and comrade. Some of the statements were read at the memorial rally organized at UCLA by the African Activist Association, publishers of this journal, on Thursday, January 25, 1973. (On the next page are images of that rally.) Others were sent to us by friends as a homage to the vision, wisdom and courage of a great twentieth century revolutionary who laid down his life that mankind may become more civilized. Ed. note.]



Cabral Memorial Rally at UCLA. (Photos by J. Hubbard)

BASIL DAVIDSON

Distinguished Africanist:

The loss of Amilcar Cabral is so grievous and so close that I find it hard to speak about it. But Amilcar was never defeated, not even in death; and knowing this can be a help.

I think that history will see him as one of the most penetrating, original and creative thinkers of our time, and not least because he was also an effective man of action. Thought and action: he never separated that sequence, just as he never changed its order.

If he was that kind of man, it was also because he possessed an endless generosity of spirit. He loved his own people and gave his whole life for their cause; and yet it was no small part of his greatness that he linked that cause to the cause of all the rest of us. He was a revolutionary who saw the virtues of revolution in their meaning not only for the black man's world, but for the white man's world as well.

All this came through in his personal ways and attitudes, in his patience and his courage, in his style of work, in his relentless using of himself for the common good, in his writings whether published or not yet published, and, above all, in the tone and temper of the movement that he founded and led to such remarkable success.

He was of the band of those who can never be replaced, and of whom it can be said, in the violence and horror of this world that we inherit, that they make the human race worthwhile.

Sorrow and anger remain for us: yes, but redoubled determination as well.

WALTER RODNEY

Well-known historian, and

Lecturer, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

...As I write, we have only just learnt of the assassination of comrade Amilcar Cabral. The Revolution undoubtedly claims the very best among its victims, but victory will be ours. I hope it is not too late for you to insert in your forthcoming issue a small tribute to one of Africa's finest sons, who has led the way in both theory and practice, and who travelled with his people until imperialism stands on the verge of defeat in Guinea-Bissau.

BONIFACE I. OBICHERE

Professor of History and

Director, African Studies Center, UCLA:

*Hide nothing from the masses of the people,
tell no lies, mask no failures, claim no
easy victories.*

(Amilcar Cabral)

This was one of the guiding principles and maxims that characterized the heroic leadership of Amilcar Cabral in the inveterate struggle which he led against Portuguese imperialism in Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands. Amilcar Cabral scored phenomenal successes in the armed revolution and struggle for independence which he master-minded. He founded the PAIGC in 1956. As a leader, he grew from strength to strength as a result of his directness and impartiality. He inspired all the inhabitants of Guinea-Bissau from the remotest hamlets to the best-known cities. By 1965, only two years after start of the armed struggle, Amilcar Cabral proudly announced that the PAIGC had gained control of 45% of the whole territory of Guinea-Bissau, and late last year he made the resounding announcement that the PAIGC would declare the independence of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands from Portugal early in 1973. The amazing success of his appearance at the United Nations General Assembly as well as the resounding victory that was his visit to and audience with Pope Paul VI in Rome in 1970 dealt a blow of a deadly nature to Lusitanian pride.

The enemies of African freedom and independence represented by Portuguese imperialism assassinated Amilcar Cabral on January 20, 1973. They hope to postpone, even to prevent, the proclamation of the independence of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands. What they did not reckon with was that in African culture the people and the individual are viewed in terms totally different from the European cultural situation. It is an age-old truism that truth crushed to earth will rise again. Amilcar Cabral was the embodiment of an indestructible idea. He stood for the truth. The cowardly acts of hired assassins cannot crush the truth nor can they stop the course of an idea whose time has come. Cabral's work is going to be continued, and Victorio Monteiro has already demonstrated that the only fitting memorial to Cabral's life and struggle will be the independence of Guinea-Bissau. Long live the memory of the great Amilcar Cabral!

MOLEFI ASANTE (*Arthur L. Smith s.n.*)
Director, Center for Afro-American Studies
UCLA

Once again a giant of our worldwide liberation struggle has fallen but once more our objectives and goals are clearer than ever. The people of Guinea-Bissau will have freedom, and the name of Amilcar Cabral will be imprinted forever on the course of that freedom. Amilcar Cabral's deeds are written in our hearts, and the forces of our liberation struggle will continue to issue forth new generations of freedom fighters.

CHARLES DIGGS

Member, U. S. House of Representatives
and Chairman, House Subcommittee on Africa

It is with shock and profound sadness that I have learned of the assassination of Amilcar Cabral, the revered leader of the people of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde in their magnificent struggle against the forces of Portuguese colonialism and repression in Africa. He was a selfless and great fighter for freedom: He has been cut down in the hour when he was carrying his people into the final stage of the battle and was about to proclaim the independent nation of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde.

Yet, even at this moment of grief and loss two things are clear: First, the facts of this tragedy must be determined -- the perpetrators and all those responsible for this horrible deed must be made known. I urge an in-depth investigation under impartial international auspices -- by a special commission of inquiry of the United Nations or of the Organization of African Unity or some other legitimate, credible body. Second, the struggle to which Amilcar Cabral dedicated his life -- the winning of freedom of the people of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde and the throwing out of Portuguese oppression -- must go on.

T. O. RANGER

Professor of History, UCLA:

The death of a famous guerilla leader is hardly ever altogether a waste. The death of a Che creates a symbol of self-sacrifice and dedication which is all the more powerful because of the practical failure of his last campaign. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of commitment to liberation. But it is important to hold fast to the fact that Amilcar Cabral did not die at such a moment of failure.

Certainly his death, too, provides a model of dedication and self-sacrifice. Cabral knew that he risked death as much as any guerilla in the field, even when he was travelling about the world or operating out of his office in Conakry. But his death was also an indication of his success. Che did not find the way to organize an African guerilla campaign and left the Congo in disgust. Cabral did find the way. Che's example for an African guerilla movement is purely moral. Cabral's is practical as well as moral.

He was killed because his ideas had begun to spread, but fortunately not before they had begun to spread. Before his death the leaders of the liberation movements of southern Africa had begun to understand the futility of summoning an unprepared population to rise up and had begun to realize the futility of hoping for decisive help from outside. Cabral's patient years of analysis and persuasion stand as a model for southern Africa.

Yet, even if it is futile to rely on help from outside, Cabral's success and the successes of Frelimo in Mozambique mean that at last the victories of one liberation movement are rendering practical aid to the others. Cabral's death comes at a time when Ian Smith has lost that famous Rhodesian cool, and has made the mistake of closing the border with Zambia. The new element in the situation has little to do with Zambia. It is the success of guerillas in Mozambique which has opened up the whole eastern border of Zimbabwe to infiltration and to the spread of Cabral's kind of persuasion among the peasantries of the eastern districts. It is the overall pressure of guerillas on Portugal which has led to the desperation of the plot against Cabral and which will lead to further tensions between Portugal, Rhodesia and South Africa.

It is a moment of great opportunities. It is also a moment of great dangers. As we meet to commemorate Cabral,

so also comes the news of the cease fire in Vietnam. There used to be a slogan that America must be entangled in many Vietnams. It was never a slogan which I much liked, since the people of Vietnam have suffered so much more terribly than has America. But in a negative way we should remember the slogan. What are the implications for Africa of America's apparent success in disentangling herself from Vietnam? Will the released energies flow outwards?

I should guess not. We are probably in for a period in which America -- and Britain -- abstain from direct intervention, and for a period of propping up the men on the spot. The world has suffered enough in the past from American and British intervention, but at least it was sometimes possible to play off America against Britain -- as happened during the 'de-colonization' of Africa -- or both against Portugal. It seems now that we are in for a period in which that will not be possible; in which Portugal receives the tacit support of America and Britain. There was no serious inquiry into the invasion of Guinea; there will be none now into the assassination of Cabral. It is a time when Sir Alec Douglas-Home can say that it is tragic that a reliable ally like Turkey is criticized for the use of torture, and not say that it is tragic that torture is used.

If, as seems probable, the released energies of America will be used in this covert way to prop up Portugal, what about the released energies of American protest? There was a cartoon in today's paper, showing a bewildered and bewhiskered youth inquiring what on earth he could protest about now that the war was over. Well, when we hear it said that the end of the war will allow a diversion for constructive purposes of America's wealth and industry, I always think at once of the diversion to constructive purposes of the wealth of American protest. Cabral's death should serve to remind us that the monster is not dead; nor will it be dead in the months during which there are no assassinations. Protest in the future will require more discernment; more imagination; more coherence. We shall need to track the monster to its lair. We shall need the patience of a Cabral. And we shall need his respect for analysis; for research; for finding out. Cabral turned the weapons of his education against his educators. He was not silly enough to throw the weapons away.

RICHARD L. SKLAR
Professor of Political Science, UCLA

Amilcar Cabral personified the highest ideals of national liberation in the twentieth century. His truly original mind conceived practical and humane solutions to the most intractable problems of revolutionary development. His teaching will continue to inspire the quest for freedom in every part of the world.

BERNARD MAGUBANE

*Professor of Anthropology
University of Connecticut*

Once again the enemies of African freedom and independence have struck what they think is a fatal blow to the progress of liberation. They will be disappointed. The dastardly assassination of Cabral is but the latest expression of the universal decadence and regression of Portugal as a country and of western civilization of which Portugal is a part. The cold-blooded murder of Cabral is but an incident in the five hundred-year history of Portuguese barbarism perpetrated against African people. The assassination of Cabral like that of Mondlane is a desperate and frantic act of a class whose doom is inevitable. The Portuguese ruling class, as it suffers defeat after defeat in Guine Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique has become more snarling, more vicious, more ferocious, more shameless, more vindictive, more wild and more barbarous.

The brutalities of the Portuguese merely confirm an implacable law of history that every decadent class finds itself turned into a Frankenstein monster whose ferocity is an epitome of all the historical cruelties of an exploitative civilization. Every class that is on its way out by an irresistible logic must first disgrace itself completely on all fronts. The Portuguese ruling class is departing from the historical stage with its hands soiled by the innocent blood of the peoples of Africa. Yes, it is with the innocent blood of Cabral that the Portuguese ruling class utters its swan song!

The path of western civilization is littered with the bones of the innocent from all over the world. Portugal, the first and the last colonial power, is a mirror -- a reflection of the evils of colonialism and imperialism. Let us not forget that though the hand that struck Cabral may have been that of a Portuguese agent, in actual fact it is a hand that is supported and sustained by the NATO powers and those American companies that have investment in Portugal's colonies. Let us not be deceived by the superficial condemnation of violence and rhetorical righteousness that is going to be professed. Let us ask ourselves how long these crimes will be allowed to go on. How many more Mondlanes and Cabrals must die?

Cabral died, a tall blackman! He met his foes toe to toe! Let us hope his blood was not shed in vain!

Let the death of Cabral be an acceleration of victory! For as Cabral tells us, we are a society of the living and the dead, and that is not weakness. For someone to die is not a loss but an affirmation of the continuity of life itself.

PAUL SWEZEY

Noted Marxist and Co-Editor, Monthly Review:

The vile murder of Amilcar Cabral by the agents of imperialism is a blow to the African Revolution and a source of great sorrow to his millions of friends and admirers all over the world. But it is too late for imperialism to be able to hope to change the course of history by such treacherous tactics. Guinea-Bissau is already largely liberated, and Cabral's creative revolutionary ideas have struck deep roots throughout the African continent. Worthy successors will come forward to take his place, and the struggle will go on until final victory. All of us at *Monthly Review* join in paying high tribute to a great man and a great revolutionary.

EDWARD I. STEINHART

Committee to Oppose Racism and Apartheid:

It was with sorrow and anger that the members of our committee received the news of the criminal and pointless murder of Amilcar Cabral. The loss suffered by the Guinean people, the PAIGC and all the Africans and others who have turned to him for direction and for courage is beyond recall. Our sadness is for ourselves -- for Cabral's death is a terrible loss to all who love freedom.

Why has so little been said in public, in the press and at the U.N. about humanity's loss in the murder of Cabral? Is history already denying the greatness of this revolutionary hero, because his face was black and his cause hostile to America's rulers? We must raise our angered voices to shout our support of Guine's struggle against colonialism, racism and imperialism. We must question anew, in every forum, our government's craven support for Portugal's wars against the people of Guine, Angola and Mozambique. Why do we stand with the murderers of freedom in Africa, against self-determination, against human dignity -- as we have stood for so long in Vietnam and Indochina -- against all that Cabral has struggled and now died for.

Blacks in particular may feel the obligation to honor the fallen leader, but Cabral's vision belongs to all men. His enemy was not the white man but oppression. His sympathies were with the Portuguese people -- who suffer under fascist oppression almost as much as the Guineans suffer fighting it. His vision was not of the fire and death of battle, but in a school, a library, a clinic. His hope was the liberation of his people.

Amilcar Cabral is dead, yet U.S. weapons acquired by Portugal through NATO continue to be used against his hope and against his people's struggle for independence. Strategies and tactics developed in Vietnam -- 'strategic hamlets,' helicopter gunships, napalm bombing of villages -- are taught to Portuguese soldiers for use in the devastation of a poor African country. And American assistance to Portugal climbs above 435 million dollars while U.S. corporations continue to profit from the exploitation of Africa amidst the carnage.

The death of Cabral must galvanize the world against the colonial and imperial monster he fought. We must overcome our grief at the senseless murder of a man of greatness, and focus our anger on the tyranny of Portuguese fascism and American imperialism which are the twin causes of the death and destruction of so many who aspire to freedom and dignity.

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

164 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016:

The assassination of Amilcar Cabral removes a man of almost unparalleled ability from the African scene. His death on Saturday, January 20, took place just ten years after the beginning of the armed struggle in January 1963. His leadership of the PAIGC welded the people of Guinea-Bissau into a tremendous fighting force. His death recalls the assassination of Eduardo Mondlane of Mozambique, by the Portuguese, four years ago. Just as Mondlane's death did not lead to the demise of FRELIMO and the struggle for liberation in Mozambique, so Cabral's assassination cannot stop the victory over Portuguese colonialism in Guinea-Bissau. Amilcar Cabral laid a base not only for a victory in the struggle for freedom from the Portuguese, but for the new future of the people of Guinea-Bissau, in guiding the building of institutions for a country that will soon proclaim its independence before the world.

Amilcar Cabral was the prime mover with five other men in the formation of the PAIGC in September 1956. At this time he was one of very few university graduates from the whole of Guinea-Bissau. He had used his position as an agronomist during 1952-1954 to travel around his country and acquire intimate knowledge of the life of his people in the villages. Thus he combined, in a most unusual way, theory and practice. Fortunately, many of his ideas have been put in written form in collections of his lectures and statements, as well as in books about him and the PAIGC.

These writings reflect the clarity of his thinking and planning. Thus in 1959, after the massacre by the Portuguese

of striking dockworkers in Bissau, Cabral recognized clearly that a new stage of political action had been reached in which, in order to save and strengthen the people's struggle, it was necessary to organize "underground." In a brilliant statement given in May 1964 at the Frantz Fanon Center in Italy, he outlined the basic analysis on which he and his fellow fighters had based their organization tactics, recognizing that "the peasants would be the mainstay in our struggle" but that it would be necessary to "struggle fiercely for peasant support" . . . and indeed in the years between 1959 and 1963, when the PAIGC was ready to embark on armed struggle Cabral made a fundamental contribution to the future of his country by carefully building a widening base of political education and creating consciousness amongst the peasantry so that they could become the engine of the revolt. He recognized that nothing could be achieved by a small group of "leaders", however dedicated. Without the political preparation that would mobilize the mass of the people nothing of lasting value can be done. This political preparation is the toughest, most daunting but also most important aspect of the whole campaign for national liberation." Thus he made a fundamental contribution to the development of a revolutionary theory of change for his country in insisting that fighting against the Portuguese should not start until there had been a well-executed educational campaign in the countryside to win mass support for the independence movement.

No leader of a liberation movement in Africa has spelled out the essential theory of political organization more clearly than has Cabral. Actual fighting against the Portuguese began in 1963, and now, ten years later, three-quarters of the country is under PAIGC control. This was to be the year in which the PAIGC declared independence for their country -- it will probably still be. In 1972 Cabral had initiated elections to a National Assembly representing the people throughout the country. This will be the body which, speaking for the people of Guinea-Bissau, will have the power to announce the freedom of the people.

This was only the most recent of the many practical creative measures of the PAIGC under Cabral's leadership. In 1960, training schools for political leadership were organized in Conakry, capital of the then newly independent ex-French colony, Guinea; these were designed to develop a cadre of organizers to work inside their country for its liberation. Later, as areas were liberated from the Portuguese, people's stores, schools and hospitals were organized inside Guinea-Bissau. And always, as soon as possible, the people were involved in running and controlling their own lives, men and women, through the establishment of democratic village committees.

At this moment, Guinea-Bissau is virtually independent. The ten years of armed struggle have been a success. The assassination of a great leader, however tragic, cannot reverse this, whatever the perpetrators of the deed may think.

It is a measure of Cabral that he always hoped the killing and the fighting could stop. He once said: "we are ready at any time to cease hostilities in order to find a political solution to the conflict which opposes our people to the government of Portugal. Our only condition is the unequivocal recognition by that Government of our inalienable right to independence."

Portugal, a poor country, could not carry on this fight against the liberation forces of Guinea-Bissau, Angola or Mozambique, which now drains almost 50% of its annual budget, were it not for the strong support it receives from its NATO allies and the United States in particular. American support for Portuguese colonialism must be ended. Inspired by Amilcar Cabral's example, all those who love freedom will renew their pledge to support the struggle against Portuguese colonialism and give unstinting assistance to the PAIGC and other liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies until independence is won.

A NORTH AMERICAN COMRADE

who prefers to remain anonymous:

Comrade Amilcar Cabral was a revolutionary brother to all men and women who are engaged in struggle on all continents. He will be remembered as a brilliant guerrilla theoretician whose ideas came from a deep knowledge of his people and their history and whose actions sprang from a desire to liberate his country and build a socialist future.

Many of us never had the opportunity of meeting our revolutionary brother but we knew him from the books he wrote; and the warmth, clarity, and directness of his thought immediately forged a bond between him and us. We knew that his theories were based on practice: they were always hammered out in struggle on the blood-red earth of Guinea-Bissau.

We have learned a great deal from our comrade and we should continue to learn from his writings. He studied history in order to understand how the common man of Guinea-Bissau could be put in motion to change the colonial present and build a socialist future. He concluded that the primary struggle of

our time is an international one between the imperialist and anti-imperialist forces in the world. It was his conclusion that the twentieth century was witnessing the decline of the imperialist and the rise of the anti-imperialist nations and he assigned the people of Guinea-Bissau an historic role in this battle:

. . . the liberation struggle of the colonial peoples is the essential characteristic, and we would say the prime motive force, of the advance of history in our times: and it is to this struggle, to this conflict on three continents that our national liberation struggle against Portuguese colonialism is linked.

Our comrade was also able to put his knowledge of sociology to the service of the revolution. To assist the PAIGC in making revolution in Guinea-Bissau he made a detailed analysis of the social structure of the country. He sought answers to the following types of questions: What was the position of the traditional chiefs? What was the position of women? What about the youth? Could one confide in the elders? Were there classes in Guinea-Bissau? If so, with which class should the party begin to work and build the necessary cadre and leaders?

He had no illusions that the struggle would be quick and easy. The struggle would be protracted and must, therefore, be grounded firmly in the common people with the guiding maxim:

. . . hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies . . . Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories. . .

Yet he had an invincible conviction that an organized people with a revolutionary commitment could defeat an oppressor who had the most modern military technology available to them.

Our comrade had an international perspective even though he was leading a movement in one of the smallest countries in the world. Through his study and travels he returned to the people to tell them of the international struggle being waged against imperialism. Those people engaged in struggle at home who had never had a chance to travel abroad now had their horizons broadened. His writings are rich with references to struggling peoples who, in the far off lands of Vietnam, Palestine, and Puerto Rico, are engaged in the same type of revolutionary movement as the people of Guinea-Bissau.

Through his writings we are impressed with his understanding of the immediate enemy. "Our peoples make a distinction between the fascist-colonial government and the people of Portugal: we are not fighting against the people of Portugal." By using a class analysis of Portuguese society he sees clearly that the same government that oppresses the people of Guinea-Bissau oppresses the people of Portugal. But that does not absolve the people of Portugal from the crimes committed against the people of Guinea-Bissau: they, too, must take up arms against the fascist Portuguese government at home!

What will happen to the national liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau now? Let us hope that they have followed the statement made by Cabral at Khartoum in 1969. He said: "I want to emphasize that the leadership of the struggle is the leadership of the Party." If this policy has been followed we can expect that the struggle will not only continue but will be intensified until complete victory is achieved over the Portuguese.

What else is there to say? We must go to the writings of our comrade and learn from him. More important, we must learn to act like him. For if we agree with Cabral that this is an international struggle, then a knowledge of history or sociology, or whatever, is of little value unless put to the service of a revolutionary movement. All of us who live in an imperialist or neo-colonialist country have a responsibility to carry on the struggle against imperialism until it is brought to its knees.

We mourn the loss of Comrade Amilcar Cabral. We will never forget him nor the principles for which he lived and died. His own words to the Fourth Commission of the U.N. General Assembly are a fitting epitaph:

While it is true that the victims of this struggle are none other than the children of our people, it is nevertheless true that each of our comrades who dies under torture or falls under the fire of the Portuguese colonialist machine-guns identifies himself, through the hopes and certainties which we all carry in our hearts and minds, with all men who love peace and freedom and wish to live a life of progress and happiness.

[All the quotes are taken from *Revolution in Guinea: Selected Texts by Amilcar Cabral* (Monthly Review Press, 116 West 14th St. New York, NY 10011), which has been used as a textbook in courses taught by the author of this article. Author's note.]

TESHOME H. GABRIEL

Quondam Editor-in-Chief, Ufahamu:

The brutal assassination of Amílcar Cabral on January 20, 1973 was clearly foreshadowed in the Portuguese invasion of the Republic of Guinea in 1970, in the assassination of Mondlane in 1969, in the treacherous murder of Lumumba in 1960. It must be recognized that what started in the 1500's in the brutal trade in human lives will continue to manifest itself in various vicious forms so long as we fail to see each event in its total context of the uninterrupted and calculated repression of the African people by alien forces. In mourning Cabral, therefore, we should not only draw inspiration but should also pause to reflect on the real meaning of the struggle to which he dedicated his entire life.

It is necessary to bear in mind the historic significance of the liberation struggle in Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands. That area saw the first Western intrusion into the African Continent some 500 years ago. In the process of the encounter, between 10-50 million of Africa's ablest and healthiest sons and daughters were carted off to Europe and the Americas for slave labor. The sordid history of the *diáspora* - with all its ugly manifestations, its wickedness and brutality - is too well known to need recounting here.

The important point is that Portugal, simultaneously both a colonial and a colonized country - precisely the most backward, morbid and impoverished in Europe - has occupied African lands much longer than the traditional colonial powers of Europe.

While one wonders why Portugal in all its wretchedness and poverty remains glued to the African "Colonies" one should also bear in mind that Portugal is not alone but is part of a wider network. Portugal's economic infrastructure does not allow her to prosecute three colonial wars without the financial and military support it gets from the western countries.

Let us listen to Cabral:

Some people talk of 'Portuguese Imperialism', but there is no such thing. Portugal has never reached the stage of economic development that you could call imperialist - there is a difference between actual imperialism and an imperialist domination . . .

. . . The truth is that Portugal has never been an imperialist country. Portugal is an agent of imperialism. . .

The reason Portugal is not decolonizing now is because she is not an imperialist country, and cannot neo-colonize. Her economic infrastructure is such that she cannot compete with other capitalist powers . . .

In this sense, therefore, it is truly momentous that the PAIGC, after a long and bitter struggle, is about to declare its independence and become the first revolutionary power in Africa to hand Western colonialism its first military and political defeat in modern times.

It is evident that the success of the struggle in Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands with a Portuguese military force proportional to 8 million American forces in South Vietnam will not only step up the struggle but will accelerate the liberation of Angola and Mozambique, while at the same time infusing new life into the fire brewing in South Africa.

It is in the context of such inevitable historic evolution that Cabral could confidently say:

. . . we are showing Africans it is possible to transform one's life; it is possible to fight the great colonialist-imperialist powers in our continent. Our struggle is part of the making of African history.

The entire complex in Southern Africa needs a special treatment by itself but it will suffice here to mention certain highlights. Since Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa contain the richest source of mineral wealth on the planet: 50% of the diamonds, 50% of the aluminium (Bauxite), 30% of the copper and chromium, 60% of the gold and cobalt, 40% of the manganese, 15% of the lead and tin and 10% of the uranium, it is obvious why almost all the international Western monopolies are either operating or prospecting in Southern Africa. Companies and industries who have been historically known to foment wars, organize, make and unmake governments are the main support of legitimizing the racist regimes from Salisbury to Pretoria. No wonder that Western Imperialism continues to flout world opinion, and ignore successive judgments of the World Court and the decisions of the United Nations.

The Western powers have clearly taken their side by collaborating with the Caetano-Vorster-Ian Smith alliance and in practice opposing all measures of solidarity within the national liberation movements in Africa. They have indicated that they would not interfere in Southern Africa "unless there is a breakdown of law and order." It is hoped that the racist tone here is not overlooked. We submit that there has in fact been an obvious violation of law and order in Africa since the initial intrusion by Europe into Africa. The support of Western powers, bilaterally and through NATO to the Salisbury, Lisbon and Pretoria racist and fascist regimes, is certainly the supreme manifestation of a flagrant violation of international law and order.

Indeed, the inevitable race war that many observers have long predicted seems very close. Against the background of the corporate and industrial rape of Africa's wealth and a system of government that continues to rationalize its exploitation of Africa's peoples, the temptation of white Western regimes to involve themselves in Southern Africa is great. Although recent history in Southeast Asia suggests the futility of such an attempt, the trap of Southern Africa is economically and racially more enticing than any of the pseudo-justifications for intervening in Southeast Asia.

It seems, therefore, that even after Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands will have been completely free and even after Angola and Mozambique will have achieved their own liberation, the stage will be set for what will be the last ditch stand of imperialism in Africa. Cabral affirmed that:

. . . There are two alternatives; either we admit that there really is a struggle against imperialism which interests everybody, or we deny it. If, as would seem from all the evidence, imperialism exists and is trying simultaneously to dominate the working class in all the advanced countries and smother the national liberation movements in all the underdeveloped countries, then there is only one enemy against whom we are fighting. If we are fighting together, then I think the main aspect of our solidarity is extremely simple: it is to fight. We are struggling in Guinea with guns in our hands, you must struggle in your countries as well -- I don't say with guns in your hands, I'm not going to tell you how to struggle, that's your business; but you must find the best means and the best

*forms of fighting against our common enemy;
this is the best form of solidarity:*

Faced with the prospects of final defeat, the imperial powers will be forced to abandon all pretenses and will reveal once more, perhaps for the last time, how their primary motivations have always been economic in character and racist in manifestation. To understand these dimensions of the struggle is to begin to appreciate the need for an ideology of the African revolution. Fanon had once aptly observed on the eve of Africa's scramble for political independence:

*The deeper I enter into the cultures and
the political circles the surer I am that
the greater danger that threatens Africa is
the absence of ideology . . .*

Part of the historic role of Cabral is his grasp of the need for an effective ideological weapon in the struggle. We refer to the ideological content of the PAIGC which Cabral so eloquently defines:

*The colonialists have a habit of telling us
that when they arrived in Africa they put us
into history. You are well aware that it's
the contrary - when they arrived they took
us out of our own history. Liberation for us
is to take back our destiny and our history.*

*Our military successes are decisive, but the
most important success for us is the capacity
to create a new life, in the liberated regions,
at the same time we are fighting and defeating
the Portuguese forces.*

*We believe that the laws governing the evolution
of all human societies are the same. Our society
is developing in the same way as other societies
in the world, according to the historical pro-
cess; but we must understand clearly what stage
our society has reached . . .*

*Social justice and power in the hands of the
people is our ideological basis. Never again
do we want to see a group or a class of people
exploiting or dominating the work of our people.
That's our basis . . .*

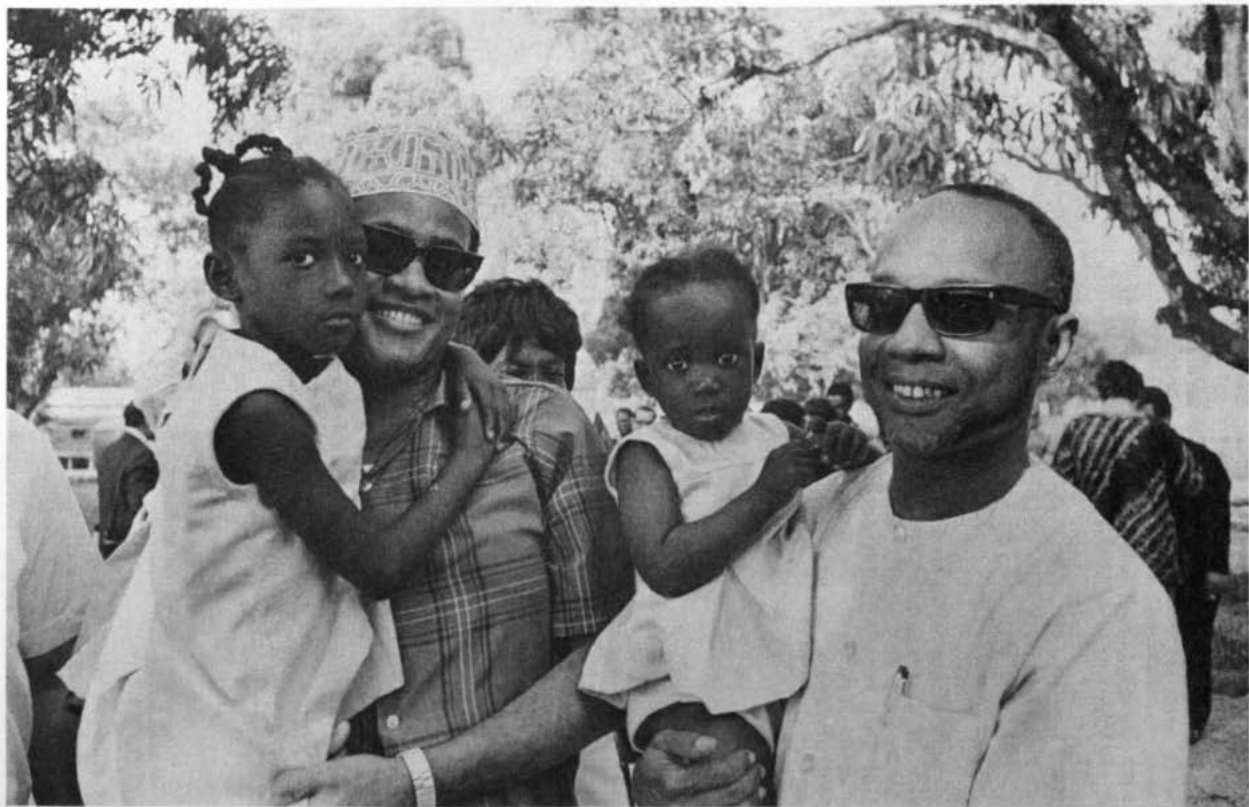
This ideological orientation, with a healthy freedom from dogma, provides the ultimate durability of the revolution and

explains the obvious tone of self assurance and total confidence exemplified in Cabral's own words:

No manoeuver or crime on the part of the Portuguese colonialists - no power in the world - can prevent the sure victory of our African people who are on the road to national liberation and the construction of the peace and progress to which they have a right.

Such is the utterance of a man of strength and the vision of ultimate victory. It is part of the legacy left to us by Amilcar Cabral. Only when we grasp the full meaning of this legacy of ideology backed by effective action can we do justice to the memory of a man who laid down his life that Africa may one day be politically and economically free.

[*Quotes are mostly from Our People are Mountains, Amilcar Cabral on the Guinean Revolution, (Committee from Freedom in Mozambique, Angola and Guine, 531 Caledonian Road, London N7, and from Revolution in Guinea: Selected Texts by Amilcar Cabral (Monthly Review Press, 116 West 14th Street, New York, New York 10011).*]



Amilcar Cabral (right) visits a PAIGC kindergarten in Conakry in company of Salim A. Salim of Tanzania, Chairman of the Special U.N. Committee on Decolonization. April 13, 1972. (U.N. photo.)