

BEFORE UNITED NATIONS:

PORTUGUESE ATROCITIES IN AFRICA EXPOSED (1)

IN the year 1962, we had opportunity of presenting our case before the United Nations Organisation. I led the freedom fighters delegation sent by the oppressed masses of Portuguese Guinea and Cape Verde Islands.

We honoured the opportunity very much, for we have an unqualified confidence in this august international organisation of our time.

We made it clear to the United Nations that our presence before it was not for the sake of propaganda nor were we there to have resolutions adopted deploring Portuguese colonialism but we were there to seek its help in order to secure concrete solution to the problem which confronts both our people and all the peace loving people of the world, namely: the immediate liberation of our people from colonial yoke.

We did not go there to condemn in words Portuguese colonialism. For the persistent condemnation from both within and outside our countries had not had any repercussion on Portuguese stubborn colonialism whose characteristics are tricks and whose methods of atrocities against our people are well known throughout the world.

We appealed to the United Nations and Portuguese Representative for assistance which would enable us to find out the shortest and most efficient way to liquidate Portuguese colonialism from Guinea and Cape Verde Islands.

FRUIT OF FREEDOM

"For us, that is for our people and our party, the time has come to put an end to fumbings and fake promises. Our people now believe in action. Yes the time to take definite and concrete decisions and steps to liberate our countries from colonial bondage has come.

"We are tired of living like captured men in our own countries. We are tired of force labour. Yes the time has come for us, too to live like men of our own and enjoy the fruit of freedom." We declared.

We told the august organisation of the world forum boldly that it should advise Salazar and his clique in Portugal to leave our countries alone. For we had had enough of their suppression, oppression and exploitation and would not accept any more.

It was true, we said, that since our people began, some few years ago, to fight for their freedom and human dignity, Portugal had been using modern weapons mainly supplied by her NATO allies against our people and already more than 40,000 of our people—men, women and children had been murdered in cold blood for no crime other than asking for their bona fide rights, we would still fight on until victory was achieved.

We explained that our aim of appearing before the United Nations was to assist it by giving the facts of the situation in our countries and proposals of our plan for solution of the problem.

"These are the objectives of our presence here and we shall be with you until our task is accomplished; for our people will anxiously

expect something concrete from us when we are back home. We can only take back to them guarantees and assurances that United Nations has undertaken to give the necessary assistance and its resolutions on the issue will be adhered to.

"Or that United Nations is not going to help us and that we should reinforce and develop our own efforts to continue our struggle in order to conquer or to be defeated by Portuguese colo-



Amil Car Cabral

niaлизм in our countries". We stated.

THE FACTS

Through communiques public declarations and also through various correspondence we were sure that the United Nations had had sufficient information as to what the problem was in our countries and the conditions under which peoples in Portuguese Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands were living. Before we had the opportunity of presenting our case personally to the United Nations, we had already done our best to place at its disposal a considerable number of facts through the special committee set up to investigate the conditions in the territories administered by Portugal.

As much as we accepted and agreed to all the findings presented by the committee, we still felt duty bound to give the Assembly at least a summary of the conditions which were and still are prevailing in our countries. The events were conveniently summed up as follows:

Since June 1961 the Portuguese colonialists have increased the numerical strength of their white troops in Guinea to about eight thousand men and have unleashed the most violent repression against our people. It is possible that such measures were taken as a way to prove once more, the total disregard of the Portuguese Government as far as the United Nations is concerned and in this particular case as far as the arduous task of the special committee of seven was concerned but we must add that such an attitude also aims at liquidating our resistance, the cadres of our party: it aims at terrorising our population and curbing our struggle.

VILLAGES RAZED DOWN

Many peaceful villages have been attacked by these Portuguese

thugs and their populations subjected to the most atrocious tortures and massacres. Villages like Mores, Antuane, Salancoeur and many others in "Portuguese" Guinea shall ever be remembered in the history of our struggle as the martyred villages of our resistance.

In desperation and anger which characterises their impotence and their failure to shake the strong determination of our people, the Portuguese colonialists have arrested, tortured and assassinated political prisoners: they have massacred entirely the defenceless populations of some villages in our countries, burnt down these villages and houses of nationalists, thrown many patriots, some in the rivers, some in the sea, burnt some of them alive after having sprinkled them with petrol, mutilated their corpses and exposed them in public. They have besieged and burnt many of the party strategic points in the forests, and had recourse to all baneful machinations in order to break down our resistance.

Comrades like late Bernado Soares, a 28-year-old school teacher, a husband and a responsible member of our party in Empada, was arrested and subjected to awful tortures for a week and as he refused in spite of all these tortures, to betray his comrades-in-arms the Portuguese thugs threw petrol on him and burnt him alive before a horrified gathering.

CORPSES MUTILATED

People like late comrade Vitorino Costa, a 24-year-old student and member of the Central Committee of our party was assassinated on the 15th July by the Portuguese troops at Tite after a strong and firm resistance, against Portuguese siege as he was leading a number of responsible and party activists. His corpse was mutilated by the Portuguese soldiers, his heart pulled out and his head exposed at public places from village to village so as to show the people that their leader had been done with.

The village of Mores, a very important strategic point, in our struggle situated in the forest of Oio has been attacked by the Portuguese troops and practically destroyed.

About 2,000 patriots were arrested in the country between 15th of June and 31st of July 1962 as a prevention against possible uprising, scheduled to take place on the 3rd of August—the anniversary day of the massacre at Pijiguiti during which 50 African workers on strike were mowed down by the repressive forces and armed European civilians.

Three hundred and fifty were deported during the month of September into concentration camps on Sal island. Among these is a prominent member of our central committee, Mamadou Toure (momo) 28-year-old married man. At S. Domingos, Forim, Oio, Bafata, Gabu, Bissao and Bolama and in particular in the southern region of the country, these repressive measures have taken new proportions and have become as barbarous as anyone can imagine, resulting in thousands of victims, and in the destruction of many families. Such pressure gives cause to starvation and terror among the people. Bissao, the capital town of Guinea has been transformed into a gateless prison—the colonial authorities have proclaimed a dawn-to-dusk curfew there.

REPRESSIVE MEASURES

In Cape Verde Islands and particularly in the islands of Santiago and Vicente, the repressive measures have been equally stepped up. During October for instance, 14 patriots were arrested and deported into concentration camps at Tarrafal. That is not all. The Portuguese colonialists are equally using other methods in their bid to liquidate our resistance. They have for instance started up old tribal conflicts and maintained, on large sums of money, a few ambitious tribal chiefs. The Portuguese colonialists have armed a number of mercenaries of the peulh tribe and have incited these elements against their fellow men and in particular those belonging to the Barenti and Besfada tribes.

We exposed the Portuguese colonialists tricks of fake reforms and propaganda to blindfold the world.

After the violent repression exercised by them in our countries and particularly in "Portuguese" Guinea last year, the Portuguese colonialists continued to shout their heads off to proclaim "reforms" and intensified their propaganda with the aim of demobilising our people.

PAPER REFORMS

As regards these "reforms" they are nothing but what our people term "paper reforms". We presented to the United Nations a few pamphlets and some receipts of dues paid by African populations. We submitted these documents to the United Nations scrutiny and appreciation so that its members might thereby find for themselves what type of "reforms" were going on in our countries and whether these justified the claims of the Portuguese colonialists.

We however, mentioned that the documents were posted and also were issued according to

By Amil Car Cabral
Secretary-General, P.A.I.G.C.,
Portuguese Guinea and Cape Verde

laws which had been in use before September 1961 during which month the new "reforms" were supposed to have been entered into use. About these "reforms", we have more than once, had the opportunity to give our comments on them, what we thought of them, to the special committee of seven appointed by the United Nations to investigate the conditions in Portuguese territories.

THE MANOEUVRES FAILED

We referred to the Portuguese authorities announcement that the conference of colonial governors which had earlier been transformed into extraordinary session of Overseas Council, would recommend new "reforms" and explained that the Portuguese authorities were trying to use this deceitful announcement to convince our peoples that it was of no use struggling because the Portuguese government would, on its own initiative, solve the problem of their independence.

Indeed this conference of colonial governors was held from the 12th to the 30th October 1962. But their manoeuvres failed to achieve their aim for our party started immediately to denounce openly that such a conference was in contradiction with our in-

terest since our legitimate representatives were not invited to take part. The conference, however, unanimously adopted a resolution which was to be sent to the Portuguese National Assembly with propositions as to the reshuffling of the various organic laws governing overseas territories and to find new political status for the colonies.

We stated before the National Assembly of the United Nations that our people had already been told by our Party leaders that these diabolical propositions presented to them by the Portuguese colonialists did not constitute any answer to their aspirations

to self-determination and independence and therefore should reject it. Although we were informed that the Minister for Overseas Affairs who took the initiative of this meeting of the Overseas Council was dismissed immediately after the conference, and to express their disapproval at the government's action in this matter, the governor of Mozambique and the Vice-President of the Overseas Council had resigned their posts, our people felt all was part of the manoeuvre to deceive them.

THE PROPAGANDA

In spite of the reinforcement of the repressive measures, in spite of all the machinations and propaganda by the Portuguese colonialists, our struggle has been intensified, day in and day out. Our people, encouraged by the friendly attitude of the United Nations, expressed in the appointment of the special committee of seven, have organised and mobilised themselves and being directed by our Party, are courageously resisting this repression, and will continue to resist heroically all crimes committed against them by the Portuguese colonialist forces.

Our people have gone further than that in any case. They have taken up the challenge of the colonia-

able to preserve our forces and to eat into those of the enemy. We have been able to come out successfully from the hard test to which we have been subjected.

OUR VERY BLOOD

Presently with the experience we have so far acquired and backed by the struggle itself, to which we are compelled to partake, we have become strong and firm in our position and are ready to sacrifice our very blood in order to liquidate colonial domination from our soil. The crimes committed against our people by the colonial forces: considering the victims and martyrs of such crimes and the isolation in which we find ourselves face to face with a strong enemy decided to liquidate us and the poor condition and the passivity in which we are forced to live, all this as a matter of fact, has reinforced our conscience and accentuated, in a decisive way, the hatred of our people against foreign domination and has shown us clearly our position as far as this liberation struggle is concerned.

In the context of this new awareness about our situation and in view of the victory already recorded by our people under rather odd conditions, our people have thoroughly come out to consider objectively the problems of legality and illegality of our struggle.

Prior to the Resolution on decolonisation adopted at the 15th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, (December 1960) our struggle was considered strictly in the national context. Whereas in fact even a judicial analysis of the glaring situation in our country could reveal that in "Portuguese" Guinea as well as in the Cape Verde Islands, our people are deprived of their own personality and subjected to Portuguese "sovereignty" and foreign domination.

We are therefore struggling to gain our own personality as Africans, completely different from the Portuguese personality, we are struggling to liberate our country from foreign subjugation, we are struggling for our right to self-determination and for our right to nationhood and independence.

Internationally, our struggle, therefore, has taken advantage of the right of any people to rebel against foreign domination, our struggle has taken advantage of fundamental rights that is everybody's and of the rights of peoples to self-determination as stipulated in the United Nations Charter which unreservedly condemns the colonial system and calls for its immediate liquidation.

INTERNATIONAL CRIME

The Portuguese colonialists are precisely seeking through all sorts of tricks while silently tracking down our struggle, to evade the principles of the United Nations Charter of which Portugal is a signatory.

