

PAIGC in the rural areas of the country, organizing village and sector committees to manage local affairs, had produced an active mass base for the movement, a reality that culminated in the emergence of a workable nation-wide system of popularly-elected regional assemblies and a National Assembly. Already, in 1972, PAIGC sector committees were able to register tens of thousands of voters and, in a series of elections, popular representatives were chosen to the National Assembly. It was these representatives that adopted a constitution, elected a Council of State and, on September 24, 1973, declared Guinea-Bissau an independent and sovereign state. Soon over 80 countries (not including Canada) had recognized the new republic.

### Guinea-Bissau recognized

Ultimately, in September of this year, the leaders of post-*coup* Portugal also accepted the reality of a free Guinea-Bissau and ceded the remaining urban areas to the PAIGC. Guinea-Bissau was admitted to the United Nations, and even Canada was finally moved to grant recognition. Only one piece of unfinished business remains — the future of the Cape Verde Islands, for whose freedom the PAIGC (as its name indicates) has also been fighting. For the moment, the Portuguese seem to be accommodating PAIGC on this issue, allowing the movement to organize support on the islands for elections or for a referendum on the issue some time next year. It is true that the Cape Verde Islands are of strategic significance — with certain NATO installations and with air facilities that service South African commercial flights — and any shift to the right in Portugal might yet jeopardize a smooth transition to PAIGC control. But for the moment it seems most likely that PAIGC will successfully carry to the islands its profoundly democratic resolution to the problem of Portuguese colonialism.

Equally dramatic progress has been made in Mozambique. There, the Frente da Libertacao de Moçambique (FRELIMO) represented at its foundation in 1962 a coming-together of a number of Mozambiquan nationalist organizations then primarily operating from neighbouring African countries. FRELIMO, under the leadership of Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, a Mozambiquan who had worked at the United Nations and as an anthropology professor in the United States before returning to Africa, requested the Portuguese to grant independence. But the latter had already demonstrated clearly the nature of their rule when, in 1960, at Mueda in Northern

Mozambique, 600 Africans were shot and killed while peacefully protesting Portuguese handling of agricultural matters. Now, to FRELIMO's more concerted and focused demands, the response was again to crack down on African activities, especially in the urban areas. The absolute necessity of military action became perfectly clear to FRELIMO.

FRELIMO prepared for this carefully and began the fighting inside Mozambique on September 25, 1964. Progress in the two northern provinces of Cabo Delgado and Niassa was sufficiently marked by 1968 that FRELIMO was able to launch armed struggle in a third key province, Tete (site of the notorious Cabora Bassa dam scheme), where once again the Portuguese were slowly but surely driven back. Thus, by 1972, most of Cabo Delgado and Niassa and much of Tete could be considered liberated areas. In the same year, FRELIMO also announced the opening of a front in the strategic and densely-populated province of Manica and Sofala in the very heart of Mozambique. Soon the war hovered close to the important port of Beira, broke out in ambushes along the strategic lines of road and rail that linked Rhodesia to the sea, and surfaced even further south. This dramatic advance was perhaps the most important nail to be driven into the coffin of the fascist system in Portugal.

### Network of institutions

In Mozambique itself, however, it was merely the tip of the iceberg. As in Guinea-Bissau, vast changes were taking place at the base of the movement, among the Mozambiquan people themselves, and it was these changes that actually premised the military advance. As I had occasion to witness for myself when I visited the liberated areas of Tete Province with FRELIMO guerillas in 1972, there existed an impressive network of participatory institutions right up from the village level, as well as the rudiments of social services (health, education and the like), which were more obviously designed than in most societies to meet the real needs of the mass of the people. Even more impressive was the establishment of new economic practices: co-operative institutions for marketing and distribution, for example, and the beginnings of collectively-based production in the villages. In every sphere, there was the effort to pre-empt the temptations towards élitism and entrepreneurial aggrandizement that have created an unbridgeable gulf between leaders and people in many other parts of Africa. There was a further dimension. FRELIMO remained as ready to accept genuine assistance from

*Success in strategic zones spelt doom for Portuguese system*