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# Guinea-Bissau Since Independence: A Decade of Domestic Power Struggles

by JOSHUA B. FORREST*

AMÍLCAR CABRAL was perhaps the foremost political thinker to emerge out of the many independence movements of post-World War II Africa. His insightful theory of class struggle in the continent, his informative analysis of the history of Guinea-Bissau, his original concept of 'class suicide', and his notion of the relationship between national liberation and culture,[1] helped convince many scholars of the viability of a class and ideological approach to the study of African politics.[2]

At the same time, the fact that Cabral, as the Secretary-General of the *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné-Bissau e Cabo Verde*, had successfully headed a peasant-based national liberation struggle against the Portuguese colonialists, appeared to lend special credence to his claims regarding the viability of a class-based approach to understanding African politics, and seemed to reinforce the acuity of his analytical vision.[3] Based on the convincing arguments of Cabral and on the success of the war for independence, it was widely assumed that

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[1] Amílcar Cabral, *Princípios do partido e a prática política*, 1–6, from the collection, 'Cabral ka muri', edition of the Department of Information, Propaganda, and Culture of the Central Committee of the P.A.I.G.C. (Portugal, 1983), *Unity and Struggle* (London, 1980), *Unité et lutte* (Paris, 1975), *Return to the Source* (New York, 1973), and *Revolution in Guinea* (London, 1969). See also Carlos Cardoso, 'Os Fundamentos do Conteúdo e dos Objectivos da Libertacão Nacional no Pensamento de Amílcar Cabral', International Conference on the Political Personality of Amílcar Cabral, Bissau, 4–7 December 1984.

[2] Patrick Chabal, *Amílcar Cabral: revolutionary leadership and people's war* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 175–82, and 'The Social and Political Thought of Amílcar Cabral: a reassessment', in *The Journal of Modern African Studies* (Cambridge), 19, 1, March 1981, pp. 31–56; Henry Bienen, 'State and Revolution: the work of Amílcar Cabral', in ibid. 15, 4, December 1977, pp. 555–68; Ronald Chilcote, 'The Political Thought of Amílcar Cabral', in ibid. 6, 3, September 1968, pp. 373–88; and Timothy W. Luke, 'Cabral's Marxism: an African strategy for socialist development', Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, 19–21 April 1979.

[3] Lars Rudebeck, *Guinea-Bissau: a study of political mobilization* (Uppsala, 1974); Basil Davidson, *Growing from the Grassroots: the State of Guinea-Bissau* (London, 1969), and *No Fist is Big Enough to Hide the Sky: the liberation of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde* (London, 1981); Gerard Chaliand, *Armed Struggle in Africa. With the Guerrillas in 'Portuguese' Guinea* (New York, 1969), and *Mythes révolutionnaires du tiers monde* (Paris, 1976).

the P.A.I.G.C. was building a workable and admirable 'revolutionary democracy', characterised by popular elections and close links between leaders and led, being united in its goals and determined to carry out Cabral's vision of national integration and peasant-focused development.[1]

Through the course of the post-independence period, 1974–85, none of these optimistic assumptions have come to pass in Guinea–Bissau. On the contrary, the national political arena has been marked since the assassination of Cabral in January 1973 by profound struggles for power among competing institutions, leaders, and ethnic groups that have been significantly affected by the rice-producing peasantry. Rather than ideological unity and cultural integration, the leadership has been weakened by personal antagonisms and serious ethnic divisions. The evolution of national-level conflicts since independence makes it clear that politics in Guinea–Bissau cannot be comprehended within the analytic frameworks of class and ideology, as had been suggested by Cabral, but must instead focus on the more politically salient factors of institutional, ethnic, and leadership competition.

## 1974–80: SCHISMS, GRIEVANCES, AND A SUCCESSFUL COUP

The institutional balance of power developed decisively after 1974 in favour of the expanding central régime as the P.A.I.G.C. weakened and became substantially demobilised. Ethnic resentment on the part of the Balanta over the dominant rôle of the Cape Verdians grew acutely; and the President, Luiz Cabral, and the Army Commander, João Bernardo Vieira, became locked in a personal struggle for political power, with the leaders of the Government and the Party behind the former, while the armed forces and middle-level political cadres supported the latter. Many peasants resented the newly imposed taxes and opposed the ministerial trade policies, and this discontent was passed on to the armed forces through ethnic ties. These intersecting

[1] Rudebeck, op. cit.; Luís Moita and Luísa Teotónio Pereira, *Guiné-Bissau. 3 Anos de Independência* (Lisbon, 1976); Peter Aaby, *The State of Guinea-Bissau. African Socialism or Socialism in Africa?* (Uppsala, 1978); Chantal Sarrazin and Ole Gjerstad, *Sowing the First Harvest. National Reconstruction in Guinea-Bissau* (Oakland, Ca., 1978); Denis Goulet, *Looking at Guinea-Bissau: a new nation's development strategy* (Washington, D.C., 1978); Jean-Claude Andreini and Marie-Claude Lambert, *La Guinée-Bissau d'Amílcar Cabral à la reconstruction nationale* (Paris, 1978); Shirley Washington, 'Some Aspects of Post-War Reconstruction in Guinea-Bissau', Ph.D. dissertation, Howard University, Washington, D.C., 1978; Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy in Process: the letters to Guinea-Bissau* (New York, 1978); Stephanie Urdang, *Fighting Two Colonialisms: women in Guinea-Bissau* (New York, 1979); and Tony Hodges, 'Guinea-Bissau: five years of independence', in *Africa Report* (Washington, D.C.), January–February 1979, pp. 4–5.

factors generated a degree of conflict that resulted in a successful *coup d'état* in November 1980.

### 1. *Domination of Government, Demobilisation of P.A.I.G.C.*

After national independence had been gained in 1974, the P.A.I.G.C. fully intended to retain thorough-going supervisory control over the Government-in-formation. To this purpose, most of the Commissioners appointed to head the 16 new Ministries were party officials, and under the principle of 'horizontal leadership', sector committees were created specifically to act as combined party-government administrative units.[1] However, despite these efforts at political control, the necessity of constructing a viable, functioning public sector meant that the P.A.I.G.C. would have to allow its members a generally free hand to build appropriate bureaucratic structures.[2]

The sector committees failed as both administrative organisations and mechanisms of P.A.I.G.C. control, mainly because the party personnel were insufficiently experienced to be really effective governmental managers.[3] Furthermore, according to middle and lower-level functionaries in the Ministries of Public Works, Foreign Affairs, Internal Administration, Migration and National Security, not only did the public sector as a whole begin to distance itself from the Party, not least by concentrating on the need to create workable ministerial structures and procedures, but the concern of the Commissioners to consolidate and strengthen their own authority left them with few incentives to seek party supervision and control over their new enclaves of bureaucratic power.[4]

Indeed, the party leaders who became Commissioners were very quickly preoccupied with the regulation of their Ministries and less concerned with developing clear-cut links to the P.A.I.G.C.[5] They focused their attention on gaining resources, often by cultivating links

[1] Carlos Lopes, *Etnia, Estado e Relações de Poder na Guiné-Bissau* [*Ethnicity, State and Relations of Power in Guinea-Bissau*] (Lisbon, 1982), p. 70; and Laura Bigman, 'Revolutionary Democracy in Guinea-Bissau', M.A. thesis, Howard University, Washington, D.C., December 1980, pp. 65–6.

[2] Jean Ziegler, 'Libération et culture: le cas de la Guiné-Bissau', in *Main basse sur l'Afrique: la recolonisation* (Paris, 1980), p. 209.

[3] Interviews by the author, Bissau, May 1983; Patrick Chabal, 'Party, State and Socialism in Guinea-Bissau', in *Canadian Journal of African Studies* (Ottawa), 17, 2, 1983, p. 203; Ziegler, loc. cit. p. 209; and Bigman, op. cit. pp. 65–6. P.A.I.G.C. cadres spent the years of the national liberation struggle either in the rural areas, directing the guerrilla war, or engaged in propaganda work abroad. Most of them, therefore, had little or no experience in bureaucratic management when the P.A.I.G.C. took power in 1974.

[4] Interviews, Bissau, November 1982; and Lopes, *Etnia*, pp. 71–5.

[5] Lopes, *Etnia*, pp. 70–5 and 78.

with foreign development agencies and bilateral lenders, and together with their staff they claimed a hold over administrative responsibility that effectively placed their Ministries outside the parameters of broader party control.[1] The obtainment of funding, in particular, was crucial to the establishment of administrative power by all Commissioners, as it enabled them to dispense jobs and salaries in a patrimonial way that reinforced intra-departmental loyalty.[2]

Among the more flagrant examples of independent governmental consolidation and financing were the Ministry of Postal Services and Telecommunications, headed by Fernando Fortes, who became renowned for rewarding personal friends with administrative posts,[3] and the Ministry of National Security, directed by António Buscardini, who was intensely and widely feared, so much so that even the President hardly dared to interfere with his activities.[4] In addition, the Ministry of Economic Co-ordination and Planning, presided over by Vasco (unrelated to either Amílcar or Luiz) Cabral, was able to secure a large amount of funding from the eastern bloc, as well as approximately 100 expatriates who dominated the local staff. This reliance on external monetary sources and personnel provided Cabral with a significant amount of economic independence and bureaucratic power, and allowed him to isolate his apparatus from both the Party and other Ministries.

Thus, despite the fact that most Commissioners simultaneously remained within the P.A.I.G.C. élite,[5] an increasing functional and organisational separation between the Party and the Government ensued, with the Ministries expanding their bureaucratic hegemony and control over the nation's wealth. This institutional division was exacerbated by the fact that a large percentage of top and middle-level public servants had obtained their administrative experience under the colonial régime, and they were neither members of, nor enamoured with, the P.A.I.G.C.[6] Not only did these bureaucrats lack political incentives to promote party-government ties, but they were especially

[1] Interviews, Bissau, January and May 1983, and Dakar, November 1983.

[2] Lopes, *Etnia*, pp. 71–4 and 78. [3] Ibid. p. 75.

[4] Interviews, Bissau, May 1983; Carlo Lopes, 'A Transição Histórica na Guiné-Bissau: do movimento de libertação nacional ao estado' ['The Historical Transition in Guinea-Bissau: from the national liberation movement to the state'], Institut universitaire d'études du développement, Geneva, November 1982, p. 225; and Eric Makedowsky, *L'Année politique africaine* (Paris, 1981), p. 10.

[5] Fifteen of the 19 members of the 1979 Cabinet were party officials.

[6] Lopes, *Etnia*, p. 73; Andreini and Lambert, op. cit. p. 53; Washington, op. cit. p. 217; and Jeanne Makedonsky, 'Guinée-Bissau premières élections du temps de paix', in *Africa* (Dakar), 86, December 1976, p. 53.

prone to concentrate on dispensing resources and jobs to family and friends, as had been the tendency of administrators during colonial rule.[1] Thus, political Commissioners, as well as officials with no previous links to the P.A.I.G.C., directed their functional emphasis towards building the machinery of the new administration, so that the Ministries in effect operated as entities unto themselves, and the Party was unable to maintain control over the direction of governmental decision-making.

The rising power of the Ministries within the national political arena was accentuated by the concomitant demobilisation of the P.A.I.G.C. and its decreasing political potency. The 1973 assassination of Amílcar Cabral had left the Party largely devoid of the charismatic authority, leadership ability, and ideological lucidity that had been so crucial to the P.A.I.G.C.'s success as an organisationally coherent, internally unified, and tightly-structured apparatus during the anti-colonial armed struggle.[2]

After independence, the party leadership and cadres remained concentrated in Bissau, and were not poised to reach back towards the countryside to build on the organisational links with villagers that had been formed in the course of the liberation movement.[3] The ideological position of the P.A.I.G.C. did stress rural-oriented political mobilisation, but the cadres, upon gaining national power, found it necessary to focus party work in the capital city, as the inhabitants of Bissau had remained under Portuguese influence during the war and were generally sceptical of their new leaders, while substantial sectors of the peasantry had already been won over to the Party.[4]

In addition, there was the widespread sense among the most influential members of the P.A.I.G.C. élite that they merited whatever material benefits Bissau had to offer, since they had made many personal sacrifices by devoting the best years of their lives to guerrilla warfare in the rural periphery.[5] The consequence was a growing lack

[1] Lopes, *Etnia*, p. 73.

[2] Interviews, Ziguinchor, January 1984, and Dakar, September and October 1983; E. D. Valimamad, 'Nationalist Politics, War and Statehood: Guinea-Bissau, 1953–1973', Ph.D. dissertation, St Catherine's College, Oxford, 1984, p. 227; Chabal, *Amílcar Cabral*, pp. 142–3; and Lopes, *A Transição Histórica*, pp. 25, 105, 138, 152, 263, and 321.

[3] Interviews, Bissau, May 1983, and Dakar, September–October 1983; and Sarrazin and Gjerstad, op. cit. p. 32.

[4] Interviews, Dakar, September 1983; Huges Jean de Dianoux, 'Études. La Guinée-Bissau et les Îles du Cap-Vert', in *Afrique contempraine* (Paris), 107 (January–February 1980), p. 7; Speech by President Vieira in *O Militante* (Bissau), November–December 1981, p. 22; Ziegler, loc. cit. p. 209; and Makedowsky, loc. cit. p. 51.

[5] Interviews, Bissau, January 1983; Lopes, *A Transição Histórica*, pp. 263–4; Ndiane Nyangoma, as quoted by Momar Seyni Ndiaye in 'La Guinée-Bissau: sept ans après, une situation difficile', in *Le Soleil* (Dakar), 1980.

of contact between cadres and the general populace, a rapid decline of grass-roots mobilisation activities, and a physical and institutional distancing of the Party from the peasantry.[1]

## 2. *The Ethnic Factor*

Juxtaposed into the growing imbalance of power between the P.A.I.G.C. and the Government were widening ethnic divisions that significantly augmented the degree of political tension at the national level. The war had not eliminated the hostility felt between the Cape Verdians and the Balanta during the colonial period, when most of the public office-holders in the mainland had been brought in from the islands, and they had been accorded envied educational advantages.[2] Some members of this privileged group from Cape Verde became radicalised while studying in Portugal,[3] and after playing a leading rôle in building up the pro-nationalist P.A.I.G.C. in both Bissau and the rural areas, they continued to dominate the top party positions even after independence.[4] Indeed, as President Luiz Cabral lacked a trustworthy base of personal support in either the army or among the peasants, he relied heavily on his Cape Verdian colleagues in both the Party and the Government.

Other ethnic groups were increasingly frustrated by not receiving what they considered to be their fair share of key posts after independence, all the more so because the Cape Verdians had acted, *inter alia*, during the colonial era as overseers of forced labour projects (such as road-building) in the countryside, which principally involved the Balanta due to their reputation for toughness and hard work.[5] They in

[1] Interviews, Bissau, May 1983; Anne-Marie Hochet, *Paysanneries en attente: Guinée-Bissau* (Dakar, 1983), pp. 44–5; Lars Rudebeck, *Problèmes de pouvoir et de développement: transition difficile en Guinée-Bissau* (Uppsala, 1982), pp. 40–1 and 64; Lopes, *A Transição Histórica*, pp. 223–4 and 248–50; and Dianoux, loc. cit. p. 7.

[2] Virginia L. Bollinger, 'Development Strategy's Impact on Ethnically-Based Political Violence: a theoretical framework with comparative applications to Zambia, Guinea-Bissau and Moçambique', Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado, Boulder, 1984, pp. 190–1; and Barbara Harrell-Bond, 'Guinea-Bissau. Part III, Independent Development', American University Field Staff Report No. 22, Hanover, N.H., 1981, p. 14.

[3] The six men who founded the P.A.I.G.C. were all from Cape Verde or of related lineage: Amílcar Cabral, Luiz Cabral, Aristides Pereira, Fernando Fortes, Julio de Almeida, and Eliseu Turpin.

[4] Cape Verdians occupied four of the seven seats on the Executive Committee of the Struggle, the nation's ruling political organ at that time, and held most of the 15,000 public-sector positions. Bollinger, op. cit. pp. 189–92 and 338–42; Chabal, *Amílcar Cabral*, pp. 202–3; Dianoux, loc. cit. p. 9; Goulet, op. cit. p. 35; and José Manuel de Braga Dias, *Mudança Sócio-Cultural na Guiné Portuguesa* [*Socio-Cultural Change in Portuguese Guinea*], Ph.D. dissertation, Universidade Tecnica de Lisboa, Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Política Ultramarina, Lisbon, 1974, pp. 207–8.

[5] Interviews, Ziguinchor, January 1984, and Portugal, March 1984; and Chaliand, *Armed Struggle*, p. 74.

particular had vigorously supported the P.A.I.G.C.-led liberation struggle, contributing over 80 per cent of the ground troops and sustaining them with food and logistical support throughout the course of the war.[1] The Balanta were determined to oust not only the Portuguese imperialists, but also their Cape Verdian appointees, in order to free themselves of political and physical oppression.[2] The extent to which the Balanta had been determined to assert their self-respect as an identifiable collectivity is indicated by the fact that they often refused to fight the Portuguese outside their own region, suggesting to the P.A.I.G.C. that they were not interested in defending the rights of other ethnic groups.[3]

This historical background makes clear why the Balanta became especially resentful of the fact that power was still being monopolised, after independence, by the very same group of people who had previously usurped their territorial, political, and social autonomy, even subjecting them to forced labour. By 1980, the fact that very few Balanta had been promoted to leading positions in either the Party or the Government, not to mention the army, despite their critical rôle in helping to place the P.A.I.G.C. into power, severely intensified their dissatisfaction with the existing ethnic imbalance of power, and helped generate the conditions necessary for radical political change.

### 3. *The Armed Forces and the Peasantry*

Meanwhile, the army's dissatisfaction under Cabral's administration was similarly deepening. Between 1977 and 1979, soldiers who had earlier proved themselves in battle were being passed over for promotion in favour of trusted confidants of the President who had less military legitimacy in the eyes of the vast majority of the armed forces.[4] The fact that the majority of those being promoted were Cape Verdians made matters worse, especially for the 70–80 per cent who were Balanta.[5] The introduction in February 1980 of formal ranks within the armed forces – previously divided only between commanders and soldiers – provoked widespread anger, notably by those convinced that this was

[1] Interviews, Casamancian villages and Ziguinchor, January 1984; Davidson, *No Fist*, p. 42; Dianoux, loc. cit. p. 4; Dias, op. cit. p. 205; and Chaliand, *Armed Struggle*, p. 14.

[2] Interviews, Casamancian villages, January–February 1984, and Dakar, October 1983.

[3] Chabal, *Amílcar Cabral*, p. 80; and Davidson, *Growing from the Grassroots*, p. 102.

[4] Lopes, *A Transicão Histórica*, p. 257; Fidelis Almada, 'Let Us Restructure Our Party – the PAIGC', in *Nô Pintcha* (Bissau), 10 November 1981; and President Vieira's speech in *O Militante*, November–December 1981.

[5] Interviews, Ziguinchor, January 1984; Bollinger, op. cit. p. 211; and Lopes, *A Transição Histórica*, p. 252.

merely a convenient way for even more undeserving military men to be promoted.[1] Finally, while ministerial office-holders were benefiting from the Government's distribution of national resources, military salaries remained very low and new uniforms became impossible to obtain, intensifying the feeling that the soldiers were not being recompensed for the contribution they had made to the liberation struggle, while highly resented élites were monopolising the benefits of independence.[2]

The peasants producing rice – Guinea-Bissau's principal food crop – also had a variety of serious grievances. Despite the fact that the Party had promised the rural inhabitants a large amount of agricultural and general economic assistance after independence, the Government had instead moved to monopolise rural trade.[3] At the May 1976 session of the Popular National Assembly, a number of deputies voiced their dismay at the wide disparity in benefits accorded to Bissau in relation to the countryside, and certain Commissioners were accused of being responsible for the deterioration taking place in the rural areas.[4] Moreover, although the Government had initially expressed its appreciation of the grass-roots support received in the anti-colonial struggle by granting a three-year period of 'grace' as regards taxes in those areas that had been especially hospitable to the P.A.I.G.C., their introduction on a nation-wide basis in 1977 caused great disappointment and discontent.[5]

Furthermore, between 1977 and 1979, when the impact of the Sahelian drought resulted in a severely depleted food-crop harvest and the Government was able to obtain internationally supplied rice, much of this was distributed within the urban sector rather than to the peasants who had until then been providing the Government with their surplus produce.[6] With 80 per cent of the rice normally being grown by the Balanta, their discontent was directly transmitted to the soldiers, the vast majority of whom continued to retain direct ties with their rural homes, so that these economic and ethnic variables merged to further prepare the political stage for military intervention.

[1] Babtista de Silva, 'Guiné-Bissau: o instável poder' [Guinea-Bissau: unstable power'], in *Terceiro Mundo* (Lisbon), 84, December 1985, p. 35.

[2] Rudebeck, *Problèmes*, p. 21; and René Odou, 'Guinée-Bissau: un coup d'état pour rien', in *Afrique Nouvelle* (Dakar), 1637, 19–25 November 1980, pp. 6–7.

[3] Joshua B. Forrest, 'State, Peasant and National Power Struggles in Contemporary Guinea-Bissau', Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1987, ch. 5, 'State vs. the Peasant Mode of Production in Guinea-Bissau'.

[4] Andreini and Lambert, op. cit. p. 56.

[5] Forrest, op. cit.

[6] Makedowsky, op. cit. pp. 149–50.

## 4. *The Cabral-Vieira Leadership Struggle*

The manifold grievances among the Balanta, the armed forces, and the rice-producing peasantry had attained a level of such accumulated intensity by 1980 that they could only be resolved by altering what might be described as the national political grid. Here the personal history, ethnic symbolism, and institutional affiliation of the Principal Commissioner [equivalent to Prime Minister] and Army Commander, João Bernardo (Nino) Vieira, were brought to full political significance. As commander of the strategically all-important southern front in the war of independence, he had emerged as the single most important military leader of the P.A.I.G.C.[1] By eluding near-constant efforts by the Portuguese to capture him, and by regularly outwitting them on the battlefield, Vieira had proved himself to both sides as a brilliant military strategist, gaining a strong sense of personal loyalty among not only the liberation fighters – the vast majority of whom were Balanta – but also the rural population more generally.[2]

The fact that Vieira was Papel added to his symbolic and historical legitimacy for the Balanta, as both ethnic groups had traditionally served as military allies in their resistance against the Portuguese 'pacification' drives preceding the colonial period.[3] This, combined with the long years that Vieira had spent fighting with the Balanta in their own regions, allowed him to be seen as their 'voice', and his military abilities and bravery even inspired several ballads.[4] For all these reasons, it was Vieira, not surprisingly, to whom the Balanta-dominated army turned when it became clear, towards 1980, that radical political changes were needed.

Tensions between Cabral and Vieira heightened from 1979 to 1980 as dissatisfaction within the military mounted, and the two leaders grew increasingly hostile towards and wary of one another, especially as each moved to strengthen his own power base.[5] As indicated already, although virtually all soldiers were behind Vieira, most public servants preferred Cabral, the party cadres being split between the two: Papel and Balanta supported Vieira, while Cape Verdians backed Cabral, notably the Minister of National Security, António Buscardini, widely feared for his brazen but clever police actions carried out against those

[1] Ibid. p. 150; and Urdang, op. cit. p. 120.
[2] Interviews, Ziguinchor, January 1984, and Lisbon, March 1984.
[3] Makedowsky, op. cit. p. 150; and Documents from *Caixas* 1–25, *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino*, Lisbon.
[4] Makedowsky, op. cit. p. 150.
[5] Lopes, *A Transição Histórica*, p. 255.

whom he believed to be enemies of the state.[1] As the President became ever more aware of the growing threat to the security of his régime, he came to rely increasingly on Buscardini and his national police for protection, with the result that a rising climate of fear in Bissau virtually eliminated public political debate and discussion.[2]

At the same time, Cabral replaced a number of administrators with government officials that he more closely trusted in order to secure a solid power block within the Ministries.[3] In an effort to consolidate his authority over internal opponents within the Party, Cabral nominated his supporter, José Aráujo, to the post of Secretary of the Party Organisation and Executive Secretary of the Executive Council of the Struggle. There is evidence that during this period the President became much more aggressive and domineering in party discussions, especially when opposition was voiced to his manipulations of governmental personnel.[4]

Sensing the rising discontent within the army and the Party, and fearing that Vieria had the capacity not only to mobilise the soldiers against the ruling régime, but also to garner widespread support from the rural populace, Cabral attempted to manoeuvre him away from the centre of political and military power.[5] As a first step, Vieira was relieved of his responsibilities for the armed forces in 1979.[6]

On 4 November 1980, Cabral announced the forthcoming implementation of a new constitutional framework, whereby the post of Principal Commissioner (then held by Vieira) would be abolished, while the President would automatically become Supreme Head of the Armed Forces.[7] This represented not only a direct challenge to Vieira's continued political power, but also an affront to the integrity of the army, since neither the rank-and-file nor most of the officers had any wish to accept commands from Cabral, who they considered to lack any legitimate personal or historical claim to be their Supreme Head.[8] At the same time, army commanders thought to be loyal to Vieira were replaced by officers that Cabral felt he could trust, even though these changes were not merited on professional grounds.[9]

The supporters of Vieira were particularly infuriated both by his removal from the Government and the prospect of Cabral's direct control of the military, and this created an atmosphere within the armed

[1] Interviews, Bissau, December 1982.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Lopes, *Etnia*, p. 75.
[4] Lopes, *A Transição Histórica*, pp. 255 and 257.
[5] Account written expressly for the author by a Guinean historian in January 1984.
[6] Lopes, *A Transição Histórica*, p. 257.
[7] Ibid.
[8] *The New York Times*, 16 November 1980.
[9] Lopes, *A Transição Histórica* p. 255.

forces that increased the likelihood of their violent intervention into the political arena.[1] When Vieira decided that it was the moment to move against the President, he had no difficulty in ordering the army to depose Cabral's régime, and the successful and nearly bloodless *coup d'état* of 14 November 1980 was cheered enthusiastically both in Bissau and in the countryside.[2]

It is important to emphasise that the coup resulted from an amalgamation of institutional (government *versus* party), ethnic (Balanta *versus* Cape Verdians), and interpersonal (Cabral *versus* Vieira) power struggles, all of which were informed by historical legacies and symbolisms, and intensified by the growing political and economic alienation of the peasantry from the Party and the Government (but not from the army).[3] These cross-cutting divisions and conflicts led to the assumption of national power by a Papel military commander who had the full-fledged backing of the Balanta soldiers, and who would proceed to oust the Cape Verdians from the upper levels of the Government, resurrect the organisational power of the P.A.I.G.C., and integrate the peasant-backed military into the central decision-making political bodies of the new régime-in-formation.

## 1980–5: PARTY, ARMY, PEASANTRY, AND VIEIRA'S PERSONAL RULE

### 1. *The Resurrection of the P.A.I.G.C.*

Within several weeks of the 1980 *coup d'état*, the pre-existing State Council and Council of Ministers were abolished, and a nine-member Revolutionary Council was formed,[4] of whom seven were military officers, and none Cape Verdian.[5] With representatives of the armed forces now incorporated into the highest decision-making body, Vieira had the institutional support needed to begin to remold the then-withering P.A.I.G.C. into a powerful, genuinely ruling political party.

[1] Makedowsky, op. cit. p. 150.

[2] Interviews, Casamance, January 1984; and Ndiaye, loc. cit.

[3] Afterwards the new Guinean leaders explained the instigation of the coup in terms of their determination to prevent the élite from the Cape Verde Islands from dominating the power-sharing arrangement that had worked successfully with Guinea-Bissau after the independence of the two countries in 1974. My own interpretation is that this domestic factor was quite secondary in relation to the much more significant institutional, ethnic, and interpersonal struggles.

[4] Makedowsky, op. cit. p. 149.

[5] Bollinger, op. cit. p. 192. The new Revolutionary Council was composed of Vieira, Commander Iafai Camará, Captain Paulo Correia, Commander Manuel Saturnino da Costa, Samba Lamine Mané, Victor Saude Maria, Commander Bjota N'Ambatcha, Captain Bheghatba Na Reate, and Commander João Silva.

The focus was now on pushing through the consolidation of a selective, vanguard party, emphasising centralisation and a distinctly hierarchical structure, rather than reconstructing the P.A.I.G.C. by linking it with a mobilised, politicised mass-popular base.

This decision was taken because a serious effort at genuinely asserting party power in the rural areas would have necessitated challenging traditional authority in Balanta villages, which are organised acephalously, without any identifiable individual chiefs.[1] As the Balanta constituted the very backbone of the P.A.I.G.C.'s social support in the countryside, the leaders could not risk losing this by attempting to overturn their rural power structures.[2] Furthermore, the decision not to expand the Party towards the countryside, but to rebuild it into an institutionally insular and emphatically streamlined organisation, was made more necessary by the fact that it had become so thoroughly entrenched in Bissau and distanced from the rural populace. During the previous six years, the P.A.I.G.C. had come increasingly to lack an effective organisational presence in the countryside, not least because cadres were unwilling to engage in 'political–ideological work' among the peasantry.[3]

The move towards a more hierarchical party structure was actually initiated in 1977, when a one-year candidacy period and a six-month training course at special schools became mandatory for those members who aspired to promotion in the P.A.I.G.C.[4] However, no solid momentum was given to this direction until 1981, when the Extraordinary Party Congress created a 51-member Central Committee and a 16-member Political Bureau.[5] Top government officials were included within these new political bodies so that the Party would be able to regulate the decisions and activities of the Commissioners. Indeed, President Vieira vigorously decried the usurpation of the

[1] Christian Sigrist, 'The Case of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands', 'Workshop. Traditional Societies and Western Colonialism', Bielefeld, Federal Republic of Germany, 22–3 June 1979, pp. 2–3.

[2] Interviews, Bissau, December 1982 and May 1983, Casamancian villages, January and February 1984, and Dakar, October 1983.

[3] Interviews, Bissau, April and May 1983, and Dakar, September 1983; Rudebeck, *Problèmes*, pp. 9–10, 18, 41, and 51; and Vieira's speech in *O Militante*, p. 22.

[4] By way of contrast, at the time of the independence struggle, the P.A.I.G.C. was open to virtually all Guineans, without even a functioning system of membership cards or files. See 'The Party', ch. 8 of *Relatório do Conselho Superior da Luta* (Report of the Superior Council of the Struggle), presented to the 3rd Congress of the P.A.I.G.C. by the Secretary-General, Aristides Pereira, Bissau, 1977, pp. 8–12; and Lars Rudebeck, 'Development and Class Struggle in Guinea-Bissau', in *Monthly Review* (New York), 30, 8 January 1979, p. 21.

[5] Bollinger, op. cit. p. 206.

P.A.I.G.C.'s political dominance under the previous régime, and repeatedly stressed the need for the Party to re-assert its power over the governmental Ministries.[1] While the new leadership structure did effectively transform the P.A.I.G.C. into a powerful political organisation, it became less democratic in nature than during the independence struggle, since directives now emanated from the Revolutionary Council downwards, without meaningful inputs from ordinary members.[2]

## 2. *President, Party, and Government*

The strengthened top-level apparatus of the P.A.I.G.C. enabled Vieira to consolidate his personal rule over the increasingly interconnected institutions of the state. At the 1981 Extraordinary Congress, the strong-handed nature of this new régime was indicated when Vieira criticised the airing of divergent views by party and government officials – which at times had occurred during the Cabral era – and stressed that they should now stand united behind the Party and put forth its political line.[3] Vieira furthermore asserted that all significant decisions would be made by the Revolutionary Council,[4] and the fact that eight (of the nine) members also belonged to the P.A.I.G.C.'s newly created Political Bureau,[5] made clear that the party leadership would be in direct command of the most important decision-making body in the country.

The augmented power of the President and of the P.A.I.G.C. was asserted more practically by a series of thorough-going cabinet reshuffles – in May and July 1982, August and October 1983, and July 1984 – resulting in the replacement of Ministers and Director-Generals (those second in command) with party cadres who were particularly loyal to Vieira.[6] The 1982 changes swept all but four Ministers out of office – including many who had constructed personal fiefdoms of bureaucratic and economic power for themselves – thus allowing more direct party control of the Government. Vasco Cabral and Mario Cabral [unrelated], ex-Ministers of Economic Planning and Education,

[1] *O Militante*, p. 3.
[2] Interviews, Bissau, May 1983, and Dakar, November 1983.
[3] *Nô Pintcha*, 10 November 1981; and personal informants.
[4] *Le Soleil*, 26–7 November 1983.
[5] Bollinger, op. cit. p. 206.
[6] Augusta Conchiglia, 'Coup de barre à droite', in *Afrique–Asie* (Paris), 269, 21 June–4 July 1982, p. 30; *West Africa*, (London), 19 July 1982, p. 1906, 29 August 1983, p. 2030, 26 September 1983, p. 2255 and 24 October 1983, p. 2478; *Africa Report*, 27, 5, September–October 1982, p. 26, and 28, 6, November–December 1983, p. 31; and *Nô Pintcha*, 17, and 24 September 1983.

respectively, were transferred to exclusively party posts, and their intellectual and managerial abilities added to the P.A.I.G.C.'s propagandistic and organisational capacities.[1]

The fact that the May 1982 and August 1983 reshuffles took place without the prior knowledge of the Revolutionary Council, indicates that the President had, by then, already gained sufficient personal authority to be able to act with a substantial degree of decision-making independence.[2] Furthermore, while these changes were justified in terms of the 'illegal' or 'corrupt' activities supposedly carried out by the former officials, the President did not consider it necessary to explain the expulsion of seven party administrators in yet another 'house-cleaning' exercise in mid-October 1982, thereby indicating that he had significantly strengthened his own grip over both the P.A.I.G.C. and the Government.

Vieira's determination to tighten the Party's internal unity and domination of all Ministries is reflected in the fact that nine party members were immediately suspended or ousted after they had disclosed the substance of a high-level discussion to government officials.[3] A fifth post-coup cabinet reshuffle in July 1984 resulted in the appointment of 11 new State Secretaries, all staunch Vieira supporters, and a series of changes in the middle-level personnel of the Ministry of the Interior and of Internal Administration further consolidated the President's control over the public bureaucracy.[4]

### 3. *1983: Military Threats and 'Nino's Response*

The fact that Vieira had brought army leaders into the direct management of national political power led many soldiers and officers to expect: (i) internal promotions for those who legitimately merited them on professional and historical grounds, rather than the advancement of presidential favourites, as had occurred previously; (ii) special consideration in regard to the redistribution of the régime's resources; and (iii) advancement of outstanding officers to important governmental posts.[5] While some experienced soldiers did move rapidly up the military hierarchy in the first two post-coup years, many others

[1] Interviews, Bissau, January 1983.
[2] *Le Soleil*, 3–4 December 1983; and Conchiglia, loc. cit. p. 30.
[3] *Nô Pintcha*, 7 September 1983; and *West Africa*, 24 October 1983, p. 2478.
[4] Économist Intelligence Unit, *Quarterly Economic Review, Guinea-Bissau* (London), 4, 1984, pp. 26–7; and interview, Dakar, September 1983.
[5] Patrick Chabal, 'Coup for Continuity?', in *West Africa*, 12 January 1981; and Odou, loc. cit. pp. 6–7.

remained frustrated. In addition, only a small handful of officers advanced into ministerial positions, while the army as a whole had received no special economic privileges by 1983.[1] As a matter of fact, many junior commanders and non-commissioned officers charged that the 1982–3 ministerial turnovers had been mere cosmetic changes, whereby the President had attempted to avoid the deeper grievances within the military.

Army discontent reached a peak in June 1983, when shortages of basic necessities worsened so severely that many soldiers received insufficient quantities of rice and had to rely on their families for food.[2] In that same month, a number of junior officers who had formed covert groupings within the armed forces, relying on the accumulated intensity of the above-mentioned grievances, as well as the impact of the immediate crisis, indicated that a widely backed coup might be expected unless the President offered more concrete expressions of patrimonial beneficence.

Vieira's response was twofold. First, he relied on the threat of military force, by instructing loyalists within the army to close all roads in the capital city, with tanks at various checkpoints on the perimeter, and by allowing a Soviet naval warship to remain in Bissau's harbour twice as long as had been planned, in order to intimidate his potential rivals and strengthen the hand of his supporters.[3] Secondly, the President formally granted the armed forces the privilege of receiving the initial distribution of all imported rice, as well as 'first call' on such basic necessities as oil and butter – so that they would no longer need to wait in line for these goods along with the rest of the population – and also promised them new uniforms.[4] Thus, Vieira deftly employed a stick-then-carrot approach which had the twofold overall impact of regaining the loyalty (however tentative) of the armed forces, while re-asserting his authority over them, and of illustrating that his political power remained, to some extent, dependent on continuing partial acquiescence to the various demands of the military.[5]

At the same time, it was clear that further strengthening of Vieira's personal rule and of the Party would necessitate additional support

[1] Interview, Ziguinchor, February 1984; and Odou, loc. cit. pp. 6–7.

[2] Personal informants in Bissau.

[3] Personal observation and informants, Bissau, June 1983, and interview, Dakar, September 1983.

[4] The uniforms were provided by South Korea. Interview, Dakar, September 1983; and *Nô Pintcha*, 7 September 1983.

[5] This bears out Patrick Chabal's post-coup suggestion in *West Africa*, 12 January 1981, that 'Dependence on the army will inevitably lead the new government to allocate more resources to the armed forces'.

mechanisms and re-deployment of personnel. First of all, Commander João de Silva, who had been responsible for some of the unrest in the armed forces, was relieved of his position as Chief of Staff.[1] Secondly, a National Security Council, selected by and functioning at the disposition of the President, was entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing the new security agencies that were created in the Government, Party, and army.[2] Thirdly, the J.A.A.C. (*Juventude Africana Amílcar Cabral*') was revitalised in a determined effort to increase that organisation's effectiveness by encouraging a new sense of commitment among the youth cadres, whose activities should henceforth directly benefit and bolster the P.A.I.G.C.[3]

The significance of the J.A.A.C. to the Party's drive to augment its power is indicated by the fact that the August cabinet reshuffle was first announced to its leaders, and by the emphasis at its September 1983 Conference that the Party's 'future militants' would be recruited from the J.A.A.C., described as 'the fighting reserve of the P.A.I.G.C.', constituted by those who are 'most disposed to and capable of defending intransigently and under any circumstances' the realisation of its programme.[4]

## 4. *Personal and Ethno-Military Power Struggles*

Victor Saúde Maria, the Foreign Minister until 1981, who became Prime Minister in March 1982, vied for power and influence with Vieira in a steadily intensifying effort to overcome his hold over the centralised political arena. Maria proved a formidable political foe, utilising his governmental expertise and relying on his supporters in the Ministries to weave a web of personal support that simultaneously reflected lingering resistance by the public bureaucracy to the mounting controls being exercised by the Party. The initial surfacing of the conflict between the two men took place immediately before and during the course of the 1981 Extraordinary Party Conference, when, after intensive lobbying efforts on the part of both leaders, the President finally succeeded in abolishing the post of Secretary-General-Adjunct of the P.A.I.G.C.[5] As this position would have gone to Maria, allowing

[1] *Africa Report*, 28, 6, November–December 1983, p. 31.
[2] *Nô Pintcha*, 24 August 1984; and *West Africa*, 5 September 1983, p. 2082.
[3] Interview with J.A.A.C. official, Bissau, July 1983; and *Nô Pintcha*, 14 September 1983.
[4] Interview, Dakar, November 1983; and *No Pintcha*, 14 September 1983.
[5] *Afrique–Asie*, 1013, 319, 9–23 April 1984, p. 28.

him a substantial base of power within the Party, in addition to his Prime Ministership, Vieira's success in eliminating the post represented an important strategic victory.

However, Maria was successful in each of the years 1981, 1982, and 1983 in working to prevent new elections from being held for the National Popular Assembly, which the President had wanted because this would have served as an institution of personal strength.[1] Finally, in March 1984. Vieira succeeded in securing sufficient support not only to organise elections, but also to eliminate the post of Prime Minister, in effect ousting Maria from power. Shortly afterwards, the latter was placed under house arrest for attempting to organise a *coup d'état*.[2] The abolition of the Prime Ministership further weakened the institutional independence of the Government, especially as the post was 'replaced' by that of Vice-President of the Revolutionary Council, allowing for an unimpeded regulation of the Ministries by the Party.[3]

While the President had out-manoeuvred Maria, the Army Commander, Paulo Correia, a Balanta military hero of the independence struggle with a large and loyal following within the armed forces, posed an even greater threat to Vieira's rule, twice directing coup attempts by Balanta officers and soldiers, the first in March 1982, when the Bra tank battalion just outside Bissau was coaxed into moving against the régime.[4]

After the Bra commander had been executed, Correia – who had served as Minister of the Armed Forces until then – was made Minister of Rural Development in an apparent effort to remove him from direct access to the army without provoking a hostile reaction from other Balanta officers, which undoubtedly would have been the case had he been altogether ousted from the Government.[5] Also, Viriato Pan, a Balanta lawyer and General Prosecutor as of 1981, who had been arrested out of fear that he was linked to Correia's attempted coup, was released as a result of intense pressure placed on Vieira by Balanta officers.[6] The President's respect for the power of the Balanta within the

[1] Ibid. and Rudebeck, *Problèmes*, pp. 58–9.

[2] *Diario de Noticias* (Lisbon), 27 March 1984; *O Jornal* (Lisbon), 5 April 1984; and *Afrique–Asie*, op. cit.

[3] Interviews, Lisbon, March 1984; and Bollinger, op. cit. p. 213.

[4] Babtista da Silva, 'Guiné-Bissau: o instável poder' ('Guinea-Bissau: unstable power'), in *Terceiro Mundo* (Lisbon), 84, December 1985, p. 35; *Africa Report*, 27, 3, May–June 1982, p. 25; and *Economic Quarterly Review, Guinea–Bissau. Annual Supplement*, 1983, p. 28.

[5] *Africa Report*, 27, 4, July–August 1982, p. 29; and *Quarterly Economic Report, Guinea–Bissau*, 3, 1982, p. 18.

[6] Confession by Viriato Pan in *Nô Pintcha*, 12 March 1986.

army was further reflected in the March 1984 appointment of Correia to the post of Vice-President, a clear effort to appease the Balanta soldiers and officers.[1]

Despite these relative concessions, however, neither Correia nor his fellow military men were thwarted in their drive to augment their power, and in November 1985 they planned to overthrow the régime and to install Correia as President and Viriato Pan as Vice-President.[2] Correia and about one dozen Balanta were immediately arrested before their coup could be implemented; a total of 53 accused conspirators were later convicted, including Correia and Pan, who were both executed along with four others in July 1986.[3]

### 5. *The Popular National Assembly*

The President's success in repelling the challenges by Maria and Correia to his rule had been made possible by amassing the political, physical, and propagandistic might of various supportive institutions and personnel in his favour, including the new security forces, loyalists in the army, the P.A.I.G.C., the now-thoroughly controlled Ministries, the J.A.A.C., and the Popular National Assembly, which had first been elected in 1972 and re-elected in 1976, before being disbanded immediately following the successful coup of November 1980. The 1972 elections had served to ratify the popularity of the P.A.I.G.C. within the territories under its control – about three-forths of the country – before the war for national independence had been concluded.[4]

The 1976 elections had been held in order to legitimise the new régime, and to incorporate into the formal political system those areas of the countryside that had not directly participated in the liberation struggle for geographic or political reasons.[5] The voting procedures did not 'extend grass-roots democracy' in either 1972 or 1976, as some analysts had claimed,[6] because the P.A.I.G.C. had hand-picked the vast majority of candidates and had controlled the elections sufficiently to ensure a party-dominated Assembly.[7] Between 1972 and 1980, the National Assembly had practically no other function than to meet

[1] Interview, Lisbon, March 1984; and Da Silva, loc. cit. pp. 34–5.
[2] Pan's confession, loc. cit.
[3] *Christian Science Monitor* (Boston), 23 July 1986, and personal sources. Additionally, six of those arrested soon died in jail as a result of what the Government described as 'health reasons'.
[4] Rudebeck, *Guinea-Bissau*, p. 159.
[5] Interview, Bissau, May 1983.
[6] Chabal, *Amílcar Cabral*, p. 159; Rudebeck, *Guinea-Bissau*; and Davidson, *No Fist*.
[7] Interview, Bissau, May 1983; and Valimamad, op. cit. pp. 237–40.

annually for several days,[1] being principally a symbolic institution that lacked independent power, serving to bolster the image, although not the reality, of a popularly controlled political system.[2]

The March–April 1984 elections, similarly to the previous two, were carried out in a highly controlled manner, having been preceded by explanations given by party officials about the balloting procedures.[3] The 'campaign' period, in which people are informed about when and how to vote, was much briefer – lasting only three weeks – than in earlier elections,[4] the single-party, single-candidate lists having been chosen by the party élite with little or no public discussion.[5] The voting process clearly reflected this hierarchical approach: an indirect, two-step procedure was followed, as in previous elections, whereby the participating populace, organised in 546 electoral assemblies, voted Yes/No for lists of candidates to serve as regional councillors, who then, two weeks later, voted Yes/No for a selected list of 150 of their peers to become Deputies in the new National Assembly.[6]

By now, as already indicated, the P.A.I.G.C. had clearly established a hegemonical position *vis-à-vis* the Government, and was therefore in a superior strategic position to employ the National Assembly which emerged from the 1984 elections as a party-supportive institution. After all, this body was designed and dominated by the P.A.I.G.C., with many of its Deputies simultaneously holding party posts, and even though it lacks any substantive decision-making power, it does officially serve as the highest organ in the Government.[7]

The Assembly thus provides the P.A.I.G.C. with an additional trump card to play in the consolidation of its power over the public bureaucracy, particularly in its rôle of providing *pro forma* electoral acclamation of those appointed by the Party to government posts.[8] It also serves as a public forum for the airing of party propaganda, and for the routine Yes-voting on party policies, as is indicated by the

[1] Rudebeck, *Problèmes*, p. 53.

[2] Tony Hodges, 'Five Years of Independence', in *Africa Report*, January–February 1979, pp. 4–5.

[3] Interview, Lisbon, March 1984; and *Nô Pintcha*, 25 and 29 February, and 10 and 24 March 1984.

[4] *Nô Pintcha*, 10 and 24 March 1984; and Rudebeck, *Guinea–Bissau*, p. 156.

[5] Interview, Lisbon, March 1984; and *Nô Pintcha*, 29 February 1984.

[6] Interview, Lisbon, March 1984; *Nô Pintcha*, 24 March 1984; *Diario de Noticias*, 1 April 1984; and *Quarterly Economic Review*, *Guinea–Bissau*, 3, 1984, p. 27. The voting was held on 31 March and 18 April 1984.

[7] Interview, Lisbon, March 1984; and *Nô Pintcha*, 24 March 1984.

[8] Interview, Lisbon, March 1984.

Assembly's approval in May 1984 of the new constitution.[1] Whereas the weakened P.A.I.G.C. of Cabral's era did not effectively use the Assembly to control the Government, Vieira is now able to do exactly that, employing the Deputies to boost the P.A.I.G.C.'s real and symbolic authority, and to expand its organisational reach, thereby spreading the power of the Party over wider institutional territory.

### 6. *Ethnic Relations of Power*

Although Cape Verdians were removed from the highest positions of power, many have been re-integrated into the public bureaucracy, with less visible and responsible posts, mainly because their technical and administrative skills could not be duplicated by others.[2] Both the President and current Vice-President, Carlos Correia (not related to Paulo Correia) are Papel, although the P.A.I.G.C.'s Political Bureau, Central Committee, and the ruling Council of State are all well-balanced among Balanta, Papel, Mandjack, and several other ethnic groups.[3]

In general, the rural Balanta have continued to back Vieira and the P.A.I.G.C., as indicated by interviews and, especially, by their massive participation in the 1984 elections.[4] This support has been based on the fact that the P.A.I.G.C. has not attempted to challenge the existing structures of power in the villages, that Balanta military men were rapidly promoted following the 1980 coup, and that Vieira himself was embued with historical legitimacy for his rôle in the independence struggle. However, the mass arrests in November 1985 of their military commanders, combined with the fact that Papel leaders now hold the two highest positions of national power, may cast doubt on the legitimacy of Vieira's rule for the Balanta.

## CONCLUSIONS

The institutionalisation of a political system substantively dominated by the P.A.I.G.C., and supported by a widened security apparatus, by the J.A.A.C. and the A.N.P., and headed by a powerful President, has

[1] *Africa News* (Durham, N.C.), XII, 22, 28 May 1984, p. 12.
[2] Interviews, Bissau, April 1983; Lopes, *A Transição Histórica*, p. 259; and Hochet, op. cit. p. 45.
[3] Interviews, Casamance, January 1984, and United States, November 1985.
[4] Balanta participation in the 1976 elections was relatively weak, reflecting their lack of support for President Luiz Cabral. Interviews, Ziguinchor, January 1984, and Casamance, February 1984. Also written correspondence received July 1984; and Lopes, *A Transição Histórica*, p. 92.

only been possible as the result of a long struggle for national power: in particular, the active military intervention of 1980 and the pursuant incorporation of army officers into the ruling political bodies; the achievement of party control over the Government; the defeat of a series of individual challenges to Vieira's Presidency; the 1983 deflection of a threatened army coup; the re-invigoration of the J.A.A.C.; the formation of presidentially commanded security agencies; and the re-establishment of an elected Popular National Assembly.

The extent to which this configuration of power has become entrenched is indicated by the fact that the Party itself called 1984 'The Year of Rigorous Discipline and of Institutionalisation'.[1] This process has been reflected by the establishment of a new constitution that has formalised the paramountcy of the P.A.I.G.C., that has strengthened the Presidency by not including a Prime Minister, and that has replaced the Revolutionary Council with the Council of State.[2] Headed by President Vieira, and responsible for overseeing all governmental activities, the Council of State has 15 members, approximately two-thirds of whom are party leaders, with the remainder being military officials.[3]

It must not be forgotten that the institutionalisation of the President's personal rule, and of the power of the P.A.I.G.C., have taken place in an almost constantly fluid political context, in which many soldiers undoubtedly still harbour major reservations about Vieira (especially because of his arrest and execution of Balanta officers), and in which recent events may well have sparked deep dissatisfaction in the rural areas. While Vieira appears for the moment to have consolidated his existing apparatus of power, discontent among the peasantry and military may eventually swell sufficiently to produce strong currents of

[1] *Nô Pintcha*, 24 March 1984.

[2] The Council of State was 'elected' on 16 May 1984, the new constitution having been ratified two days previously, albeit hardly differing in substance from what existed during Cabral's era, since the dominance of the Party over the Government continues to be stressed. The difference is in the context of its promulgation: the constitutional emphasis on party supremacy is meaningful now, because the P.A.I.G.C. really has consolidated its political hegemony. Thus, the official approval of the new constitution may be viewed as part of the institutionalisation process. See *Africa News*, 22, 28 May 1984, p. 12, and *Quarterly Economic Review, Guinea–Bissau*, 4, 1984, p. 26.

[3] In addition to Vieira, the members of the 1984 Council of State included Paulo Correia, Iafai Camará, Batua Na Batcha, and Bengate Na Beate (all military officers), Vasco Cabral (Director-General of Economic Planning in the President's Office and party theoretician), Carlos Correia (Minister of Rural Development and Fisheries, military officer and party leader), Filinto Barros (Minister of Natural Resources), José Pereira (Minister of National Security and party cadre), Julio Semede (Minister of Foreign Affairs and head of the P.A.I.G.C.'s workers' movement), Tiago Alelua Lopes, Mario Mendes, and Bana Matche (party cadres), Teoboldo Barboza and Francisca Pereira (head of the P.A.I.G.C.'s youth and women's organisations, respectively).

antagonism that are likely to pose a genuine threat to the present régime.

Politics in contemporary Guinea-Bissau have been marked by struggles for power among political institutions, individual leaders, and ethnic groups, with the peasantry also playing an important rôle. Class conflict and ideological disputes have not formed a significant part of the post-independence landscape, and an analysis of politics in Guinea-Bissau that is based on the frameworks of class and ideology would fall short of explaining the vicissitudes that have permeated the centralised political arena. Amílcar Cabral's goals of national integration and revolutionary democracy have receded onto a distant plane of historical thought, as the country remains mired in conflicts that appear to have undermined, at least for the near future, the potential for constructing a popularly controlled political system under the guidance of a unified and responsible national leadership.