

CABRAL

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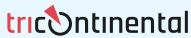
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Introduction: Amílcar Cabral, the Life of a Revolutionary Socialist

DESMOND FONSECA¹

Amílcar Cabral was born nine months after Vladimir Lenin died and a few years into the Soviet Union first steps as the world's first socialist state. As in this collection of unpublished texts, Cabral wrote that the great Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin was born around the same time that imperialism was. While Lenin's birth coincided with that of imperialism, Cabral's coincided with the arrival of the socialist camp and the Third International—the Communist International—which pledged to support the liberation movements of the colonies and altered Marx and Engels' famous dictum “workers of the world, unite!” to “workers *and oppressed people* of the world, unite!”

Around the same time, colonial Portugal was following in the footsteps of fascist Italy and anticipating the moves of Nazi Germany in suspending bourgeois democratic rights and ushering in

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a far right military government. Revolutions were being crushed all across Western Europe which was a blow not only to the working classes of various European countries, but to the oppressed workers and peasants across the periphery who had some hopes that World War I would bring freedom as it had the colonized peoples of the defeated Russian Empire. The military coup of 1926 in Portugal would lead to nearly fifty years of uninterrupted colonial and anti-democratic rule in the westernmost reaches of Europe. This was the context that Amílcar Cabral was born into, one which he would play a leading role in overturning.

The descendant of two Cabo Verdean parents, Cabral was born in the small town of Bafata in what was then Portuguese Guinea (now Guinea-Bissau). He was part of a rapidly growing class of Cabo Verdeans who would go on to work as colonial officials in “Portuguese” Guinea. Cabo Verdeans and Guineans had long lived together in harmony, but the colonial destruction of the Guinean political economy and the immiseration of the Cabo Verdean population through neglect and famine led to a jarring reality: by the end of World War I, and the eve of Amílcar Cabral’s birth, up to 70 percent of all colonial officials in Guinea were of Cabo Verdean descent. Despite the horrors of famine and drought which plagued the vast majority of Cabo Verdean population, a segment was permitted to advance through the colonial education system much easier than the rest of Portugal’s colonial territories in Africa, mainly so that they could do the bruntwork of administering Portugal’s colonies—Cabo Verdeans were thus prevalent as colonial officials in both Guinea and Angola.

This was the environment in which Cabral was born. Spending his first years in Guinea with his father—a Cabo Verdean schoolmaster educated in a Catholic seminar—Cabral moved to Cabo Verde to attend secondary school as a teenager, where his mother worked in a fish tannery and struggled to make more than a few pennies after working several hours a day. In the face of

colonial drudgery, Cabral developed a love of poetry and for his parents native country:

They say the fields were covered in green,
the most beautiful color, because it is the color of hope.
That the land, now, really is a green cape.
 – *And the storm became a cornucopia...*

It was also here where Cabral saw firsthand the horrors of famine. The lack of rains in 1940, combined with the negligent agricultural policies of Portugal combined with the confiscation of grain and foodstuffs to sell to the warring nations of World War II, led to cataclysmic death and destruction of the Cabo Verdean population over the next decade. On several islands, over half of the population perished. Per capita, it was one of the deadliest famines in human history. These famines were a recurring permanent feature of life in the Cabo Verde islands. In his poems, Cabral dreamed of liberating his homelands from the deprivation and devastation.

Surviving the famines, and maintaining top grades (when school was able to be held), Amílcar went to Portugal to study agronomy—no doubt moved to this course of study by his experience of famine and drought. In Portugal, he quickly joined anti-fascist student groups as one of the few Black African students in the metropole. Amílcar’s fraternizations with anti-fascist Portuguese youth remains an understudied area of his life to this day.

More well known is his nascent anti-colonial activity with the handful of other African students studying in Portugal at the time. As part of the Casa dos Estudantes do Império (ironically, the “House of the Students of the Empire”) and the Centro de Estudos Africanos (Center of African Studies), Cabral and the nationalist youth—inspired by the wave of national liberation struggles in the post WW2 setting—would begin clandestinely studying and discussing the pressing issues of the day: blackness (or *negritude*), development, culture, colonialism, and, most taboo to the colonial authorities, independence. Around this time, Cabral first read

Vladimir Lenin's *On the Agrarian Question*, which he recounts in this collection as when he finally got access to that "forbidden fruit" which "tasted the sweetest." Seeds of revolution were being planted, and the praxis of Amílcar Cabral began to ripen.

At secret apartment meetings, Cabral and the rest of the nationalist students would discuss all these under the guise of secrecy, playing loud music over their speakers to avoid the Portuguese gestapo. Giants of African anti-colonialism—Agostinho Neto, Mário Pinto de Andrade, Marcelino dos Santos, and more—were a part of this circle, but it was Cabral who stood above the rest. It is for this reason and others that Pinto de Andrade, a founding member of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, would name this era of university students the *Geração de Cabral* (the Cabral Generation).

The Chinese, Vietnamese, Algerian, and Korean Revolutions were further splitting the world into two—the imperialists and the anti-imperialists—and the Africans colonized by the Portuguese needed to get into the action. Remembering the horrors of his adolescence, Cabral got through his master's degree with top marks and set himself up for a lucrative career as an agronomist. But, as he wrote in letters to his first wife whom he met in Portugal, he was called to pursue a career of liberation rather than self-enrichment, as was the prerogative of his class:

What calls me are millions of individuals who need my contribution in the thankless struggle they have been waging with Nature and with men... There, where Technology and Science are still shadows, where Nature, rich in secrets, virgin of riches and secrets, offers those who want to work and do something for Men, the most interesting reasons with regard to the profession that we have chosen. There, where life calls me, where I will have to live part of my life because life itself needs me.

At the age of twenty-seven, in 1952, Cabral got a position as director of an experimental farm in Pessube, Guinea. From his large house and comfortable accommodations in Guinea, Cabral began having initial conversations with a small group of Guin-

eans and Cabo Verdeans (including the future first presidents of both nations, and also a Portuguese woman named Sofia Pomba Guerra, who was a member of the Portuguese Communist Party) about the future of their homelands. As in Portugal during his university days, these meetings were held under the strictest of clandestinity. As the adults would have discussion in a backroom, Cabral's niece would stand guard, only entering the room when an unexpected character would arrive or pass by, signaling everyone to get up and dance as if they were just at a party—and not organizing towards the liberation of their country.

The Portuguese eventually grew suspicious of Cabral's activities, and his contract with the experimental farm in Pessube was not renewed in 1955. Nevertheless, Cabral kept to his career for the time being. The jobs Cabral did get—consulting for various agricultural firms in Portugal, Guinea and Angola—allowed him the ability, mobility and stability to travel frequently for political matters. The Angolans were the most advanced of the Portuguese-colonized Africans, but Cabral was an integral part of this budding nexus. Conducting agricultural research in Angola, Cabral was present during the founding of the Party of the United Struggle for Africans in Angola (PLUAA) in 1953, which would eventually merge with other organizations to become the MPLA. Reflecting on his time in Guinea and Angola...

However, Cabral was forbidden to enter Guinea by the Portuguese except to visit family around his birthday, September 12. It is for this reason that the history of the PAIGC is etched around two important moments. The first being September 19, 1956, which is when Cabral and five others gathered in Guinea to officially form the party which would go on to be the revolutionary vehicle utilized by the people of Guinea and Cabo Verde to win their independence. The second being a famous meeting of cadres following the August 3 Pidjiguiti Massacre—where the Portuguese slaughtered dozens of striking dock workers who had been organized, at least in part, by the embryonic PAIGC—where

Cabral ordered an end to the party's urban activity aimed at winning independence through nonviolent means. Party cadre were sent to the bush to organize the population for armed struggle to win their liberation by force.

With this, Cabral joined the likes of Mao, Ho Chi Minh, Fidel, and the millions of men and women across the world who by 1960 had been compelled by the forces of imperialism to pick up the gun and fight for their dignity as human beings. Once “merely” a skilled poet, a brilliant agronomist, and a precocious political activist, Cabral would shortly go on to become a master of military tactics, diplomatic affairs, and theoretical analysis, and a party organizer. Always methodical, the armed struggle in Guinea did not begin until 1963, after four years of deep preparation in the bush. Early military victories were met with severe challenges in party organization, many of which were rectified at the first party congress at Cassacá led by Cabral in 1964. The famous “liberated zones” were implemented following the congress, and the leadership of Cabral became known beyond the confines of Lusophone Africa.

That same year, Cabral's work caught the attention of a revolutionary Argentinian doctor who was stationed with some guerrillas in Congo. Che Guevara, during his tour of Africa as a representative of the revolutionary Cuban government, made it a point to stop in Guinea and meet the PAIGC leader before heading back to the socialist island 90 miles off the coast of the US. When he arrived in Guinea, Che was surprised to learn that Cabral was off on an important mission. If he wanted to meet Cabral, he'd have to wait a few days, if not weeks. Wait he did. Following the meeting of the two revolutionaries, agreements were made between the PAIGC and the Cuban government to send various resources to the liberation movement. An invitation was soon extended to Cabral and the PAIGC to attend the now-heralded Tricontinental Conference in Havana a year later. It was here where Cabral delivered what is still a must-read for all anti-imperialists, the

“Weapon of Theory” address. The importance of ideology, of class struggle, of developing the productive forces, of class suicide, of revolutionary socialist states, and many more were laid out here.

Cabral received a warm welcome from all the revolutionaries in attendance, most notably Fidel Castro, with whom he shared a lengthy private audience following the address, and the representatives of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to whom Cabral wrote warmly following the conference. If there was one event which marked Cabral as a world-historical figure, it was the Tricontinental.

Cabral’s work in leading the PAIGC would continue on diligently for the next seven years of his life. Many more speeches were made which live on today, military tactics were devised, and diplomatic travels were arranged, where Cabral managed to organize important war materiel and human resources that would be instrumental in eventually defeating the Portuguese in Guinea—most important of these were no doubt the Strela missiles sent by the Soviet Union. The party Cabral built was continuously strengthened, the greatest single example of which was the 1969 PAIGC cadre seminar in Dakar.

Up until his assassination on January 19, 1973, Cabral was giving detailed instructions to his most trusted commanders such as Pedro Pires on how the next phase of the struggle should be conducted. The struggle continued as his funeral was being held in Conakry, attended by Pan-African revolutionaries such as Sekou Toure, Amiri Baraka, and Kwame Ture. The struggle certainly continued without Cabral, and continued victoriously. How the struggle would have been conducted were Cabral to see the end of the national liberation phase of the struggle, however, we will never know. How would the liberation struggle have ended, given that it was the PAIGC’s huge offensive against the Portuguese armed forces launched in response to Cabral’s death that led to military victory? Would the devastating 1980 split of the PAIGC have been averted? What would the process of socialist

reconstruction in Guinea-Bissau *and* Cabo Verde look like under Cabral's leadership? How would Cabral have navigated the changing global order into the 1980s and 1990s? Would socialism have a state representative in Africa today?

We will never know. He would have only been sixty-six—much younger than Mao and Fidel who both governed well into their sixties—by the time the Soviet Union was dismantled, the same year that the party in Cabo Verde was crushed in multiparty elections by a neoliberal right-wing opposition made up of party members. Cabral's assassination cut short a wealth of rich experiences and lessons from one of the greatest thinkers and practitioners of the twentieth century. Even Lenin, whose brilliant life came to a close at the age of fifty-four, was able to govern in revolutionary Russia and the Soviet Union for nearly seven years.

1973 was a difficult year for revolutionaries, beyond Cabral's assassination. Allende was overthrown and executed in a US coup, alongside thousands of other socialists, leading neoliberalism to its first disastrous trial run in Chile. Mao met with Nixon, and further threw the worldwide socialist movement deeper into its disorientation around China and the Soviet Union. The oil embargo by OPEC threw the US and global economy into a downturn, but also accelerated the empire's turn to neoliberalism and marked a long-term negative shift in the economic prospects of socialist countries. Domestically, COINTELPRO had smashed a burgeoning revolutionary left in the US.

2024 is the centennial of Cabral's birth and Lenin's death. Immense challenges still face the left today. Chief among them all is Israel's ongoing genocide against the Palestinian—and now the Lebanese—people, financed, armed, and overseen with the full backing of the United States and its junior partners in imperialism, reaching horrors unparalleled in the twenty-first century. Domestically, in the West, the far-right has made gains unseen since the lead-up to World War II. US-led hybrid warfare is rampant against the socialist and progressive countries of Latin

America. Kenya's neoliberal government is serving as a Black face for imperialism in Haiti, as the Western plunder of Congo facilitated by the Rwandan and Ugandan-funded militias of Paul Kagame and Yoweri Museveni leads to the heart-wrenching death and displacement that fuels capitalist production.

But the struggle continues. Palestine has ignited the global anti-imperialist movement with its heroic resistance. Socialist and anti-imperialist movements are on the rise in Europe and the United States. The governments of Venezuela and Cuba remain steadfast in the face of criminal blockades and coup attempts. The Alliance of Sahelian States (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso) continues to chart a model of independence and genuine Pan-Africanism. As Cabral writes in his tribute to Lenin, "imperialism has killed and continues to kill capitalism," and, in so doing, has paved the way for socialism.

As readers will see in this book, Cabral spoke to the irreversibility of the world socialist revolution signaled by the October Revolution at the onset of his life and carried on by the Guinean and Cabo Verdean revolutions led by the PAIGC during his adulthood. The overthrow of the Soviet Union marked the reversal (for the time being) of these particular projects, but the international movement they represented continues in a new phase. The thesis declaring the "end of history" has been thoroughly debunked by the movement of the masses around the world. Revolution lurks around the corner. The life and revolutionary leadership of Vladimir Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution, of Amílcar Cabral and the PAIGC Revolution, prove it has been possible. The ongoing relevance of their thought and praxis highlights the reality uttered and embodied by Black Panther Party leader and revolutionary Fred Hampton, "You can kill a revolutionary, but you can't kill the revolution."

Long Live Lenin!

Cabral Ka Muri!

October 2024

Centennial of a Simple African

LUÍS FONSECA¹

We celebrate, in this year of 2024, the centennial of the birth of Amílcar Cabral.

“A simple African, fulfilling his duty within the context of his times,” as he described himself, Amílcar Cabral gained a universal significance when he founded the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde (PAIGC), the most successful organization in the struggle for national liberation of all the former Portuguese colonies in Africa. The PAIGC defeated the colonial army, which contributed to the fall of the dictatorship in Portugal and the extinction of its colonial empire, leading to the foundation of the two sovereign states of Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde, powerfully influencing the political future and reconfiguration of the African continent.

What distinguishes and signifies Cabral is the exceptional combination of attributes united in his historic personality through political charisma, diplomatic efficacy, and sagacious military strategy, as well as prolific theoretical thought. This thought was the result of his reflections on the struggles (and its translation into revolutionary action) which encompassed various domains of humanity.

These multiple facets and the influence that he exerted and continues to exert over contemporary intellectuals make Cabral

¹ President of the General Council of the Amílcar Cabral Foundation

one of the most renowned figures of the African continent in the twentieth century, as well as an obligatory reference amongst serious thinkers today. This is reflected in the ample publication of works about his life and thought worldwide. Renowned authors, thinkers, artists, and activists from all continents have demonstrated their admiration in various ways, acknowledging his influence in their own career and life choices and dedicating a considerable number of scientific and artistic works to him. Many of those who, still today, are brought to the struggle for justice, progress, freedom, and equality, continue to find inspiration and guidance within his texts and in the example he set.

To honor this exceptional character, the Amílcar Cabral Foundation—a depository of a large part of his material and immaterial archive, founded by friends and followers of Cabral whose central goal is preserving and disseminating his legacy—has been promoting a series of commemorative actions. In doing so, we invite the institutions and national entities in Africa and the world that value this heritage to join us in the celebration of the Centennial.

The International Union of Left Publishers (IULP), which consists of more than forty publishers from the Global South, joins the celebrations in publishing two works of Cabral—“Lenin and the National Liberation Movement” and his speech on the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution—in various languages.

CABRAL AND LENIN

By remarkable coincidence, Amílcar Cabral’s centennial is also taking place on the same year as the centennial of the death of Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin, inviting us to revisit Cabral’s reflections on this important figure of the twentieth century and the extraordinary historical events in which he played a decisive role.

These texts leave no doubt over Cabral’s admiration towards Lenin and his greatest accomplishment: the formation of the Soviet Union. To Cabral, Lenin was a “consequential revolutionary

... a philosopher and a sage with a grandeur comparable to those of the greatest thinkers of humanity” whereas “the great October Revolution ... transformed the destiny of not only the Russian peoples, but of humanity.”

However, it is interesting to note that on par with the rich contents and elegance of his writings directed at academic and political figures, Cabral was a pedagogue of the revolution, as Paulo Freire characterized him. He produced real didactic works that would be more useful to his own comrades than to the illustrious audiences they were directed to, intentionally or not. This perhaps explains his efforts to personally revisit the records of his improvised speech at the Alma-Ata Symposium in honor of Lenin and to publish them through the PAIGC’s Department of Information.

In his text about Lenin, Cabral emphasizes how his behavior and coherence set an example to all freedom fighters and defined revolutionary ethics as an ultimate imperative. These are questions he never tired of emphasizing to the leaders and rank and file of the party, whether in formal or informal encounters.

As can be read in this collection, he writes the following:

In the general framework of the national liberation movement, particularly in conditions like ours, the moral behavior of the combatant, particularly of leaders, is a factor of the highest importance that can significantly influence the success or failure of the movement as a whole. Obviously, the struggle is essentially political. But the political, economic, social, and historical circumstances in which this movement is structured and develops bequeath a particular importance to problems of a moral nature. This is above all because of the weaknesses specific to the national liberation movement in the colonies, the opportunism or possibilities of opportunism which characterize it, the pressures and ruses put into practice by the imperialist enemy, and by the difficulty or the impossibility of vigorous control of the movement or its leaders on the part of the popular nationalist masses.

What is the most extraordinary in this text is how his acclamatory description of Lenin also applies perfectly to the author himself:

Lenin was an example of coherence within himself and the coherence of words with actions. As his personality evolved, he was able to remain true to himself through his choices and actions. His actions always corresponded to his words as he rejected facile verbalism, demagoguery and flattery. Lenin was an example of honesty, probity, sincerity, and courage. He always placed above all his conveniences the need to strictly observe the duties of morality and justice, to refuse to lie and to practice the truth, whatever the consequences or problems that it might create... He always considered man as the supreme value of the universe. His devotion to children has become legendary, because, for him, these delicate beings who are so misunderstood or mistreated by the exploitation of man by man, are the flowers of humanity, the hope and the certainty of triumph of a life of happiness.

What better description for this “simple African,” whose centennial we celebrate today?

* * *

In contemporary times, with the disappearance of the USSR and the socialist camp, one can question the validity of the texts that praised the stability of a system that was unable to resist the new “winds of history,” regardless of who triggered them.

Historians have a duty to critically analyze the factors that led to this end. If the majority of opinions lean towards considering the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp as definitive proof of the inviability of this system, there must also be those that defend the point of view that states that if these projects did not survive, it was due to the internal subversion of the very principles and values defended by its founder. With this perspective, rereading Cabral’s texts can support other interpretations about the sequence of global events that took place in the ’80s and ’90s.

The most important thing is the following, according to Cabral:

To love the cause for the liberation of mankind from any type of oppression, to love the wonderful adventure that is human life, and to love all that is beautiful and constructive on the planet.

Praia, Cabo Verde, September 2024,
Centennial Anniversary of Amílcar Cabral

A Legacy for Current Times

JOÃO PEDRO STEDILE¹

Amílcar Cabral is, without a doubt, one of the principal heroes of Pan-African thought and struggle. His legacy has cast a light that illuminates us to this day. He led an intense life in his forty-nine years. He began as a very studious and intelligent youth, the son of a protestant pastor that raised him with values of humanity and solidarity. He then migrated to Portugal and chose to become an agronomist, with the objective of helping his people and Cabo Verde, an agricultural nation lacking development in technical and productive capacities.

He understood the theoretical contribution of past revolutionaries and took from them scientific knowledge and historical experiences in order to interpret the African reality. He joined the Pan-African movement in the footsteps of Frantz Fanon and Kwame Nkrumah, and joined his peers Agostinho Neto, Julius Nyerere, Samora Machel, and Nelson Mandela. Today, he continues to hold great significance amongst those who fight for a more just, solidaristic, and anti-capitalist society.

Despite his young age, he was an exemplary popular leader and activist. In the field of theory, he was also an avid thinker and scholar of the classics without being dogmatic or sectarian, much less unoriginal. He knew how to use scientific knowledge to explain the continent of Africa. His time in the Portuguese

¹ National Coordinator of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST)

metropolis allowed him to access revolutionary literature, where he studied Marx, Engels, Lenin, and also came into contact with other scholars.

He knew better than anyone how to use this knowledge to study and interpret the current reality of his country, and of Africa. His writings analyzing Cabo Verde and its people are exquisite and attest to the importance of analyzing the reality we live in and how to change it in depth. Furthermore, he was able to extract lessons from historical revolutionary experiences to adapt them to the organizational needs of his people, towards a project of national liberation.

However, he did not stick solely to theoretical analysis—he also produced a method of organization which included activists of political organizations such as the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde (PAIGC) and influenced other political organizations in Africa such as the Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). His method of writing letters and manifestos directed to activists and social sectors combined critical analysis of a given situation with practical orientations of what actions to take. It is because of this that his texts are organizational, orientational: they induce practice.

When it came to the class struggle, he concretely demonstrated his commitment to the cause of the people by mobilizing the armed struggle and the mass struggle. He was directly involved and set an example risking his life.

His wisdom, coherence, and undying commitment to the people are perhaps the reason why even after achieving the political liberation of Guinea-Bissau, the empire never forgave him and deployed the right-wing forces working with Portugal and the United States to assassinate him on January 20, 1973.

I would also like to highlight another important legacy of Amílcar. Perhaps, amongst all other Pan-African leaders that I have mentioned, he was the one who most approached Latin America. He understood the importance of internationalism not

only as a principle, a theory, but as a real practice. He understood it as imperative for the people of our countries to unite in the anti-colonial, anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchist struggle.

This led to his approximation to the Cuban revolution, through his active participation in the first historical conference in Havana in 1966 that gathered dozens of leaders of the then-called Third World, today more appropriately known as the Global South, known as the Tricontinental with representatives from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This is where the Organization of Solidarity amongst the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (OSPAAAL) was founded, and it would grow to become a key instrument in the practice of solidarity and internationalism amongst peoples.

There, he met with key characters of our history such as Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and commander Manuel Piñero, also known as Barbarroja (Red Beard), who dealt with issues of solidarity amongst revolutionary organizations. Although there is no official record, I also take the liberty to say that he certainly must have met with our Brazilian revolutionary, Carlos Marighella, who was also present at this conference.

As this, the life and works of Amílcar is rich with experiences and teachings that should orient our political action to this day, especially for the youth of Latin America, Asia, and Africa who did not know him, politically, in his lifetime. For us Brazilians, Amílcar Cabral is an important reference given the ties between our country and the people and cultures of Africa. As activists of popular peasant movements, we feel even more represented by his origins and vocation as an agronomist, which led to a better understanding of the agricultural reality of Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau with the objective of transforming it.

For all these reasons, I hope that this publication can, beyond just recovering theoretical texts, nourish our political will to better understand his legacy and the current task at hand. Despite the achievement of political independence in Africa and some

advances in Latin America, the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle remains at the forefront of the contemporary political struggle.

The bourgeoisie of our respective countries have adhered to the project of capitalist and imperialist domination. They are mere puppets, accomplices in the exploitation of capital, and subordinate in the exercise of political power in national governments. The anti-colonial and anti-racist struggle is present now, more than ever, in the Palestinian resistance, in the struggle of the Sahrawi people, in the struggle of the African peoples against French and European neocolonialism. It is present in the struggle against NATO's aggression in Libya and in Syria and in the treatment given to its migrants who cross the Mediterranean Sea.

On the other hand, western capitalism and imperialism are currently experiencing a profound crisis. They seek to compensate for this by digging deeper into classic forms of capital accumulation by promoting wars and armed conflicts to create markets for their industries of war, death, and destruction. Furthermore, multinational corporations continue to appropriate, with rapacious greed, the natural wealth of the Global South in order to transform them into commodities for profit. We see this in their attempts to seize the oil of Venezuela, Nigeria, and Angola, and strategic minerals such as uranium, iron, copper, and aluminum in all of our countries. Just as they are insatiable in their quest for gold, they are reckless in their destruction of our biodiversity and our forests through their models of predatory agriculture.

However, from the contradictions and the crisis, new paths also emerge. Little by little, international spaces of articulation of countries and governments such as BRICS, the African Union, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), are being strengthened, to resist the decadence of imperialism.

The false bourgeois democracies in our countries are also in crisis. To create new instruments for popular political participation is an urgent and necessary task. That is why it is on the agenda of all popular movements and parties, to confront the current crisis and to build anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist struggles. Capitalism is not a solution to the needs of our peoples.

These are times of crisis. But they are also times of change. And in these times, it is essential that we turn to the legacy of the life and works of our leaders, Africanists, Latinos, and internationalists.

Long live Amílcar Cabral!

Brazil, September 2024

At the Vanguard of Struggle: Letter to the 23rd Congress of the CPSU

Conakry, Guinea
March 28, 1966

To the Twenty-Third Congress of the Communist Party of the
Soviet Union

Dear friends,

At the moment when your great Party—the party of the immortal Lenin and of the working people of the Soviet Union—is having its Twenty-Third Congress, a spacecraft formed from humankind’s hand sits on the moon, after having completed its mission of human research. Furthermore, another spacecraft, also made by our own hands, successfully landed on Venus’ surface, producing valuable scientific information.

Taking into account the concrete prospects opened up by these exploits for the conquest of the Cosmos, and the fact that they are the work of your scientists rooted in the efforts of your people, one can affirm that Man—worthily represented by the Soviet people—has granted itself the enormity of the universe, through the infinity of our creative power. If it is true that no one can any longer look upon the stars as distant and elusive supernatural entities, it is certain that your poets—the faithful followers of Poushin and Mayakovsky—would nonetheless not only assimilate the planets with the rivers and mountains of our Earth, but dream of the imminent reality of the “humanization of the universe” and even the day when “man will be immersed in the stars.”

Your Congress—which brings together the vanguard of your country and the best children of your people best children—must be proud of this new reality, of the singular contribution given by Soviet Man under the direction of your great Party towards the conquest of the Cosmos, and therefore toward progress, toward peace and toward the construction of humanity’s happiness. And so, we give to you, in the name of our people and our Party, the warmest salutations.

At the same time, no one will forget the serious and complex problems which are rampant on our planet, this Earth whose cosmic beauty has moved the hero and pioneer of space, cosmonaut Gagarine. Through these problems, which surely warrant our best focus in your Congress, it is correct to highlight the following: the national liberation struggles of the people against imperialism that is aggressively intensifying everywhere, and the struggle for peace against the threats of nuclear war which heavily weighs each day on the future of humanity. And at the base of these struggles—the dramas, the tragedies but also the joys and hopes of this world, this powerful characteristic of human nature—the search for progress, for well-being, and for happiness.

There, too, you have enough reasons to be proud. Indeed, the Great October Revolution, having opened the path to liberation of oppressed nations and to the ascension of people’s power and social justice in several European countries and elsewhere, the victorious establishment of socialism in your country has consolidated these achievements of humanity. You are presently at the vanguard of the struggle against imperialism and the battle for peace. Your country is also at the vanguard of human progress, based on the continuous development of the level of productive forces—the creative work of your people. This progress isn’t only about the improvement of material well-being for all, but also of culture, art, sports, and the other domains of humankind.

While successfully reinforcing its material and spiritual power, the Soviet Union is currently providing singular aid to the peo-

ples in struggle against imperialism. Your people, who had twenty million victims during the Second World War in defense of your Revolution and the right of nations to self-determination, to peace and to liberty, continue to give new sacrifices to help newly independent countries build their progress and—from South Vietnam to Saint Domingue—to fully support by all means necessary, the peoples' acts of liberation against domination and imperialist aggression.

Allow us, dear friends, to give to you our fraternal salutations for the grand and historic role which is that of your homeland

Your Congress, which is the legitimate representative of your entire people, therefore bears on your shoulders heavy responsibilities—the heaviest that a people or a group of people has ever had before history and humanity. We are certain that your resolutions will mark another significant step forward in the fulfillment of your historic duties.

While successfully advancing our armed struggle for national liberation, our people and our Party remain faithful to the politics of peace, of non-alignment, and the intransigent defense of Africa's interests, those principles which you have woven. We remain equally proud of the effective aid that you provide to our liberation struggle and the continuous reinforcement of the foundations of sincere friendship and useful collaboration between our peoples, in service of peace and progress.

With our greatest salutations,

Please accept, dear friends, this expression of our highest sentiments and considerations.

Public Relations, Political Bureau of the PAIGC
Amílcar Cabral
General Secretary

Speech at 50th Anniversary Celebration of the October Revolution

*Red Square, Moscow
November 7, 1967*

Lovers of peace, freedom, and progress from all continents celebrate this solemn occasion, this great event that is the fiftieth anniversary of the great October Revolution. Men and women from all countries, of all races, colors, and beliefs, have come and continue to come to this wonderful capital of socialism, to this exemplarily hospitable country, to participate with the working people of the Soviet Union in the greatest celebration not only in their history, but in all of history.

It is an unforgettable privilege for us to be able to make the voice of our people—the African people of Guinea and Cabo Verde—heard here in this brief message of friendship, solidarity, hope, and certainty in the destiny of humanity which the October Revolution radically transformed. On behalf of our people, on behalf of the fighters of our party who, with arms in hand, have to fight for the liberation, peace, and progress that the great October Revolution makes possible for all peoples, we have the honor of addressing our fraternal greetings and warm congratulations to the friendly people of the USSR, to its great party, the party of Lenin, and to all its leaders. We also greet on this occasion all the peoples fighting for progress and peace, because this celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution is also theirs.

Dear friends and comrades, our people, like all peoples of the world, are increasingly aware of the transcendent significance of the October Revolution for the history of humanity. After breaking the wall of silence and the shackles of exploitation and ignorance in which Portuguese colonialism kept our people for more than one hundred years, we know today and are more certain every day that the first great transformation of our destiny on the path of liberation and progress took place on the banks of the Neva, when the Aurora crusade gave the signal for the beginning of the Revolution which the incomparable genius of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin conceived, directed, and led to total victory over the forces of feudalism, the bourgeoisie, and imperialism. Therefore, at a time when, after almost five years of armed struggle for national liberation, we have already liberated more than half of our country and kept the Portuguese colonialist hordes on the defensive, we consider that the October Revolution is a fact of our own history, and that this celebration is also ours.

We are aware of monopoly capitalism's final and fatal plan on the international stage: imperialism. Many facts, some of which are more significant, prove this reality. The first great defeat of imperialism, that is to say, the first and certainly the most transcendent victory in the struggle for the national and social liberation of the masses, was the October Revolution.

This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that, over the last fifty years, one constant has characterized history: the desperate attempt by imperialist capitalism to erase from the pages of history the great fact of the October Revolution. An attempt carried out in a thousand ways, but fundamentally aimed at the destruction of the first socialist state—the USSR.

Today—in the increasingly impossible situation of sabotaging the economic, social, scientific, and cultural achievements of the Soviet people; in the face of the irreversible expansion of the socialist camp in both Europe and Asia; irritated but powerless

in the face of the growing consolidation of the Socialist Republic of Cuba established in the Western Hemisphere, and increasingly harassed by the national liberation struggle of the peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America; progressively threatened by the internal contradictions that if, through the intensification of the international workers' movement and the social struggles within its own borders—the agonizing world capitalist system, imperialism, reveals its true face to the world. It reveals its criminal instincts and seeks, by all means, namely through ever-increasing aggressiveness, to block the path to the October Revolution: to the revolutionary struggle of the people for freedom, for democracy/independence, for peace, and for progress.

But just as it is not possible to stop the sun from shining with one hand or for a dam to stop the Volga from flowing into the sea, no imperialist maneuvers or aggressions can block the liberation and progress of the masses on the path to history which the October Revolution brought into being. That is why imperialism is being defeated in Asia, where the heroic people of Vietnam, the object of the most shameful aggression ever recorded in history, are putting up increasingly victorious resistance; why imperialism is being defeated in Africa, where, in addition to the victories already achieved through decolonization, peoples such as those of Guinea, Cabo Verde, Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia, South Africa, and Southeast Africa are, arms in hand, making every effort and undertaking every task to completely free their homelands from the plagues of colonialism and racism; why imperialism is being defeated and will be defeated in Latin America, where, as a summary of all forms of struggle, the masses are determined to shake off the direct or indirect yoke to which they have been subjected for more than half a century; why imperialism will surely be defeated in the Middle East, where, under the Zionist guise, it is trying, through blitzkrieg, to dispossess the Arab peoples not only of their victories in the field of national liberation but of their own territories and national wealth.

At this moment of commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution, it is comforting to note that imperialism is encountering even more resistance from the masses of all continents, who are willing to make every effort and sacrifice to free themselves from foreign domination. But it is also a reason for encouragement and a demand to recognize that the current struggles of the youth have their roots in the conquests of the October Revolution, find their fundamental support in the existence of the socialist camp, and are vitally nourished by the active solidarity of the Soviet Union. This is the essential reality of our time, the truth that imperialism knows better than anyone else and which no one can refute.

This is also the reason why we must at this moment pay a vibrant immortal tribute to Lenin, to all his comrades who knew how to remain faithful to the October Revolution, to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and to the people of the USSR who were able to achieve the goals of the October Revolution, to all the forces of the world who saw in the October Revolution of the USSR a decisive factor for the liberation and progress of the masses in our time.

Glory to Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the principal worker of the October Revolution and founder of the first socialist state in the world!

Glory to the twenty million Soviet citizens who fought in the last World War in defense of the socialist homeland, thus ensuring the possibility of national and social liberation of the masses!

Long live the working people of the USSR, its socialist state and its great Party, the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union]—faithful allies, and an impregnable bulwark of the struggle for the liberation of the masses!

Lenin and the National Liberation Movement

Soviet Club, Conakry, Guinea

November 1969

INTRODUCTION

We respond with pleasure to the invitation of our friends to this session of the Soviet Club on the theme of *Lenin and the National Liberation movement*. This pleasure is all the more justified as we had the chance to participate in the Alma-Ata Symposium (in Kazakhstan) on the same theme and our party has always considered the socialist forces—the socialist community—as our historic ally in the difficult but very exhilarating struggle that our people are waging against the rotten appendage of imperialism that is Portuguese colonialism. In this context, everyone knows today that the fraternal aid granted to our people by a few socialist countries including the USSR, as the main source of aid, is a decisive element for the victorious development of our liberation struggle.

On behalf of our people and our party, we salute the worthy representatives of the socialist countries present here, and, through them, the working people of these countries, who are making sacrifices, in a Leninist spirit of internationalism, to come to help in our struggle. It is to their credit, but also to that of their political leaders who, by deciding to help us, have demonstrated not only deep feelings of humanity, but above all concrete solidarity and awareness of the importance of our fight in the general struggle against imperialism.

Despite the private nature of this session, you will surely allow me to send our fraternal greetings and a vibrant militant tribute to the people of the Republic of Guinea to its glorious Party, the PDG [Democratic Party of Guinea], and to its leader, our elder brother and companion in struggle, comrade Ahmed Sékou Touré, Supreme Leader of the Revolution. As you all know, in the special circumstances of our struggle, the moral, political, and material support granted to us by the Republic of Guinea is the most important external factor for our fight and for the common struggle against imperialism.

The people of the Republic of Guinea, under the leadership of the PDG, opened a new phase in the history of the continent by answering NO to the imperialist challenge on September 28, 1958. That people now make sacrifices in their own flesh because of their support for our struggle, and as a result of the criminal attacks of the Portuguese colonialists. As Comrade Ahmed Sékou Touré has repeatedly clearly expressed, the Guinean people are aware of the true value of Lenin's grandiose work and the transcendent consequences of the October Revolution in the development of the national liberation movement. This is another point in common between our two peoples and between our parties.

Taking up, with your permission, the themes of our improvised speech given at Alma-Ata, we will try to draw your attention to some lessons given by Lenin to all fighters for freedom and the progress of peoples, as well as to certain aspects of his theory on the national liberation movement within the framework of the struggle against imperialism.

As you will see, we will not spare Lenin praise, the fruit of our admiration for his personality as a man, a fighter, and a revolutionary.

However, we will not make the mistake of deifying or apotheosizing Lenin, even after fifty years of his death and at this time when humanity is commemorating with well-justified interest the centenary of his birth. This would be the greatest offense we could

render to the memory of a singularly intelligent man whose exemplary modesty was as great as his revolutionary firmness.

* * *

The value and transcendent character of the thought and the human, political, scientific, cultural, and historical achievements of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin have long been irreversibly recognized facts. Even his ideas' fiercest opponents have recognized Lenin as a consistent revolutionary who knew how to devote himself totally to the cause of the revolution and to carry it forward; a philosopher and a scholar whose greatness alone is comparable to that of the greatest thinkers of humanity. Nowadays, it is not uncommon to hear even the most anti-socialist politicians quoting Lenin or boasting of having read or being in the midst of reading his works. Clearly, we cannot take them at their word, but this provides a measure of the importance (and the necessity) of Lenin's thought, as well as the extent of the practical consequences of his action in the current historical context.

For national liberation movements, whose task of bringing about revolution in their countries by radically changing in the necessary ways the economic, political, social, and cultural situation of their peoples, Lenin's thought and achievements are of particular interest.

Lenin's legacy is more than just his written works. He was and remains a living example of a fighter for the cause of humanity, for the economic and therefore national, social, and cultural liberation of man. His life and his behavior as a human personality contain fruitful lessons for all national liberation fighters.

Among these lessons, we consider the most important to be those that refer to the moral behavior of the fighter, to his political action, to revolutionary strategy, and to revolutionary practice.

In the general framework of the national liberation movement, particularly in conditions like ours, the moral behavior of the combatant, particularly of leaders, is a factor of the highest

importance that can significantly influence the success or failure of the movement as a whole. Obviously, the struggle is essentially political. But the political, economic, social, and historical circumstances in which this movement is structured and develops bequeath a particular importance to problems of a moral nature. This is above all because of the weaknesses specific to the national liberation movement in the colonies, the opportunism or possibilities of opportunism which characterize it, the pressures and ruses put into practice by the imperialist enemy, and by the difficulty or the impossibility of vigorous control of the movement or its leaders on the part of the popular nationalist masses. In the liberation movement as in any other human enterprise, and whatever the material or social factors conditioning its evolution, man—his mentality, his behavior is the essential, decisive element.

Lenin was an example of coherence within himself and the coherence of words with actions. As his personality evolved, he was able to remain true to himself through his choices and actions. His actions always corresponded to his words as he rejected facile verbalism, demagoguery, and flattery. Lenin was an example of honesty, probity, sincerity, and courage. He always placed above all his conveniences the need to strictly observe the duties of morality and justice, to refuse to lie and to practice the truth, whatever the consequences or problems that it might create.

As a complete human being, he knew how to love and hate. He loved the cause of the liberation of man from all kinds of oppression, the wonderful adventure that is human life, everything that is beautiful and constructive on the planet. He hated the enemies of progress and human happiness, the class enemy, the opportunists, cowardice, lies, all the factors that degrade the social and moral conscience of man. Because he always considered man as the supreme value of the universe. His devotion to children has become legendary, because, for him, these delicate beings who are so misunderstood or mistreated by the exploitation of man by

man, are the flowers of humanity, the hope and the certainty of triumph of a life of happiness.

The national liberation struggle is, as we have said, a political struggle which can take different forms depending on the specific circumstances in which it develops. In our concrete case, after having exhausted all the means at our disposal to lead the Portuguese colonialists to a radical change in their policy in the direction of the liberation of our people, we have only faced repression and crimes. We had to take up arms to fight against the attempted genocide of our people determined to be free and masters of their own destiny.

The fact that we are waging an armed liberation struggle in no way changes the essentially political character of our fight. On the contrary, it accentuates it. But there is not, there cannot be, any political action, whatever its form, without well-defined principles, be they good or bad.

As part of the political lesson, Lenin was an example of loyalty to principle. He knew how to make concessions on the form of claims or actions, but never on principles, particularly when it was a question of defending the interests of the class he represented and in practice consequent on an internationalism devoid of narrow reservations, timidity, or contingency.

A lesson also in political realism, in a clear notion of possibility and opportunity in politics, which finds its greatest expression in the decision to trigger the insurrection of October 1917, despite hesitations and contrary, but unfounded, opinions. The merciless fight he waged against all deviations from the right or the left and which created so much trouble for him serves as a lesson in realism and firmness on the path to political leadership. By going beyond the vulgar notion according to which politics is the art of the possible, Lenin showed that it is rather the art of transforming what is apparently impossible into the possible (of making the impossible possible), without ever resorting to opportunism. As such, political action involves ongoing creativity and, as with art, creating does not mean inventing.

All his actions were characterized by great constructive flexibility. In the face of each problem, each element of the struggle—even the most negative of them—Lenin knew how to discern the positive side, in order to draw all the advantages from it to advance the struggle. In this context, as in others, he demonstrated unshakable perseverance. He, who believed that “facts are a stubborn thing,” was himself as stubborn as the facts.

However, trusting the opinion of others, in the certainty that every fighter needs others, he always knew how to change his mind when reason—scientific truth—was not on his side.

Always showing unlimited confidence in the capacity of the masses, he was nevertheless able to show clearly that they should never act in anarchy, without a well-developed plan corresponding to the possibilities of action; that the masses should never be leaderless.

Rigorous, if not violent, in his criticism of his adversaries or fellow fighters, Lenin’s practice of self-criticism was exemplary. He knew how to recognize his mistakes and praise the value of others, even his fiercest adversaries like Kautsky and so many others. But he also knew how to be as harsh as possible with the class enemy of the revolution.

In the general framework of the national liberation movement, as in any confrontation, whether peaceful or not, there is the vital necessity of detecting the general laws of the phenomenon in question—of the struggle—and of acting on the basis of a general plan developed from the concrete reality of the environment and the factors present. Every liberation movement needs a strategy.

In developing this strategy, we must be able to distinguish the essential from the secondary, the permanent from the temporary, and base all action on a scientific conception of reality, whatever the influence of subjective factors that we must face. Never confuse strategy and tactics.

At this level too, Lenin gave a very useful lesson to liberation movements and freedom fighters.

He was acutely aware of the value of unity, as a necessary means of struggle, but not as an end in itself. For Lenin, there is no question of uniting everyone around the same cause, however just it may be, of achieving absolute unity. Unity, like all reality, is subject to quantitative changes, be they positive or negative. The question is to discern what degree of unity is necessary and sufficient to be able to guarantee the outbreak and victorious march of the struggle. And, subsequently, its preservation against all the factors of dissolution and division.

Lenin also had a deep awareness of the need to know as perfectly as possible the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy, as well as our own strengths and weaknesses. The Leninist concept of strategy in the struggle implies that we must act in the direction of, on the one hand, deepening the weaknesses of the enemy and transforming his strengths into weaknesses and, on the other hand, preserving and reinforcing our strengths, eliminating our weaknesses or transforming them into strengths.

This is only possible through the permanent and dynamic alliance between theory and practice. Lenin's life is the consistent application of the pithy maxim of Paul Langevin which states that "thought comes from action and, in a healthy being, it must return to action." This implies that, as Lenin showed through all his actions, that thought must be based on the concrete analysis of each concrete situation.

According to Lenin, qualitative changes in a struggle, as in any moving phenomenon, only take place from a certain degree of quantitative transformation. This means that the evolution of the struggle occurs in stages, in well-defined phases. On this basis and in this perspective, we must establish tactics that can be the necessary means for the progress of the struggle.

Every struggle is a new experiment, whatever the amount of theoretical knowledge or practical experience that concerns it. All struggle therefore implies a certain degree of empiricism, which is not to say that it is not necessary to invent what already exists:

one must create in the concrete conditions in which the struggle occurs. Here again, Lenin's lesson is very useful: he hated blind empiricism every bit as much as dogma. Critical assimilation (of the knowledge or experiences of others) is as valid for life as it is for struggle. The philosophical or scientific thought of others—even if perfectly valid—cannot be the only basis for us to think and act, or, in other words, to create.

To create, in a struggle, you have to lead it, you have to make every effort and accept the necessary sacrifices. The struggle is not made of words, but by the daily action of all its valid elements. Lenin successfully showed that, as that other consistent revolutionary, Fidel Castro, bluntly proclaimed, the duty of the revolutionary is to make revolution.

And all the activity deployed by Lenin during a long struggle is an example of continuity and consequence, of the ability to mobilize the necessary forces in the necessary time and space.

While demonstrating the fact that, in a struggle, subjective difficulties are the most difficult to overcome, Lenin was aware of this reality: the struggle is made up of successes and failures, of victories and failures, but it advances always and its phases, even though they may be similar, are not repetitions. Because struggle is a process and not an accident, it is a marathon rather than a sprint. Possible defeats are not a reason for demoralization or withdrawal, because even defeats can be transformed into successes.

This is only possible by learning from each mistake, from each positive or negative experience, just as theory without practice is a waste of time, so there can be no practice of any worth without theory.

The main architect of the great October Revolution which changed the destiny not only of the Russian people but of humanity; creator of the first socialist state in the world, enlightened leader of the revolution in the former tsarist colonies; wise theorist and practitioner in the solution of the delicate problem

that was the national question in the country of the Soviets—Lenin marked the century and the future of mankind with his revolutionary personality, bequeathing to the generations who succeeded him a work as singular as it is full of lessons.

For the liberation movements, Lenin demonstrated, moreover, that oppressed peoples can free themselves and overcome all obstacles to their progress in a life of justice, dignity, and happiness.

It is desirable that, whatever their political tendencies or options, authentic liberation movements can draw from the lessons of Lenin, the inspiration necessary for their thinking, their action, and the moral behavior of their leaders. However, allow us to note that, within the personal framework of the forces fighting against imperialism and imperialist domination, it is not only the liberation movements, their militants, and their leaders who need to know, to assimilate and respect in practice the great and rich lessons of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.

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(1) Today everyone knows, regardless of political opinions, that Lenin's work has a universal, historical significance. Indeed, Lenin's thoughts, expressed in thousands of writings and speeches, and his actions in the long struggle he carried out as leader of the working class of his country—were and are the basis of the most profound transformations wrought in the life of humanity during this century. Even the fiercest opponents of Lenin's ideas and actions had to recognize in him a man of integrity and a consistent revolutionary, a scholar and a philosopher alone comparable to the greatest thinkers of humanity.

Lenin's work therefore has a natural influence on the liberation movement in the world, and our country is no exception to this rule. Lenin's analysis of imperialism is a powerful weapon for liberation movements. But the October Revolution, which changed the face of the world and the course of history—is Lenin's greatest work in favor of the national liberation of peoples.

(2) Our struggle developed in particularly difficult conditions. It is enough to know the economic, social and cultural situation of our people, to get an idea of the enormous difficulties that we have had to face and must still overcome, to successfully lead our struggle against Portuguese colonialism, that rotten appendage of worldwide imperialism.

For years we have struggled alone, devoid of concrete help from those who could or should have helped us. But at a certain stage of the struggle, we began to receive concrete support from certain socialist countries, notably the USSR, which helped us to face a stronger enemy naturally and effectively supported by their powerful and fairly well-known allies.

We consider the aid provided to our people by the socialist countries to be the most significant fact in the history of our party linked to the name of Lenin. Because it is our conviction that the existence of socialist countries, while being the work of many people and the peoples concerned—is above all the work and the consequence of the work of Lenin.

(3) I did my university studies in Lisbon, because in our country there has never been any higher education. As you know, Portugal has been living under a fascist regime for almost half a century. It was therefore normal that political books in general, notably those of Lenin, have been banned. But as the people say, forbidden fruits are the tastiest.

So it was that I became acquainted with some of Lenin's works in Portugal, which I read in secret, as was the case for all young people interested in the problems of the world. As an agronomy student, the first work I read was *The Agrarian Question*.

(4) Despite the difficulties specific to our struggle, its current situation is very favorable. We achieved significant successes in 1969, which led the Portuguese colonialists to intensify their acts of piracy and aggression against neighboring countries in an attempt to deprive us of their fraternal support from them—Senegal in particular. We hope to make 1970—the centenary of Lenin's

birth—another year of decisive victories for our people’s struggle for liberation and progress. With this in mind, we hope that both our already free and independent African brothers and our anti-colonialist allies throughout the world will be able to strengthen their concrete solidarity by providing adequate aid to our struggle which, through the criminal stubbornness of the Portuguese Government, is a genuine war.

* * *

What happens today to Lenin’s doctrine is what happened more than once in history to the doctrines of revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes or nations fighting for their freedom. During the lifetime of the great revolutionaries, the oppressive classes rewarded them with incessant persecution: they greeted their doctrine with the wildest fury, the fiercest hatred, the most frenzied campaigns of lies and slander. After their deaths, they try to make them harmless icons, to canonize them, to surround their names with halos in order to “console” the oppressed classes or nations and mystify them; by doing so, they empty their revolutionary doctrine of its content, degrade it, and blunt its revolutionary edge. By thus “accommodating” Leninism, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists of both the workers’ movement and the national liberation movement come together. We forget, we repress, we alter the revolutionary side of the doctrine, its revolutionary soul. We bring to the fore and exalt what is—or appears to be—acceptable if not suitable for the bourgeoisie and imperialism. All social-chauvinists, social-nationalists, whether neocolonized or neocolonizable—not to mention a few declared imperialists—are now “Leninists”—don’t laugh! Meanwhile, bourgeois or pro-imperialist scholars, yesterday still specialized in the extermination of Leninism, speak more and more of a *national-Russian* Lenin who is supposed to have demonstrated great ability in the education of workers’ associations in Russia for the realization of the Revolution and the creation of the first socialist state in the world. But no more than that.

You have surely noticed that what we have just read is only a paraphrase of a pithy statement by Lenin concerning Marx. We have only changed some names and adapted the discourse to the essential reality of history today: the lifelong struggle against imperialism. It must be admitted that the statement fits Lenin himself very well.

Without having the pretension or the audacity to want to *restore* Lenin's doctrine on the *national liberation movement*, we would, however, like to mention certain data which seem essential to us.

Lenin demonstrated very clearly that the national liberation movement, which has gained greater vigor since the beginning of this century, *is by no means an unprecedented historical fact*. On all continents, in periods more or less remote, there have been not only tribal or ethnic liberation struggles but also national liberation movements and struggles. We are not going to list concrete cases which are generally well known. The peoples of ancient Indochina, like other regions of Asia; from Mexico, Bolivia, and other countries of the American continent; of Greece, the Balkans in general, and even Portugal, in Europe, Egypt, East Africa, and West Africa—they have all had the experience of a struggle for national liberation.

These movements will have had successes or failures, but they existed and left indelible marks on the peoples concerned, within the framework of the historical coordinates of the societies in question and at a given stage of the economic and political evolution of humanity.

However, there is no room for confusion. Lenin showed that *the Roman Empire*, for example, was not the same thing as *the British Empire*. These two realities of history share what seemed to be, until now, a necessity or a constant in the relationships between human societies: the attempt or success of political domination and the economic exploitation of certain peoples or nations by foreign states or foreign ruling classes, which amounts to the same thing.

Lenin demonstrated that the liberation struggle against the domination of a (tribal or ethnic) military aristocracy, against feudal domination, or even against the foreign capitalist domination from the time of free competition capitalism—is not the same thing as the struggle for national liberation against imperialism, against the economic and political domination of monopolies, of financial capitalism acting in the form of colonialism, neo-colonialism, or semi-colonialism.

For anyone, it has become and must be obvious today that the advent of imperialism brought about a profound and irreversible transformation in the national liberation movement, the latter being defined as the natural and necessary resistance to imperialist domination.

By defining the internal and external characteristics of imperialism—the highest stage of capitalism, the result of the concentration of financial capital in a few companies in half a dozen countries and the insatiable domination of monopolies—Lenin also characterized the irreversible transformations made in the content and form of the national liberation movement, of which he scientifically predicted the general line of evolution.

Obviously, Charlemagne was not and neither could he be Caesar or Attila, but it is even more obvious that Nixon or any other head of state of an imperialist country is not, nor could be the Ghana of the African empire which carries this name, nor an emperor of the Ming dynasty or Cortez, conqueror of the Americas, or even the tsar of all the Russias. In the same way, and for the same reasons, the banks and the imperialist monopolies are not the Merchants' Associations of Venice or the Hanseatic League.

Lenin deserves the credit for having revealed and even predicted the essential realities of the struggle today. Because he went to the root of the analysis of *the fact of imperialism* and the general struggle against it.

In his general criticism, Lenin sheds light on the *essentially economical* character of imperialism, studies its internal and external

characteristics, as well as its economic, political, and social implications both inside and outside the capitalist world. He highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the new reality that is imperialism (which was born around the same time as Lenin) which irreversibly created new perspectives for the evolution of humanity.

By geographically situating the imperialist phenomenon within a well-defined part of the world; by distinguishing the economic fact from its political or sociopolitical implications, without thus forgetting the relations of dynamic dependence existing between these two aspects of the same phenomenon; and when characterizing the relations of imperialism with the rest of the world—Lenin objectively situates both imperialism and the national liberation struggle within its true historical coordinates. He thus definitively established the fundamental difference but also the fundamental connections between imperialism and imperialist domination.

Lenin's analysis thus reveals itself as a realistic encouragement and a powerful weapon for the further multilateral development of the national liberation movement.

It should be noted, however, that this analysis goes even further in the contribution it makes to the development of the national liberation movement.

Indeed, if we can say that Marx in particular in his main work, *Capital*, undertook a forensic dissection of capitalism, the work of Lenin concerning imperialism can be regarded as *an autopsy of moribund capitalism*. It is not an exaggeration to assert that, for Lenin, from the moment when the economic and political domination of financial capital (i.e., monopolies) was consolidated in a set of countries and materialized outside these countries through the new partition of the world, notably of Africa with the colonial monopoly-capitalism, as it had been previously defined, became a *putrefying corpse*.

Even the most superficial study of the contemporary economic history of the main capitalist countries, or the less important

ones, shows that the lifelong struggle between financial capital (represented by monopolies and banks) and free competition, generally ends in victory for the monopolies, i.e., of imperialism.

It must therefore be noted that Lenin was right: capitalism will manage imperialism while at the same time creating the elements conducive to its destruction. Imperialism has killed and continues to kill capitalism.

Indeed, the profound transformations carried out in the balance of power within the framework of free competition have led to monopolies, to the gigantic accumulation of financial capital drawn from within certain countries and to the political domination of these by monopolies, which transforms them into imperialist countries. This new situation lies at the origin of a permanent confrontation, be it open or not, peaceful or not, between the imperialist countries, in search of new balances in the relationship of forces, on the basis of the relative degree of development of the productive forces and of the growing need to obtain raw materials and the conquest of markets. In other words, of the insatiable acquisition of *surplus value* or *rent* for financial capital.

On the basis of such a lucid and realistic analysis, it was natural for Lenin to draw key conclusions for practical action against imperialism. Among these conclusions, these seem to us to have very significant consequences:

- The unbridled accumulation of financial capital and the victory of monopolies as the final phase of the private appropriation of the means of production—with the aggravation of the contradiction between this reality and the social character of productive work—have created the conditions conducive to the revolution. This will gradually put an end to the capitalist regime, now represented by imperialism.
- It is possible, necessary, and urgent to make revolution, if not in many countries at least in a single one, particularly

at a time when the aggressiveness characteristic of imperialism was manifested by a war between the capitalist countries for a new partition of the world (World War I).

- The creation of a socialist state will deliver yet another decisive blow to imperialism and will open new perspectives for the development of the international workers' movement and the national liberation movement.
- A new armed confrontation between the imperialist-capitalist states is possible, because the hypothesis of ultra-imperialism or super-imperialism which could solve the contradictions between imperialist states "is as utopian as that of the creation of ultra-agriculture." A new confrontation between the imperialist-capitalist states will surely weaken imperialism, and more favorable conditions will be created for the development of the forces whose historical destiny is to destroy imperialism: installation of socialist power in new countries, strengthening of international labor movement and the national liberation movement.
- The oppressed peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America are called upon to play a decisive role in the struggle for the liquidation of the imperialist system of which they are the main victims.

These conclusions of Lenin, explicitly or implicitly contained in his work, and confirmed by the facts of contemporary history, are yet another decisive contribution for the thought and action of liberation movements, one of the interrelated forces called on to destroy imperialism.

Whether one is Marxist or not, Leninist or not, it is difficult not to recognize the validity and even the genius of the analysis and conclusions of Lenin's theory on the national liberation movement, as well as the fruitful value of this contribution for all those who fight for the liberation of their people from imperialist domination.

A Legacy for Current Times

Amílcar Cabral is, without a doubt, one of the principal heroes of Pan-African thought and struggle. His legacy has cast a light that illuminates us to this day. He led an intense life in his forty-nine years. He began as a very studious and intelligent youth, the son of a protestant pastor that raised him with values of humanity and solidarity. He then migrated to Portugal and chose to become an agronomist, with the objective of helping his people and Cabo Verde, an agricultural nation lacking development in technical and productive capacities.

He understood the theoretical contribution of past revolutionaries and took from them scientific knowledge and historical experiences in order to interpret the African reality. He joined the Pan-African movement in the footsteps of Frantz Fanon and Kwame Nkrumah, and joined his peers Agostinho Neto, Julius Nyerere, Samora Machel, and Nelson Mandela. Today, he continues to hold great significance amongst those who fight for a more just, solidaristic, and anti-capitalist society.

Despite his young age, he was an exemplary popular leader and activist. In the field of theory, he was also an avid thinker and scholar of the classics without being dogmatic or sectarian, much less unoriginal. He knew how to use scientific knowledge to explain the continent of Africa. His time in the Portuguese metropolis allowed him to access revolutionary literature, where he studied Marx, Engels, Lenin, and also came into contact with other scholars.

He knew better than anyone how to use this knowledge to study and interpret the current reality of his country, and of Africa. His writings analyzing Cabo Verde and its people are exquisite and attest to the importance of analyzing the reality we live in and how to change it in depth. Furthermore, he was able to extract lessons from historical revolutionary experiences to adapt them to the organizational needs of his people, towards a project of national liberation.

However, he did not stick solely to theoretical analysis—he also produced a method of organization which included activists of political organizations such as the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde (PAIGC) and influenced other political organizations in Africa such as the Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). His method of writing letters and manifestos directed to activists and social sectors combined critical analysis of a given situation with practical orientations of what actions to take. It is because of this that his texts are organizational, orientational: they induce practice.

When it came to the class struggle, he concretely demonstrated his commitment to the cause of the people by mobilizing the armed struggle and the mass struggle. He was directly involved and set an example risking his life.

His wisdom, coherence, and undying commitment to the people are perhaps the reason why even after achieving the political liberation of Guinea-Bissau, the empire never forgave him and deployed the right-wing forces working with Portugal and the United States to assassinate him on January 20, 1973.

I would also like to highlight another important legacy of Amílcar. Perhaps, amongst all other Pan-African leaders that I have mentioned, he was the one who most approached Latin America. He understood the importance of internationalism not only as a principle, a theory, but as a real practice. He understood it as imperative for the people of our countries to unite in the anti-colonial, anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchist struggle.

This led to his approximation to the Cuban revolution, through his active participation in the first historical conference in Havana in 1966 that gathered dozens of leaders of the then-called Third World, today more appropriately known as the Global South, known as the Tricontinental with representatives from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This is where the Organization of Solidarity amongst the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (OSPAAAL) was founded, and it would grow to become a key instrument in the practice of solidarity and internationalism amongst peoples.

There, he met with key characters of our history such as Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and commander Manuel Piñero, also known as Barbarroja (Red Beard), who dealt with issues of solidarity amongst revolutionary organizations. Although there is no official record, I also take the liberty to say that he certainly must have met with our Brazilian revolutionary, Carlos Marighella, who was also present at this conference.

As this, the life and works of Amílcar is rich with experiences and teachings that should orient our political action to this day, especially for the youth of Latin America, Asia, and Africa who did not know him, politically, in his lifetime. For us Brazilians, Amílcar Cabral is an important reference given the ties between our country and the people and cultures of Africa. As activists of popular peasant movements, we feel even more represented by his origins and vocation as an agronomist, which led to a better understanding of the agricultural reality of Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau with the objective of transforming it.

For all these reasons, I hope that this publication can, beyond just recovering theoretical texts, nourish our political will to better understand his legacy and the current task at hand. Despite the achievement of political independence in Africa and some advances in Latin America, the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle remains at the forefront of the contemporary political struggle.

The bourgeoisie of our respective countries have adhered to the project of capitalist and imperialist domination. They are mere puppets, accomplices in the exploitation of capital, and subordinate in the exercise of political power in national governments. The anti-colonial and anti-racist struggle is present now, more than ever, in the Palestinian resistance, in the struggle of the Sahrawi people, in the struggle of the African peoples against French and European neocolonialism. It is present in the struggle against NATO's aggression in Libya and in Syria and in the treatment given to its migrants who cross the Mediterranean Sea.

On the other hand, western capitalism and imperialism are currently experiencing a profound crisis. They seek to compensate for this by digging deeper into classic forms of capital accumulation by promoting wars and armed conflicts to create markets for their industries of war, death, and destruction. Furthermore, multinational corporations continue to appropriate, with rapacious greed, the natural wealth of the Global South in order to transform them into commodities for profit. We see this in their attempts to seize the oil of Venezuela, Nigeria, and Angola, and strategic minerals such as uranium, iron, copper, and aluminum in all of our countries. Just as they are insatiable in their quest for gold, they are reckless in their destruction of our biodiversity and our forests through their models of predatory agriculture.

However, from the contradictions and the crisis, new paths also emerge. Little by little, international spaces of articulation of countries and governments such as BRICS, the African Union, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), are being strengthened, to resist the decadence of imperialism.

The false bourgeois democracies in our countries are also in crisis. To create new instruments for popular political participation is an urgent and necessary task. That is why it is on the agenda of all popular movements and parties, to confront the current

crisis and to build anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist struggles. Capitalism is not a solution to the needs of our peoples.

These are times of crisis. But they are also times of change. And in these times, it is essential that we turn to the legacy of the life and works of our leaders, Africanists, Latinos, and internationalists.

Long live Amílcar Cabral!

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Brazil, September 2024