

Cultural Resistance

By Amílcar Cabral

The following text is the third discussion led by Amílcar Cabral with party cadre, where key political directives were shared with the participants in a Seminar of Cadres of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), held in November 1969.

We have to remember that it's not enough to produce, to have a full stomach, to practice sound politics, and to make war. If a man, a woman, a human being does all of this without advancing as an intelligent being, as the foremost being in nature; without truly feeling every day that knowledge of the environment and of the world in general increases in one's head; without, that is, advancing in the cultural sphere; then all that one does—producing, practicing sound politics, fighting—hasn't worked at all.

In our specific situation, we have to give great attention to our *cultural resistance*. From the beginning, our Party has given great attention to this, and in this sense, it took the necessary measures—from the Cassacá Congress onward¹—while even before this we had advised that in order to advance in our struggle we should make cultural resistance. Actually, we should state concretely that the creation of our own Party, which planned and advanced our struggle of national liberation, is a fact of culture. It's a clear test of our cultural resistance, because we want to be ourselves—Africans from Guinea and Cape Verde and not *tugas*. Our culture isn't the culture of the *tugas*, although today our culture might have some influence from the culture of the *tugas*. Thus, all of our combatants, leaders, and cognizant militants should know clearly that our struggle is also cultural resistance, if not the primary mode of our cultural resistance—armed struggle.

We should work a lot to extinguish the colonial culture in our heads, comrades. And whether we like it or not, in the city or in the forest, colonialism inserted a lot of things into our heads. And our task should be to remove what isn't useful and to leave what is good. This is because colonialism doesn't only have things that are useless. Therefore, we should be capable of combating colonial culture and leaving in our heads that aspect of human, scientific culture that the *tugas* brought by chance to our land and also placed in our heads.

To give a concrete example: I am African, and it could happen, as it still does with other Africans, that I convince myself that in order for certain things to occur in my life that it is necessary to satisfy the will of a "spirit." And the spirit said that what I asked for in our conversation could only be realized if I take a little girl who just turned three years old as a sacrifice to kill, to make a sacrifice—and then, all that I want could be realized. That still exists in Africa, and if we look closely, people who believe in such things might still exist in our land. I remember a comrade named Alfucene who we sent for the struggle in Gabu (you remember, Lúcio?). One day he found me to tell me that the "spirit" in Gabu didn't want us to fight there unless his son was sacrificed. I interpreted this in the following manner: he was native to Gabu and looking for a way to be in charge, because he wanted to be the chief in Gabu; and so, he wanted to show that the "spirit" was interested in his son, thus, that he should be the boss. I told him: "Comrade, if that's how we're going to struggle in Gabu, let's

go look for that ‘spirit’ until we find it and kill it, because it’s a ‘spirit’ from the *tu-gas*—it was the *tuga* who put it there, it’s not from our land.”

But it could be that I, as an African, still have this in my head. At this very moment while I’m speaking like this, in some lands of Africa there are children who are dead in order to satisfy the will of a “spirit.” I never had such things in my head. I grew up in Africa, but I learned the following: The most wonderful and delicate things in the world are children. We should give to children the best that we have. We should educate them so that they’re raised with an open spirit, so that they understand things, so that they’re good, and so that they avoid every type of evil. So we should never do them any harm at all, much less kill them. Thus, I have the obligation to defend my land against all those people who have that aspect of culture stuck in their heads.

But, as an African, I also had much contact with the *tugas*. And it’s possible that I had gotten it into my head that I’m the son of civilized folks, that I’m civilized; I went to school, I never lived in the forest (which is filthy), and that I had a reasonable home, even though my mother was poor. I could have thought that I had nothing to do with the people in the forest, that those of the forest were distant brothers, and that I was superior to them. This is the colonial mentality; it’s to copy the mentality of the *tugas*, the colonialists. We have to combat this, whether it’s in my head or in anyone else’s head.

I gave you concrete examples, therefore, of what we should pre-serve from our contact with other realities and what we should elimi-nate from the contact with our own reality. So the comrades have already understood what our cultural resistance is. Our cultural resis-tance consists of the following: while we liquidate the colonial culture and the negative aspects of our own culture in our spirit, in our midst, we have to create a new culture, also based on our traditions, but respecting everything that the world has won today for serving people.

There are many people today who think that, in order for Africa to resist culturally, it’s always necessary to do the same things that have already been done for 500 or 1,000 years. Yes, Africa in fact has its own culture, and that is our precise opinion. Some aspects of that culture are eternal, they never end; they can transform along the way, but will never run dry. For example, our types of dance, our own rhythm of Africa. But no one thinks that the drum is only from Africa; no one thinks that certain styles of clothing—straw skirts, palm leaves, etc.—are only from Africa; no one thinks that eating by hand only happens in Africa. All of the world’s peoples go through this, and there are still peoples in the world—in Brazil, for example—who are worse off than us in this, as in Indonesia, Polynesia, and East Asia.

Many people think that in order to defend African culture, in order to resist culturally in Africa, we have to defend the negative things of our culture. No, in our opinion that’s not the case. Rather, culture is also a product of a people’s economic level. Our opinion is that eating by hand, manners of dancing, and even singing certain types of tunes depend on the life led by a people from the point of view of producing (i.e., producing riches, producing things for them).

That’s why the Balantas’ tunes are different from the Mandingas’ tunes, for example. Analyzed thoroughly, the Balantas’ tunes are those of people from the plains. When we compare the Balantas’ tunes with those of Europe, we see that they’re similar to Alentejano tunes—slow in chorus. This is because there are certain types of economic existence and geographical environments that give rise to certain types of songs. The people who live in the

mountains have certain types of songs; those who always live with cattle have their type of dance; those who live alone in the forest, without cattle, have yet another type of dance.

Those who live in the desert, where there are giraffes and other things, have another type of dance. This is the case whether in Africa, in Asia, or in America.

And our type of relations with nature is like our economy, our economic development. Whoever believes that a cow is a god raises it up when he or she dances. The dance itself presents the cow as God. But whoever believes that God is hidden in the forest has a dance that respects the forest, and the songs evoke a special kind of music with special words in regard to this. This is illustrated in every part of the world where there is such a concrete economic situation and a given situation of relations with nature. Those who are still afraid of lightning, floods, and thunder have songs and dances that are of a certain type. There might be one or another difference, but they're similar. Of course, if we compare our dances with the dances of Europe, of the cities, etc., we see that they're dissimilar, that they're ultramodern dances. But if we compare our dances with folklore, that is, with the arts and customs of Eastern European peoples or, even more, with those of Asia, we find a few dances that are very similar to ours, comrades.

So our point of view is that we should make resistance in our culture in order to conserve what is in fact useful and constructive, but in the certainty that—to the extent that we move forward—our clothing, our manner of eating, our manner of dancing and singing, and everything else has to change bit by bit. This is even more the case in regard to our minds, our sense of relations with nature, and even our relations with each other.

For example: we Africans are in a situation such that we need security because we still have not tamed nature. So we need what is called *organizational security*.² Organizational security is better the greater the number of people who are near us. If I were alone in the woods, I would be afraid, so being there with various people would be better. But that organizational security has a contradiction, which is that some don't even trust those who are around them. There is such a great need for security that we always need someone together with us; but as security isn't guaranteed and is so great, one begins to distrust those who are with us. Now, this happens in our midst, even with a person in whom we trust. Yesterday, we trusted her, but today when she comes to give us a hand, we distrust that hand. One gives them a hand, but always without trust. There are still those who go right away to wash their hands for fear of something bad. Some even distrust others' eyes.

And there are people among us who always take advantage of this in order to stare into our eyes. Take Luciano, for example—strong, valiant, truculent, sometimes a leader of our home during the time that we prepared the comrades. There was a poor man lying down in Conakry who, like the Moors at the time, had the crazy idea of going off with the opportunists. The truth is that he was bad news, and Luciano was afraid of him—he only wanted to hit him. One day this man came to the edges of our home, and Luciano went toward him, messing with him, etc. This man took out his set of animal horns, pointed them at Luciano and yelled, “Ah!” And Luciano returned later, now afraid of animal horns.

Comrades, we laugh about this now, but many of the comrades who are seated here are still afraid of animal horns. Today, we laugh and are afraid. (Don't think that when the children from São Vicente arrive with their delusions, or when those of Praia or the Cape Verdean woods arrive, that they aren't afraid too, afraid of Moors, for instance. Once when I got sick,

my mother took me to a Moor because she thought that perhaps someone had done evil to me. Fear of card reading, fear of hair—they make amulets of hair to cast off evil.) But we're certain that, in our land tomorrow, the children of our people in Guinea and Cape Verde, in the woods, will no longer be afraid of animal horns. First and foremost, horns are something rich in calcium that grow on the heads of certain animals, comrades. If we burn them, they have a special aroma as a result of proteins and other chemical products that they have. Animal horns don't do anything. But as much as I yell today no one hears me—I don't believe you all. That's why I'm not going to go to the trouble of fighting you on this. I only tell you to hold tight in the struggle and to work a lot, because the children of your children won't believe in that if we in fact complete our duties in relation to our people, as we should. Even the Swedes, those two you saw—the fathers of their fathers also believed in animal horns. And, in their land, the ancient Swedish form of burial was the same as the manner of burying people in our land today. The manner of burying kings in the times of ancient Sweden was the same as the burying of our kings too; they went into the grave with all of their things and at times their wives, killed to place in the same grave. The Vikings, who were the ancestors of the Swedes, didn't go into battle without an amulet. One day when we were in Cuba, Osvaldo and I were sitting down to watch a film about Vikings on television; I enjoy seeing films about Vikings and Osvaldo was up for it.³ Suddenly, warriors appeared and Osvaldo said, "Hey, comrade, they have their own period for wearing amulets!" Well, of course; no one thinks that we Africans know a lot or that we can only wage war because we have amulets. The Vikings liked to use amulets. The Franks, comrades, the people of ancient France, fought against Caesar of Rome everywhere only with amulets. Likewise with the ancient English and the American Indians. In China, Mao Tse-Tung had the great task of ending issues with amulets, yet even today, sorcery in China hasn't ended. There are ethnic groups in China that have sorcery. If you read the works of the Vietnamese, you'll see that sorcery exists in Vietnam as well. One of the great Vietnamese leaders said that they had to accept their peoples' amulets in order to lead the struggle. With those who scratch their heads, we also have to think before we do anything with them. We participated in ceremonies with them, but with the certainty that it was wrong—we only need to engage such things rationally to avoid misfortunes.

No one thinks that we're better than others because these things exist among us, because we're Africans, or because we know of amulets that others don't know about. They knew of these things but have since forgotten. Like our garb for dancing—everyone in the world used garb for dancing, and there are those who still use it all over. Boubous and Ghanaian style garb are similar to garb in Rome. You see films about the Romans, and their clothes are called "togas," but togas are clothes like any other. Sandals and garb—nothing more. But today there are people who walk in garb as if in fact only Africa had garb, as if it were only Africa that knew about such clothes. It's a reflection of the state of economic development, nothing else. It's good, and it's ours, but we're not now going to think that it's only ours. A day will come when the children of our children's children will have to forget all that. Unfortunately, we may not live long enough to be able to see it. Like today when we see things about the Vikings, we think that they were crazy, we don't understand that the Vikings lived their own life and in a different time. They never took a step without consulting a sorcerer first. The king always went around with the sorcerer at his side. In ancient times, before going into combat, the Romans would open the stomach of a chicken to see if the time was right to make war or not. There were even people called "augurs" who the chiefs consulted in order to know if they could go to war or not.

In ancient Greece, which was the center of world civilization, there were sorcerers who lived in the mountains called “pythonesses” who were consulted to know the destiny of war, of persons, etc., and the people brought them offerings because God was within them. It’s like our “spirit” of Cobia, comrades. But that was 3,000 years ago in Greece. Even more so in Egypt. In ancient Egypt, all of the pharaohs had their sorcerers, and God was an ox, “Apis,” who was untouchable because the cow was sacred, as in India even today. They don’t eat cows in India; there are people who die of hunger in front of their cow because they can’t kill it, because the cow is God. They bring the cow to the river to wash it, and everyone enters the water with the cow in order to bathe themselves in the water of God.

We have to have a good grasp of this in order to forge our cultural resistance on that real basis of our cultural resistance. We should clean our land of every noxious influence of colonial culture, comrades. And the first act of culture that we should instigate in our land is the following: the unity of our people, the necessity of fighting and developing in every one of us a new idea, which is *patriotism*—the love for our land as a single entity. That is the first part of culture that we should give to our land. And we should demonstrate the value of resisting the enemy, the stranger in our land. We pull together our forces in order to not allow our people, our land’s children, to be stepped on, humiliated by other people. Understand clearly that we, in our land, have rights equal to those of any other people in their own land. That’s a great advancement of our culture, if we manage to do it—and we will do it before long—our own war will accomplish this in our land.

Moreover, comrades, we have to elevate in the spirit of each, above all in the spirit of every combatant, the value of *heroism*—in order to be capable of having courage to rigorously fulfill the words of the Party. If it’s necessary to kill the enemy in a given location—to go kill him oneself—that is culture, comrades. When a man is capable of doing that, he is in fact cultured. And to the extent that a group of men such as those here who find themselves before a given reality are capable of uniting together as if they were a single man, those men are very cultured.

Consider this, for example: Our Mandinga population, for example, has many feuds between themselves, and talk a lot; some are crazy enough to think of themselves as better than others, pushing and pulling, robbing, until some say that when Mandingas say one thing, they are thinking exactly the opposite. That’s why it seems to be a divided population. But in a cultural act, such as praying, they seem to be a single person. In other ethnic groups, for example, coming before a “spirit” is pointless. For example, if we say the following to a Balanta or a Manjaco, “Listen, Bobô is a good guy,” he’ll later say that he’s a friend of Bobô and repeat the same thing to others. Some believe him and others don’t. But if we say that a “spirit” of Cobia says such a thing, even if they were in the Soviet Union or any other place, everyone believes—Mandingas, Mancanhas, Pepéis, Balantas—everyone. You see, therefore, how, facing a cultural situation, a people is capable of joining together, even being a people as divided as our people were.

This is why, when we say that we’re capable of joining together to resist our enemy, we’re increasing our culture. This is also a proof that we in fact have culture. And we have to be capable, as the Party, as a political organization, to continually raise in the spirit of our people in Guinea and Cape Verde this concrete idea: the only child of our land is the one who is patriotic—and moreover, in this phase of our struggle, he who has a love for our Party. That is culture in our land today. It’s not fundamental in our culture today to teach reading and writing or to make it to second grade—that’s also necessary, we already spoke of it. What is

fundamental is to really learn what our Party wants, what we want and what we're searching for, what we're doing, what our struggle is, and where we're going. This is what's important, comrades—to be capable of giving one's life. Whoever is capable of giving their life for the Party without asking for anything, that person is now cultured in our land.

And in the face of this struggle, we can compare, for example, diverse races of Guinea in order to see which is more cultured or less cultured. Sometimes, those who know more about certain things appear to be less cultured. And whichever Mané or N'Bana, there in the middle of the forest, who hangs in there with their work is more cultured than an Alvarenga or any other well-educated person who continues to follow the *tugas*. This is because the former corresponds to that relation of man in society and of man in relation to nature that serves the interest of his people, in order to gain a greater standard of living tomorrow. This is culture, comrades: to really understand the concrete situation of one's land to transform it in the direction of progress.

We should instill, place in the spirit of everyone, the certainty of our victory. That's a cultural act as well, comrades: for everyone to hold on, to not give up at all, to not despair in the face of any defeat (because there are no struggles that don't have defeats). In our struggle there are also defeats, but that's a part of struggle—that's why it's a struggle. But we should continually elevate the trust in our victory. We should do everything to dishearten the enemy, to dishearten the enemy's agents, to show them that there is no way—they will certainly lose. That is culture, comrades.

And, on the basis of the love for our land and for our people, on the basis of the love for our Party, we should develop our dances, our tunes, our types of music, do theater, and even acrobatics, impressions of other people, etc. For example, when we imitate the colonists, Mr. So-and-So, etc., that's important. We should develop all of that in the service of our struggle, in the service of our cause today, with a content—that is to say—with new facts and words.

This is the great value, for example, of the tunes of the Balantas, Beafadas, Mandingas, Creoles, Mancanhas, Pepels, and others, or of the *mornas* and *coladeiras*⁴ that they already made on the basis of our struggle, raising up our Party and the name of our courageous combatants, singing of our weapons, battles, attacks against *tuga* planes, etc.—showing the long path of our people in this war. That is our culture; that is what we should develop today.

In line with this, we should of course advance in order to open the minds of our people in relation to literature, science, etc. This is because we know that it's not the illiterate who can make a good land. It's necessary to have people who can read and write. All of those people who know how to read and write should teach those who don't know. Much time has passed since our Party issued this watchword⁵ and much time has passed since our Party began to create schools, to improve preparation for professors, to form frameworks so that we can advance along the path of the scientific knowledge of life and of the world.

Whether our new culture is in or outside of school, we have to place it in the service of our resistance, in the service of compliance with our Party program. It has to be that way, comrades. Our culture should be developed at the national level of our land, but without disparaging (or considering as lesser) the culture of others, and, with intelligence, availing ourselves of the culture of others—everything insofar as it's good for us, everything insofar as it can be adapted to our living conditions. Our culture should be developed on the basis of science, it should be scientific—which is to say, not involve believing in imaginary things.

Tomorrow our culture should avoid instances where anyone of us thinks that lightning is a sign that God has become enraged or that a thunderstorm is the sky's voice when a furious "spirit" speaks. In our culture tomorrow, everyone should know that, while we dance when there are thunderstorms, a thunderstorm occurs when two clouds clash, one with a positive electrical charge and another with a negative electrical charge; and when they clash they cause a flash, which is lightning, and a noise, which is the thunder. As when one grips two electrical wires, positive and negative, and touches one to the other, there is a flash. That's what lightning in the sky is—electricity in the clouds. The noise that is called "thunder" is the meeting of two clouds.

This is so much the case that, given the speed of sound in air, when one hears a thunderstorm, one can calculate where one cloud meets another, because light moves faster than sound. Watch for lightning and after a bit you hear the noise: if it were, for example, 5 seconds, we can calculate where the two clouds meet and how far from us, because the speed of sound in the air is 340 meters per second. So, if in the moment that one sees lightning one begins to count by seconds, for example, by multiplying 5 by 340, one gets 1,700 meters. That is to say, it was at a distance of 1,700 meters from where we are that the two clouds met and caused a thunderstorm and lightning.

The thunderbolt is nothing more than an electric spark, which due to special conditions comes down to earth and which can come with enough force to destroy a bit, just as, by the way, we can make anything explode indoors with an electric current. Or then you see it strike with less force, entering some place, happening and then disappearing. This can even happen to a human body, which disappears into the ground because the earth is also electrically charged, just as opposite electric charges can produce sparks. This is why they put lightning rods on top of houses, in order for the lightning bolt to enter there and pass directly into the ground without doing anyone harm.

Comrades, we have to base our culture on science. We have to rid our culture of everything insofar as it is antiscientific, if not yet today, then tomorrow. But if we work well today, we have the certainty that tomorrow that will be possible.

Our culture has to be popular, which is to say, culture of the masses: everyone has a right to culture. Moreover, we respect those cultural values of our people that deserve to be respected. Our culture cannot be for an elite, for a group of persons who knows a lot, who knows things. No. All of the children of our land, in Guinea and Cape Verde, must have the right to advance culturally, to participate in our cultural acts, to demonstrate, and to create culture.

We should place the comparative situation of the city and the countryside deeply within our spirit. We should note that, while day by day foreign customs develop in our cities—some good, others bad—our general tendency is to take advantage of the bad ones: alcoholism, prostitution, banditry, scams, assaults, robberies of a certain type, etc. Life is more pure in our forest, although by that I don't want to say that there might not be people who steal. But there is a great difference between a thief in Bissau and a Balanta thief who steals anywhere else. In general, the Balanta thief steals—after the colonialists came, so already with colonialist influence—but he steals in general without interest in keeping what he stole; that which interests him is the act of stealing. This is the very reason why he often robs something, gives it to another, and never sees that thing again—because in Balanta customs, pilfering is a sport to demonstrate one's ability, one's intelligence. If I have glasses, I guard them well, but another person thinks like this: "I'll play around with him until I'm able to

snatch them without his notice.” That person demonstrates that he has a great capacity, more than my own: the capacity to trick me. That’s the significance of Balanta robbery: to steal as an intellectual exercise, as an exercise of physical and intellectual capacity without any interest in possessing what was stolen. This is the reason why, when a young Balanta reaches the moment to celebrate his passage to adulthood, he can count the number of robberies he performed in order to show his value and abilities. And the great men laud this, are happy, treating him as if he were their son, because he’s a person of high caliber. Robberies in the cities, no. A thief from the city steals in order to allow his people to eat or so that he might enrich himself. Aside from this, there are other types of thefts in business that are legal—legal theft.

We should know how to compare our forest with our city in order to avoid all the impurities of the city coming to the forest and to direct all the purities that can exist in our forest to our cities. I repeat that this doesn’t mean that there aren’t likely bad things in the forest. There are a lot of bad things, even issues of sacrifices, of beating children, etc. The manner in which they beat children in our land is hideous. We have to combat that as well. We can’t set out from the principle that the forest is pure, that it has nothing bad about it, that the city alone is bad. No, there are bad things and good things as much in the city as in the forest, only, comparatively, the city is less pure than the forest. And we have to make our countryside progress more each day, as much in the cultural sphere as in other spheres.

From today on, comrades, we have to develop as an entire people, as combatants, as militants, and as a population in this consciousness: when a human being is laboring at something, he should do it well, perfectly, as quickly as possible, and in the simplest way possible. We should develop our spirit and the idea of perfection in the spirit of our people. We still don’t have a very good sense of perfection. Look at that curtain—there isn’t one comrade who would be capable of seeing that and lifting it to set it straight. It’s not a problem for us if a nail that’s put in the wall or clothes that are made remain crooked. We don’t have a good idea of perfection. We have to combat that spirit and infuse in our people the spirit of perfection. If we’re launching an ambush, we’re going to do it in the best way possible. A comrade who went abroad for preparation or who already has sufficient knowledge knows how to launch an ambush: he should put such a weapon in such a location, another weapon in such a location, so many men there, so many over there, so many on reserve, etc., attacking the enemy at such a point. How many comrades do that? How many? When they do it well, the results are extraordinary, but the comrades in general don’t remember that.

This is as true of an ambush as going to regions where one must speak. In a meeting, a comrade has to speak, but without taking any appointments at all; he’s just there in preparation. He can have recourse to a lot of conversation, but he has to study a bit, to remember things. Today there is a meeting with such a village, and it’s necessary to sit down and to think about the problems with that village, taking the necessary notes. He’s a political commissar, the Party trusts him, and he is the Party in that moment; he shouldn’t converse just for the sake of conversing. It’s necessary to study, which doesn’t mean preparing a whole speech—it’s not worth it to give a whole speech to our people in the forest. At times it is worth it, but it’s necessary to take notes on all of the problems, to think about all of the problems that they are going to discuss. This is very important. We need to deal with meetings of leaders in which everyone wants to go to the meeting but nobody knows what they’re going to do there.

Or at times they hold a meeting in the following way: various leaders meet in the north or in the south of our land in order to decide what? The watchwords of our Party. There are comrades who send me meeting reports, and when they leave to see what the others decided, they're things already in the Party's watchwords that they didn't read. But, on top of this, they made fewer and worse decisions than were already made. When a meeting of leaders is held it's in order to deal with the following: to what extent have we already accomplished the Party's watchwords? Take notes and discuss. Or if one or another problem emerges in the Inter-Regional Committee, take notes beforehand to discuss it.

Perfection in our work—this is very important—but perfection even in our manner of dressing. I tell the comrades over and over to fix their collars and to tuck in their shirttails. A people that is fighting for its independence, for its dignity, from today on must proceed with clean feet. When one walks in the mud—patience—but when we get out of the mud, we're going to wash our feet. Clean clothes are only one way; undress, tie on a piece of cloth, wash up, and you will become clean. Comb your hair, and if there isn't a comb, make a comb from a stick if necessary, if you're not able to buy one. But there are comrades who seem to have pride in their uncombed hair. It seems like an unimportant thing, but it's very important. For our dignity, in order to open new paths of life, the way in which we behave has great importance.

Before, the *tugas* said that we were quite filthy; but when we dressed well, they called us doctors—“black with a doctor's ways.” That was the *tugas*' position. But we don't have that complex; we're against everything dirty, we're against filthiness. For example, I marvel at how some comrades are as capable of lying down in a bed as on the ground. Fortunately, all aren't like this. But it doesn't matter if the bedroom is full of trash or clean. Even leaders amidst a mess, for example, are not capable of getting up to clean. They're capable of giving their life for their land, and they're not capable of cleaning the ground. They're not capable of sweeping, of straightening up the yard, of making any sort of small garden, when despite all of the work there is time for this.

There are comrades of ours in the land who made their base beautiful, well put together, and even being against the bases, I never told them anything because I saw an effort, a will to arrange. But others don't want to know. When a man or a woman wants to give their life for a cause, they have to be clean, in a clean environment, to make all of those around them clean. Because only in this way can their spirit be cleaner each day.

We have to have a notion of time in our culture, in our action. We weren't the ones who invented the watch, but we have to have a notion of time, comrades. We, in general, our comrades, don't have this—contrary to our people, who know very well what time is, who know that if they don't cultivate until a determinate time, then things turn for the worse, that one has to sow so many days after the first rains. If not, then this is bad. They know that so many days after a plant grows on the edge of the house, or rice in the nursery, these have to be taken to the *bolanha*—if not, things don't work out. They know that so much time after opening a *bolanha*, after clearing the mangroves, they can begin to plant—and not before this—because it still has salt, etc.

Many of our comrades today don't have the slightest notion of time. If it's necessary to get up at five in the morning, they get up at nine; it's necessary to launch an ambush beginning at four in the afternoon, but they don't arrive there that day—only showing up the following day and verifying that the *tugas* have already passed by. It's necessary to attack some barracks at

six in the evening, but they arrive in the late hours of the night. Or again, if the attack were for midday, they arrive in the afternoon and leave it for the following day. They arrive the next day in the same conditions. Our comrades missed attacks or ambushes only because of tardiness countless times. Some instances of being late are justifiable, because our conditions are difficult, but others are only late from a lack of interest, lack of consciousness, lack of order and of decision.

Sometimes one gives a comrade a mission to quickly take a letter to some location. Along the way, he finds some reason to have fun for three or four days, although it takes one day to arrive. It can't be like this. One cannot win a war this way, much less construct a land.

We must have a notion of time. The security, political commissar, etc. comrades have to be on time everywhere. Let no one come to me saying that he doesn't have a watch, and that's why he can't be on time. We don't need watches to arrive on time. We can decide to meet each other while the sun is high. There's sun in our land. When the rooster sings for the first time, one has to get up. When the sun is fully up we have to go. A watch isn't necessary in order to respect time, comrades. Watches are for helping comrades a bit more. Our people lived during centuries without watches, but they did what they could, given the economic conditions in which they found themselves. It was not the watch that made the people of Europe advance, no. They went to work on time and advanced much, thus they created the watch—the modern watch, because everyone had the ancient watch. It's enough to impale the ground with a stick, and, according to the place of the shadow, one can know the hour. This is a sun watch. The shadow of a person can be a watch, because in the morning the shadow is to one side, and in the afternoon the shadow is on the other side. Many people think they lose their shadow at midday, because it is under their feet; but the sun is full and above us.

We have to work a lot, comrades, in order to take advantage of time. We have to seek to be practical in our work; we have to instill the idea of practicality in the spirit of our comrades. It's necessary to stop complicating things, or to lose the magical interpretation of reality in our spirit. That is to say: We still have certain ways of thinking—that if we sit down and discuss a matter in which all are in agreement, we think that the thing is already done. We remain content, as if we had in fact done the thing, as if it were then necessary to throw a party because the discussion was really good. But the discussion finishes, and every- one leaves satisfied with life because they're going to do a good job. But they don't try to do it because it's only in their head.

But if we observe closely, we see that that corresponds to our own life: we're convinced that Moors or sorcerers are capable of pointing a finger at us and making us fall over. Sooner or later, we'll see that it's a lie, that it's not capable of anything. But that's in our head, we think of it and we believe. And many other things besides these. Likewise, we think about an ambush and we are very satisfied, but we don't take a single practical measure for everything to run well, without flaws, be- cause everything is good in our head—because we believe in our magi- cal interpretation of reality.

We have to combat this in our midst, and we all have to do so, as a few of our comrades do. We have to discuss, but also to correctly put it into practice, properly, without errors, because our misfortune is begin- ning and not ending. When we start some work, do it with complete enthusiasm. For example, we're going to make an underground store- house to guard our material. We begin it with enthusiasm, but after a while, we stop and people forget. Look at how many things in indepen- dent Africa have begun but have not been finished. This is

because, for us, it is enough to have a thing in our head, and soon one doesn't think of it anymore. We have planned out so many things in our struggle—in the political sphere, in the military sphere, in instruction, in health—that we don't do. We begin, but if a single difficulty arises, we don't advance. We have to combat this with vigor, with great vigor.

We can give examples of many things that were begun that weren't finished. The peoples who began something and didn't finish, the organizations that began something and didn't finish, did so for either of two reasons: either they recognized that it wasn't worth doing, or they weren't capable of finishing it. If they recognized that it wasn't worth doing, then they're doing something that they shouldn't be doing—they certainly studied the problem poorly. Before we begin to do something, we should study it well—in order to know if it's worth doing or not—and not begin to do it to put it aside later. This is a loss of energy and a waste. Or at times it happens that one can't finish. But whoever can't finish a thing that they began to do is unfortunate in life, because they can't do anything. We have to combat this, comrades.

Thus, perfection, making good use of our time, and having practical sense with our accomplishments (the capacity to bring every work, everything that we have to do, to completion) are very important—fundamental in our culture, comrades. These are new elements for our land's culture. Because even if an entire week were necessary to launch a well-planned ambush, we should do this, whether it takes an entire week or an entire month. We have to organize our troops in such a way that a group would always be on that road, patrolling, moving, etc., but it always has to be like this. If we know that the enemy should pass there, we shouldn't leave; it's necessary to complete the task. Not, as I told you, arriving, planning a great ambush, then waiting one, two, three, or four hours, and the enemy doesn't come. Some say that they're coming, others that they're not coming, and they finish by heading out. Afterward, the enemy passes and goes to supply their barracks. It's the same thing on the rivers. The time of attack has to be the appointed time. If not, then why have an appointed time? An attack was appointed for five o'clock, but five, six o'clock, even another day passes, and the attack isn't carried out. Why are the comrades playing around? For what? We appointed it for five o'clock, after having the certainty that it's even at five; we appointed it at ten after we had the certainty that it could be at ten. Moreover, knowing the enemy as we should know it, we know which time is the best to attack. We should take maximum advantage of this.

We should be capable of issuing our resistance's propaganda; this is also a cultural act. We should do so by every means that we arranged. That's the very reason why one of the greatest victories of our Party is our *Rádio Liberdade*, our newspaper, our press, our information, as much within our land as abroad. We all know the strength, the value that our Party's broadcasting station has, which issues propaganda for our people and which we should be able to improve every day, because that's an essential element, an essential means for our propaganda, for propagating our resistance.

And, in the context of our action, we should raise high the flag against illiteracy in our land. We're happy because many comrades have already improved their knowledge in this struggle. Many grown men of our land learned to read and write, and even more young guys. Today, it's rare for a bigroup to show up that doesn't have anyone who knows how to read and write, but before there were many who didn't know how to read or write. There were many bigroups in which almost no one knew how to read and write. We should reinforce cooperative learning every day.

But there are many comrades who have reached the second grade, the first grade, the second year, and even doctors, who can pass days on end with other comrades without doing anything, or even resting during spare time—lying down or telling stories—without remembering to say: “Comrades, you don’t know anything. Come here and I’m going to teach you. Or if you know a bit, come so I can teach you more than a bit.” But the comrades don’t think about this. They prefer to tell stories, to stroll through the forests, or in Conakry, or in Ziguinchor, or in Dakar.

We should work hard to construct our life in our land, comrades. For example—and the Party has already begun to do this—we should spread among our people the idea of cleanliness, of hygiene as they say. Our people are clean—they like to bathe, they always like to brush their teeth, but not everyone. There are those who don’t like these things much, and can indeed bathe, but they get themselves into the mud afterward because of certain things. We have to work to show our people that their life, the prolongation of their life, also depends a lot on the cleanliness of their house. If a people lives mixed up with filth and other things, it’s bad, because this environment is good for those insects that do harm to humans—they grow at will—for those flies and other insects that bring diseases. We should explain the norms of hygiene to our people. This is a fundamental aspect of our cultural resistance.

We began with our health brigades, but to where did these lead us? We accomplished little work in relation to what was necessary to do. But the political commissar should be an agent of hygiene; the commander of the armed forces should be an agent of hygiene. Wherever one arrives, one should demand that they clean themselves. But even in Boké, for example, or outside a home, the leading comrades who pass by encounter everyone dirty and don’t say anything. Only one or another worry about cleanliness. It can’t be so dirty; it’s necessary to clean, to sweep. We have to develop this in our spirit, comrades: cleanliness, hygiene.

Every leader or militant of the Party should be an agent of hygiene in our land. Wherever one arrives, he has to demand cleanliness, and as a good leader, he should be the first to grab a broom if necessary, in order to clean, in order to show the others that he’s not embarrassed, that he’s fighting for his land, giving his life for our struggle, but that he’s not capable of living amidst filth, because no one gets to cleaning because to clean is to be demoted. How is it that this can indicate to our people the actual path for rising up, to get out of filth?

Because if we want an answer to our struggle, if we can say that our struggle in Guinea and Cape Verde is in order to do away with all wretchedness, then we can also say that it’s in order to do away with all messes. We have to put an end to all messes and promiscuity in our midst. When we’ve put an end to this, we will have already advanced a lot in our struggle. Indeed, we have told the comrades to convince our people to make latrines, for example. That’s not to say that latrines are what exemplify progress; no, the latrine is no progress. A people that addresses their basic needs in the forest can be more advanced than a people who has latrines. But to the extent to which latrines have been made, they should be advancing in other fields, because when one moves this place of business farther away, they are preventing sicknesses among our people. Because we know that there are places where, for a person to pass, he has to hold his nose, otherwise . . . But in other African countries, it’s also like this; even in a few cities, there are places where to pass by it’s necessary to hold one’s nose. Filth on every side. We who are ready to die in a struggle, for the progress and happiness of our people, have to be capable of cleaning, because it’s easier to clean than to die.

Of course, we have to throw away everything in our schools insofar as it was made by the colonialists, everything that exemplifies the colonialist mentality. We have already begun to do it—editing new books, speaking of our Party, of our struggle, of our land, of the present and future of our people, of our people’s rights. There are comrades who think that in order to teach our children well we shouldn’t speak of our Party. What history! A pedagogy that wants that is no pedagogy at all. Pedagogy for us is that which teaches our children about our struggle, the rights of our people, the Party, the Party anthem, the value of our Party, beyond the ABCs, *The Cat and the Fox*, *The Wolf and the Kid*, etc.⁶ But the Party should be present there as well: the direction of the Party, the Party directors, the force of our struggle, the force of our people, the force of our Party, the duties of our people.

At school in my time, they taught the birth of Jesus Christ, that the Virgin Mary had a baby while remaining a virgin, and I even respected that, and even seemed to understand it in that time. They taught the miracle of the ascension in the books espoused at that time, miracles like the miracle of roses and whatnot. If in that time they taught miracles to children, why can we not teach our land’s greatest miracle—that men and women reunited to mobilize our people for struggle, to put an end to suffering, to misery, to wretchedness, to blows, kicks, forced labor, etc? Who isn’t capable of understanding that? Any little kid is capable of understanding that.

And we should make a professor of every Party leader and every Party militant who is knowledgeable. Comrades, it’s not only a professor from the schools who has the obligation to teach; anyone—a commander, member of the Party management, political commissar, security commissar, nurse, anyone—has the obligation to teach, to always teach, speaking or clarifying, explaining, helping. Only thus can we move forward. We should not only leave the work of teaching to professors. We should take advantage of every conversation with a comrade—and the comrades who deal with me a lot, who know me well, know that it’s like this, that I typically act like this in life—every conversation with a comrade, no matter at what level it may be, should be made into a study, a lesson. One or another learns. All of our conversations have to be a lesson—thus can we buy time and advance. But if we merely sit around telling stories about some sacred tree from Mansoa, or somewhere else, without thinking about learning, we lose time and we don’t advance, comrades.

We should avoid the superiority complex of those who know something and the inferiority complex of those who don’t know. This is because a person who is capable of teaching shouldn’t distance themselves from anyone, especially from our people now. On the contrary, one should constantly immerse himself more among our people. I explained to the comrades, for example, to the comrades who go to study and return: “Until now there have been two tendencies—one is from those who come, who infiltrate our people, but get so muddled with our people that they only make the same mistakes as our people. Others come as graduated engineers, and later they want to be directors. ‘Was it Bobô Keita who ran things? But how, Bobô isn’t at my level; I’m an engineer and he hardly went to school, he had to wait outside, he only committed errors, he messed up our Party work, ruined everything, etc.’ Those are the two extremes that we don’t want.” What we want is for those who left to study, who acquired more knowledge, to respect our directors, because they are in fact the directors, even if they didn’t go to school. But if one saw some deficiency, one should delve into the middle of the comrades in order to help to constantly raise, to improve the level of our things. This is what it means for a person to know more, who understood more than others and who comes to help us. Mingle with and muddle around with yourselves, but don’t forget that it’s necessary to help rise up more each day.

We should combat everything insofar as it may be opportunism, even in culture. For example, there are comrades who think that in order to teach in our land it's fundamental to still teach in Creole. Then others think that it's better to teach in Fula, in Mandinga, in Balanta. This is very pleasant to hear; if the Balantas hear this, they will be very happy, but it's no longer possible. How are we going to write in Balanta now? Who knows Balanta phonetics? One still doesn't know, and it's necessary to study first, even Creole. For example, I write, "*n'ea na bai.*" Another can write, for example, "*n'ka na bai.*" It makes no difference. One can't teach like this. In order to teach a written language, it's necessary to have a certain way of writing it so that everyone writes in the same way; otherwise it's a diabolic mess.

But many comrades, with a sense of opportunism, want to move forward with Creole. We're going to do that, but after studying a lot. Now our language for writing is Portuguese. That's why it's worth it to talk to each other here as much in Portuguese as in Creole. We're not better children of our land if we speak Creole—that's not true. But the child of our land is the one who abides by the Party's laws, the Party's orders, in order to serve our people well. No one should have a complex because one doesn't know Balanta, Mandinga, Pepel, Fula, or Mancanha. If one knows, even better, but if one doesn't know, one has to make sure that others understand, even if by gestures. But if one is working hard in the Party, one moves forward. Because who knows more Manjaco than the traitor Joaquim Batican? Who knows more Fula than the traitor Sene Sané; who knows more Fula hypocrisies than the traitor Tchern Rachid? Comrades, be patient; but who knows more Balanta than the traitor Fuab? We have to have the courage to report clear things to the comrades. Our values all right, but without opportunism.

We have to have a real sense of our culture. Portuguese (the language) is one of the best things that the *tugas* left us, because language isn't evidence of anything, but an instrument for men to relate with one another, a means for speaking, to express realities of life and of the world. Just as man invented the radio to speak at a distance, without speaking with language but only with signals, so too through the time of his development man began to speak—the necessity to intercommunicate made him begin to speak. He developed vocal cords, etc., until he could speak. And as language depends on the environment in which one lives, every people created their own language.

If we notice, for example, the people who live near the sea, their language has many things related to the sea; for those who live in the forest, their language has many things related to woodlands. A people that lives in the forest, for example, doesn't know how to say "boat," isn't familiar with boats, and don't live on the sea. For example, in the language of certain European peoples, they say things about the sea or about navigation in Portuguese because the Portuguese live along the sea. Everything has its reason.

Language is an instrument that man created through labor, through struggle, in order to communicate with others. And this gave him a great new strength because no one was closed in on himself anymore; they began to speak with one another—men with men, societies with societies, people with people, country with country, continent with continent. How wonderful! Language was the first natural means of communication that existed. But the world advanced a lot; we didn't advance as much as the world. Our language remained at the level of that world to which we arrived, in which we live, whereas the *tuga*—although he was a colonialist living in Europe—had a language that advanced a good bit more than ours, being able to express concrete and relative truths, for example, with science. For

example, we speak like this: the moon is the earth's natural satellite. "Natural satellite"—they say this in Balanta, they say it in Mancanha. It's necessary to talk a lot in order to say it; it's possible to say it, but it's necessary to talk a lot until it becomes clear that a satellite is a thing that revolves around another—whereas in Portuguese one word suffices. Speaking like that, any people in the world understands. And mathematics: we want to learn mathematics, don't we? Take, for example, the square root of thirty-six. How does one say square root in Balanta? It's necessary to tell the truth in order to really understand. I say, for example: "the intensity of a force is equal to mass times the acceleration of gravity." How are we going to say this? How does one say "acceleration of gravity" in our language? It doesn't exist in Creole; we have to say it in Portuguese.

But for our land to advance, every child of our land in the next few years has to know what the acceleration of gravity is. I won't explain this now because there's no time and we have a lot of work. But comrades, tomorrow, in order to seriously advance, not only the directors but also all of the nine-year-olds have to know what the acceleration of gravity is. In Germany, for example, all the children know this. There are many things that we can't say in our language, but there are people who want us to put the Portuguese language to the side because we're Africans and we don't want a foreigner's language. Those people want their mind to advance; they don't want to make their people advance. We of the Party, if we want to lead our people forward for a long time to come—to write, to advance in science—our language has to be Portuguese. And this is an honor. It's the only thing we can appreciate from the *tuga*, because he left his language after having stolen so much from our land. Until an actual day in which, having deeply studied Creole, finding all of the good phonetic rules for Creole, we could begin to write Creole. But we don't prohibit anyone from writing in Creole. If someone wants to write in Creole, if someone wants to write a letter to their love in Creole, they can write it. It's only that in the response one sends, one is going to write in a different way, but making oneself clearly understood. But for science, Creole doesn't yet suffice. Even in Balanta. I remember a comrade of ours, who unfortunately died—Ongo. We would write in Portuguese, and then switch to Creole, and he would write in Balanta. This is because it's possible to write in Balanta—a person who knows enough Portuguese is capable of writing Balanta. They say, for example, "*Watna*," or at times "*n'calossa*." I know how to write it but I write it in my way; yet another person writes it in their way. Even "*djarama*" in Fula can be written with a *d* and a *j*, or it can be written only with a *j*, but we read "*djarama*" because the *j* at the beginning of the word is equivalent to *dj*. But we have to set up a rule as in Mandinga or in other languages. It's necessary to first set up a rule. It has to be like this, comrades, because we have to take absolute advantage of other peoples' experiences, not only our own experience. But if we want to employ that experience in order to utilize it in our land, we have to utilize the expressions of other languages. Well, if we have a language that can explain all this, let's use it; it does no harm.

For us, using Portuguese—like Russian, French, or English—doesn't matter, as long as it serves us, just as using tractors from the Russians, English, Americans, etc. doesn't matter, as long as they serve us in cultivating the land while gaining our independence. That's because language is an instrument, but it might happen that we already have a language that works and that everyone understands. So we're not going to make everyone learn Russian. It's not worth it, especially since we have the Creole language, which is similar to Portuguese. If in our schools we teach our students how Creole comes from Portuguese and from Africa, anyone will know Portuguese much more quickly. Creole impairs those who learn Portuguese because they don't know what linkage exists between Portuguese and Creole, but if they become familiar with the linkage that exists, this facilitates in learning Portuguese.

We have to end all of our people's indifference in cultural matters with steadfastness in our decisions and in our determination to do things. We have already managed to combat this. And we should not avoid something because it's from a foreigner, or again, because it's foreign; if it's already good and we have to accept it immediately, then it's not worth refusing. That's not culture. It's crazy, it's a complex— be it one of inferiority or stupidity. Faced with things from the foreigner, we should know how to accept what is acceptable and refuse what isn't useful. We have to be capable of raising criticisms. And if you will notice, in a part of our action our struggle has been the constant application of the principle of critical assimilation, that is, availing ourselves of others, but criticizing what can be useful for our land and that which cannot. Accumulating experience and creating.

These are a few aspects of our cultural resistance in the cultural sphere, of which I wanted to speak to you comrades.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

1. The Cassacá Congress was the first Party Congress of the PAIGC held from 13–17 February 1964 in “the liberated zones in the southern front at Cassaca. Some of the notable positions taken at this Congress were: 1) an enlargement of the Central Committee from thirty to sixty-five members; 2) the establishment of the following seven departments: armed forces, foreign affairs, cadre control, training and information, security, economy and finance, and mass organizations; and 3) the formation of the *Forças Armadas Revolucionárias do Povo* (FARP) (q.v.) as well as People's Stores and an expansion of medical and educational services.” Lobban and Mendy, *Historical Dictionary*, 252. The Congress also dealt with some of the major issues arising from militarism, ethnic localism, and various cultural factors. See Chabal, *Amílcar Cabral*, 77–83.

2. While *segurança orgânica* here refers to collective, organizational security, this type of security should not be taken out of the context of “nature” as Cabral uses the term. The form of security under discussion is not only “organizational” but also harbors “organic” connotations in this context.

3. Cabral is likely referring to Osvaldo Vieira, who was the commander of the liberated eastern front of Boé beginning in 1968 and part of the elected executive committee of the PAIGC political bureau. See Davidson, *No Fist Is Big Enough to Hide the Sky*, 39–42; 55–56.

4. *Morna* and *coladeira* are types of music and dance from Cape Verde.

5. This is likely a reference to the general watchwords provided at the Cassacá Conference in 1964, published in 1965. See “Improve Our Knowledge and Defend our Health,” in Cabral, *Unity and Struggle*, 242–45.

6. *O Gato e a Raposa* was one of Aesop's fables, and *O Lobo e o Chibinho* (or *Lobu ku Xibinhu*) was a children's story originating from São Nicalau, Cape Verde. See Hamilton, *Voices from an Empire*, 256.