9

Brother and a Comrade

Amílcar Cabral as Global Revolutionary

R. Joseph Parrott

In October 1972, Amílcar Cabral was in New York again. The bespectacled revolutionary was the leader of the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (African Party for the Independence of Guiné and Cabo Verde, or PAIGC). Since 1963 he had overseen an armed struggle for independence in the Portuguese colony of Guiné (Guinea-Bissau).[1] Cabral spent much of his time abroad, traveling the world in search of monetary and material support to oppose the better equipped military of the Portuguese empire. Most of this assistance came from Africa and Eastern Europe, where Cabral adopted the iconic Czech *zmijovka* hat that often covered his receding hairline. Nonetheless, Cabral continued to court Western populations. The countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) supplied their Portuguese ally with weapons the dictatorship used to wage its colonial wars. But Cabral believed many US citizens sympathized with his party's push for self-determination and more could be won over.

Taking time from his latest trip to the United Nations, Cabral found himself in a small room packed with African American activists. Over the previous years, the PAIGC had become a model of self-determination for Black Americans and anti-imperial organizing for Western radicals (Figure 9.1), his writings part of a global canon of Third World leftists. For many in the room that day, Cabral stood out within this network of revolutionaries like Che Guevara and Mao Zedong because of his race. His identity as a "brother" created a Pan-African linkage, which made his words especially powerful for African-descended peoples. Yet as Cabral

[1] I refer to Guinea-Bissau simply as Guiné and Guinea-Conakry as Guinea for clarity.

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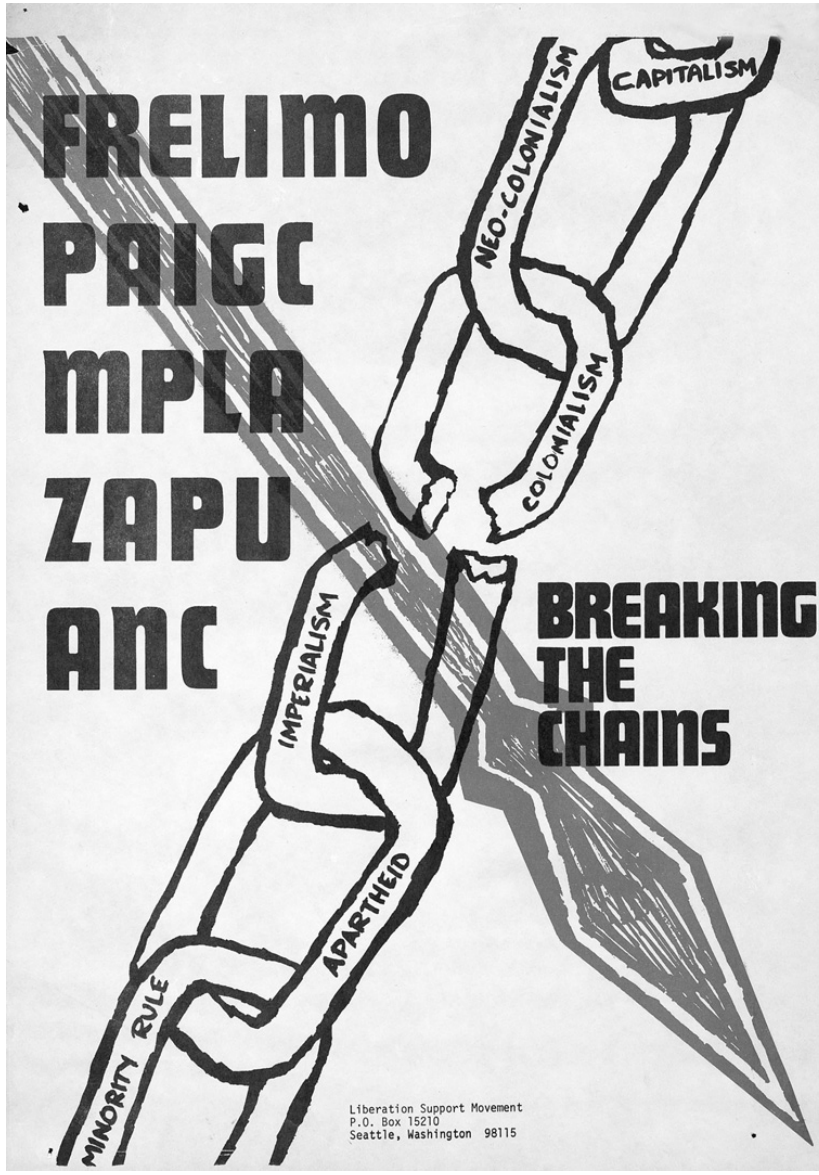


FIGURE 9.1 Westerners adapted and contributed to Tricontinental iconography while organizing solidarity movements. This American poster used the trope of broken chains to highlight the individual elements of imperialism and racism that Tricontinentalism challenged. It also reflects the cooperative diplomacy adopted by leftist liberation movements, especially in Africa, that encouraged Western activists to treat national revolutions as interconnected. Liberation Support Movement, Artist Unknown, 1972. Offset, 36x25 cm. Image courtesy Lincoln Cushing / Docs Populi.

answered questions from his audience, he offered a political challenge. "Naturally if you ask me between brother and comrades what I prefer," he explained, "if we are brothers it is not our fault or our responsibility. But if we are comrades, it is a political engagement. Naturally we like our brothers, but in our conception it is better to be a brother *and* a comrade."[2]

This concise statement captured Cabral's vision of solidarity but also some of its tensions. His nuanced, practical vision of anti-imperialism made him an icon in the 1970s and recently led to a resurgence of interest in his philosophy.[3] Yet how best to understand that philosophy remains open to debate. Many have seen Cabral as a Marxist who rarely quoted Marx and softened the edges of abstract dogmatism with a focus on concrete African realities.[4] Others have placed him in the Pan-African pantheon alongside Frantz Fanon and Kwame Nkrumah, men who drew upon African strands of radical politics.[5] A few scholars – notably Patrick Chabal and Mustafah Dhada – view Cabral as a pragmatic nationalist whose ideas developed primarily from the struggle in Guiné even as he drew elements from external sources.[6] These debates continue because Cabral never wrote a singular theoretical work laying out a cohesive set of ideas. He expressed his philosophy piecemeal in speeches and party documents, in which he revisited and refined concepts in response to domestic and international events. The result is an overarching intellectual

[2] Amílcar Cabral, *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches of Amilcar Cabral*, African Information Service, eds. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), 76.

[3] See Amílcar Cabral, *Resistance and Decolonization*, trans. Dan Wood (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016); Manji Firoze and Bill Fletcher, Jr., eds., *Claim No Easy Victories: The Legacy of Amilcar Cabral* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2013); Carlos Lopes, ed., *Africa's Contemporary Challenges: The Legacy of Amilcar Cabral* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

[4] See Peter Karibe Mendy, *Amílcar Cabral: Nationalist and Pan-Africanist Revolutionary* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2019), 202; Jock McCulloch, *In the Twilight of Revolution: The Political Theory of Amilcar Cabral* (London, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983).

[5] See for instance Reiland Rabaka, *Concepts of Cabralism: Amilcar Cabral and Africana Critical Theory* (London: Lexington Books, 2015), 204; and essays in P. Khalil Saucier, ed., *A Luta Continua: (Re)Introducing Amilcar Cabral to a New Generation of Thinkers* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2016).

[6] Chabal's Cabral is a humanist, socialist democrat, while Dhada's measured approach highlights a unique "Cabralness" that emphasizes his nationalist reading of colonialism and empire. Patrick Chabal, *Amílcar Cabral: Revolutionary Leadership and People's War* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983), chapter 6; Mustafah Dhada, *Warriors at Work: How Guinea Was Really Set Free* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1993), 127.

trajectory complicated by a series of competing emphases and audiences, which has led to diverse interpretations.

This chapter contends that Cabral's ideas were centered on the practical needs of the Guinean struggle, but they aligned with a militant brand of anti-imperialism that emerged in the 1960s. Cabral was part of a generation of Third World leftists who believed coordinated, parallel national revolutions would erase inequalities between Global North and South, advancing the long fight against empire to a more aggressive phase. A dedicated nationalist, he viewed socialism as a toolkit for evaluating the international system and organizing an independent country. Change would come not via class struggle but rather through adoption of a common culture that provided the foundations for cross-class political action against foreign domination. This Third World revolution moved beyond European communism in hopes of finally erasing the manufactured economic inequalities and racism that marginalized the Global South.

As the PAIGC became enmeshed in the diverse solidarity networks that sustained its war for independence, Cabral refined his synthetic ideology to better explain his party's position at the intersection of Third World anti-imperial traditions, international socialism, and Pan-Africanism. Indeed, Cabral argued a month before the armed revolt began that the PAIGC "had lost its strictly national character and has moved onto an international level."[7] From its earliest stages, the PAIGC sought support from an array of international alliances, building connections as decolonization and shifting politics opened new avenues for solidarity. These networks not only funded the liberation struggle but also helped legitimize the party against competitors during its many years in exile. Tensions existed – racial solidarity versus ideological cohesion, philosophical purity versus practical compromise – yet Cabral managed them by focusing on the common imperial enemy, which he understood in both its colonial and neocolonial guises. The persistence of these frictions occasionally hampered the movement, especially at the granular level of interpersonal interactions, but PAIGC philosophy legitimized the creation of an inclusive revolutionary coalition and proved effective at building solidarity in both North and South. As a result, Cabral became, according to historian Jock McCulloch, "the leading political theorist of the second phase of the independence era," or what this volume argues might be better described as Tricontinentalism.[8]

[7] Amílcar Cabral, *The Revolution in Guinea* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969), 51.
[8] McCulloch, *In the Twilight of Revolution*, 10.

THE IDEOLOGY OF NATIONALIST REVOLUTION

Central to PAIGC philosophy was the search for unity amidst the social divisions created by Europe's oldest empire. Colonialism provided Portugal with power and prestige beyond its impoverished status, and Antonio Salazar made empire the centerpiece of his fascist Estado Novo from the 1930s onward. Extractive industries in the major colonies of Angola and Mozambique led to an expansion of the colonial state, but settlement remained light into the twentieth century, especially in the hinterlands of Guiné and Cabo Verde. In mainland Guiné, the Portuguese presence did not stretch far beyond administrative centers like the port capital of Bissau. Lisbon managed the colony by manipulating and reinforcing ethnic and social divisions, which included using Cabo Verdeans to fill minor bureaucratic positions. The Cabo Verde islands featured a creole *mestiço* population produced by centuries of intermingling between Portuguese administrators, sailors, and descendants of enslaved Africans. Creolized Cabo Verdeans, along with a small minority of "assimilated" mainland Africans hailing mostly from urban areas, had access to education and civil employment after modest colonial reforms in the early twentieth century. These advantages made them ideal middlemen in the empire, especially in Guiné, where islanders became symbols of empire.[9]

Cabral and the PAIGC leadership emerged from this context. Most were Cabo Verdeans by birth or lineage with ties to Guiné. Cabral was born to Cabo Verdean parents on the mainland, where his father served as a teacher. He attended island schools and witnessed the periodic starvation that Portugal allowed to occur in its drought-prone colony. Upon gaining admittance to university in Lisbon, Cabral diverged from the path of colonial administrator and embraced a distinctly African identity. He joined a community of young nationalists associated with the Casa dos Estudantes do Império (House for Colonial Students) that included Angolans Mário Pinto de Andrade and Agostinho Neto, as well as Mozambican Marcelino Dos Santos. This cadre – effectively a revolutionary salon in the metropolitan capital – explored foreign ideas suppressed by the dictatorship including Marxism, African nationalism, and the Harlem Renaissance's search for Black identity.[10] They also began organizing against Portugal's fascist empire.

[9] Chabal, *Revolutionary Leadership*, 27.

[10] Ibid., 40–44; Dalila Cabrita Mateus, *A Luta Pela Independência: A Formação das Elites Fundadoras da FREIMO, MPLA, e PAIGC* (Portugal: Inquérito, 1999), 66–75; Mario de Andrade, *Amílcar Cabral* (Paris: Francois Maspero, 1980), 32.

At the center of this nascent ideology was a conscious identification as Africans. The well-educated students were partially assimilated into the nominally race-blind culture of the Lusophone empire but found little sense of belonging in Portugal. Cabral later implied they were Europeanized "petite bourgeois" alienated from peasants at home (there being little to no colonial working class) but marginalized within the empire. Lacking a firm identity, they found a solution in the "re-Africanisation of our minds."[11] This process was the origin of Cabral's famous dictum that revolutionaries must "return to the source," rejecting the allure of European superiority to align with the "native masses." Yet Cabral believed this conversion took on historic importance only if resistance to cultural domination laid the groundwork for political solidarity that challenged "foreign domination as a whole."[12]

The middling classes therefore had a choice. They could enjoy their small privileges or commit class suicide by adopting a revolutionary consciousness that identified fully with the culture *and* goals of the majority in their homelands.[13] While Cabral referenced Marxist ideas, he did not desire class conflict but the creation of national unity across classes. This unity provided the foundation for a revolution forged around a shared African personality. Cabral carried this nascent ideology with him when he left Lisbon to serve as a colonial agronomist, using a surveying project to analyze Guiné's diverse communities. In 1956, party histories claim, Cabral founded the PAIGC alongside a core of Cabo Verdeans in Bissau. Later that year he was reportedly present at the formation of the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, or MPLA) in Luanda. The PAIGC organized clandestinely in Bissau, with some success among the city's dockworkers.[14]

Importantly, this "return to the source" did not mean adopting one dominant cultural tradition or ethnic identity but rather creating a new national consciousness. For the educated Africans of the Lisbon salon, returning wholesale to village traditions meant rejecting the useful elements that came with empire: advanced technology, industry, modern social relationships, and the nation-state. This last point was especially important in Guiné, which featured nearly a dozen ethnic groups with distinct

[11] Cabral, *Revolution*, 86. [12] Cabral, *Return*, 63. [13] Cabral, *Revolution*, 72 and 110.
[14] There is debate over Cabral's presence and the parties' founding dates, which were likely years later. See Julião Soares Sousa, *Amílcar Cabral: Vida e Morte de um Revolucionário Africano* (Lisbon: Vega, 2011), 184–191; Mendy, *Nationalist and Pan-Africanist*, 90–102; Chabal, *Revolutionary Leadership*, 54–57.

traditions and languages. Cabral believed this was the result of Portuguese imperialism "halt[ing] our history," exaggerating and formalizing antiquated social formations or forging new ones to undermine a united resistance.[15] Europe developed nations and bureaucracies to manage modern economic and societal relations while keeping Guineans "prisoners of the medieval mentality of their political formulations."[16]

The process through which educated revolutionaries joined with the peasant majority offered a solution. It linked the nascent, authentic power of a mass movement with the knowledge and critical self-awareness of educated individuals like Cabral. For the PAIGC, the struggle against empire also offered Cabo Verdeans the opportunity for a renewed African identity as part of the formation of a modern Pan-African nation. Chabal argues that the party adapted sociopolitical structures from the large Balante ethnic group that provided many early recruits and which Cabral claimed was egalitarian and anti-colonial. Yet the party did not promote Balante nationalism.[17] Convinced that ethnocentric localism was anathema to revolution and unity amidst the diversity of Guiné, Cabral sought to forge a new identity.[18] With his party acting as a gatekeeper, Cabral envisioned a movement that promoted "positive cultural values" derived from shared African traditions while discarding inherited practices that hindered solidarity such as sexism, sectarianism, and racism.[19] Cabral contended that a successful movement could not simply displace colonialism with old ideas; it needed to create a nation that represented all citizens.

Therefore, Cabral and the PAIGC built their party at the intersection of two political avenues: an aspirational form of African identity politics and a practical socialism that provided concrete material benefits. Both were vital to party ideology but sometimes caused tension within the movement.[20] Regarding the former, the PAIGC's desire to forge a common identity

[15] Amílcar Cabral, *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 32–33.

[16] PAIGC, Communicado analisando a origem da luta na Guiné, n.d. (c. 1963), Folder: 07073.132.001, Arquivo Amílcar Cabral, Fundação Mário Soares, Casa Comum: http://casacomum.org/cc/arquivos?set=e_2617. Hereafter, Cabral Archive.

[17] Chabal, *Revolutionary Leadership*, 69–70, 201.

[18] Aristides Pereira maintained ethnic differences were generally "much stronger" than the mainland-islander divide. Aristides Pereira, *O Meu Testemunho* (Lisbon: Noticias, 2003), 103.

[19] Cabral, *Return*, 48.

[20] The PAIGC concept of African identity has similarities to the way Mahler argues Tricontinentalism used color as a metonym linking Afro-Asian-Latinx identity to anti-imperial action. Anne Garland Mahler, *From the Tricontinental to the Global South: Race, Radicalism, and Transnational Solidarity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 65.

using positive aspects of an idealized African culture meant it consciously rejected unity based on anti-imperial racism. The party's official position was that it opposed Portugal, not its people.[21] Yet this nuance faded at the operational level when PAIGC operatives used emotional appeals to mobilize disaffected Africans. "The BLACK MAN lives in misery because the WHITE MAN exploits him," wrote PAIGC President Rafael Barbosa, who recruited in Bissau until his arrest in 1962. "[I]n Africa as a whole," added Barbosa, "we are driving the Whites out because they treat us poorly."[22] Cabral himself occasionally blurred the lines connecting whites to empire when addressing PAIGC cadres, but the party generally avoided such rhetoric.[23] Cabral repeatedly expressed his strong opposition to organizing around race, arguing "we can not answer racism with racism."[24] Yet tension remained, since such appeals were powerfully convincing to many Guineans whose experiences of empire were visibly tied to white Europeans.

Indeed, competing parties saw value in adopting racial appeals. By the late 1950s, an array of nationalists competed with the PAIGC to win followers. Prominent among them was François Mendy, a Senegalese soldier of Guinean descent that historian Mustafah Dhada describes as "rabidly racist."[25] In 1960, he founded the Senegal-based Movimento de Libertação da Guiné (MLG), which became a primary alternative to the PAIGC.[26] Despite living most of his life in French territory, Mendy argued the PAIGC's Cabo Verdean leadership were interlopers. He built his party using black racial appeals that attacked both imperial Portugal and creole islanders, arguing PAIGC leaders were using the Guinean people to free their island home and replace Portuguese domination with "Cabo Verdean neocolonialism."[27] In response to these attacks, the PAIGC denounced "intransigent enemies who, guided by an opportunistic and selfish spirit, try to confuse our people" by dividing Guineans and Cabo Verdeans in ways that served Portuguese goals.[28] Linking African identity

[21] Cabral, *Revolution*, 18.
[22] Zain Lopes, A Verdade, n.d. (c. 1960–61), Folder 07063.036.077, Cabral Archive.
[23] See Cabral, *Unity*, 35. [24] Cabral, *Return*, 76. [25] Dhada, *Warriors at Work*, 7.
[26] The MLG launched an unsuccessful armed revolt in 1961 but never received much African support outside Dakar. Peter Karibe Mendy and Richard A. Lobban Jr., *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau*, 4th ed. (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 270–271.
[27] FLING, "Appel Aux 'Guineens'," n.d. (after 1960), Folder 07059.024.018, Cabral Archive; see also Letter, Luís Cabral e Aristides Pereira to Cabral, November 17, 1960, Folder 04605.043.067, Cabral Archive.
[28] Alexandre Carvalho et al., Mensagem aos jovens guineenses e caboverdianos, n.d. (likely early 1960s), Folder 04602.007, Cabral Archive.

with anti-imperialism downplayed the racial and xenophobic rhetoric that had the potential to rebound on the Cabo Verdean-dominated PAIGC. For Cabral, "African" necessarily denoted an evolving political nationalism that contrasted with the exclusionary identarian politics proposed by the Dakar-based MLG.

This less racialized idea of African identity worked hand in glove with Cabral's reading of socialism, which sought rapid modernization while complementing the oft-cited idea of African communalism. As with much of Cabral's philosophy, the origins of his socialist thought dated to his time in Lisbon, where collaborators – notably Agostinho Neto – had ties to Portuguese communists. Cabral was attracted to the socialist worldview and Lenin's definition of empire as the highest form of monopoly capitalism. But rather than adopting the one-world socialism of Portuguese communists, who were equivocal about the national question and initially hoped Africans would act as extensions of the metropolitan party, Cabral aimed for the revival of African polities capable of self-determination.[29] As Cabral explained later, African revolutions needed to gain control of the "mode of production" – and by extension, political institutions – to create "new prospects for the cultural development of the society . . . by returning to that society all its capacity to create progress."[30] The Marxist worldview helped identify strategies for reestablishing control of their own history. The PAIGC defined itself from the beginning as a "workers' political organization" (*uma organizaçao politica da classes trabalhadores*) and focused on urban organizing, but Cabral avoided the communist label.[31] Rather, he used the theoretical tools socialism provided to unite disparate African peoples against imperial domination.

Cabral's socialist worldview led him to define self-determination broadly, reaching beyond political or flag independence to embrace national control of economics and culture. "Independence," he argued in 1961, was "just one indispensable step to attaining this objective [of national progress]."[32] Other European states were allowing political independence while retaining effective economic and diplomatic control of former colonies. Cabral assumed (correctly) that allies like the United States were encouraging Salazar to embrace this approach as a way of

[29] Chabal, *Revolutionary Leadership*, 41. [30] Cabral, *Return*, 43.
[31] Estatutos do PAI, 1956, Folder 04999.001, Cabral Archive; Cabral, *Revolution*, 67.
[32] Cabral, "Rapport géréral sur la lute de libération nationale," July 1961, in Ronald H. Chilcote, ed., *Emerging Nationalism in Portuguese Africa: Documents* (Palo Alto: Hoover Institution Press, 1972), 309.

retaining influence and pro-Western stability in Africa.[33] Cabral feared "attempts by imperialists and colonialists to re-establish themselves, in new forms," specifically warning of business penetration.[34] This broad idea of imperialism encompassing both formal colonialism and socioeconomic neocolonialism became central to Cabral's ideology.

The conceptualization of empire had two effects. The first was to expand beyond Portugal to criticize Western countries that supported Lisbon, notably the economic powerhouses of the United States and Germany. This allowed the PAIGC to find allies opposed to common foes, ranging from Vietnamese communists to the British working class. Second, it highlighted the threat of "African traitors," whom Cabral described as the "self-styled heads of state" and unprincipled nationalists willing to accommodate foreign economic or political domination in exchange for personal power.[35] Effectively, the PAIGC dismissed opponents not just as rivals but also as agents of empire. In 1962, Cabral warned, "We must strengthen our vigilance against the attempts to install a new form of colonialism among us, against the opportunists, the ambitious, and all the enemies of the unity of freedom and progress of our peoples."[36] As a result, dueling accusations of neocolonialism became an inescapable part of nationalist politics.

The PAIGC promised a modern, united socialist state in direct opposition to the history of imperial division. In Guiné, where ethnicity and race were contested topics, a shared future and the struggle to achieve it provided the foundation for solidarity. In early 1962, the party laid out its program for achieving independence and building a Pan-African polity. Plans included a government based on "democratic centralism," the development of "modern industry and commerce" through state intervention, compulsory public education, religious freedom, and the "elimination of man's exploitation of man" responsible for poverty, ignorance, sexism, and a host of other social maladies.[37] After the armed revolt began in 1963, the creation of schools, hospitals, and "people's stores" became

[33] See Telegram, State to Lisbon, March 10, 1961, Box 1813, Central Decimal File, 1960-63, RG 59 Records of the State Department, National Archives and Record Administration (College Park, MD).

[34] PAIGC, Proclamation, November 1960, in Chilcote, ed., *Emerging Nationalism*, 361.

[35] Cabral, *Revolution*, 16.

[36] Cabral, Sobre a situação actual da luta de libertação na Guiné "Portuguesa" e Ilhas de Cabo Verde, January 20, 1962, Folder 04607.051.004, Cabral Archive.

[37] PAIGC, "Statuts et Programme," n.d. (c. early 1962), 23–26, Arquivo Andrade, Casa Comum: http://casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=10191.002.007#!11.

major components of party policy – and propaganda – in newly liberated territory. These services grew from one of Cabral's key insights: "the people are not fighting for ideas, for things in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace . . . to guarantee the future of their children."[38] Rather than building the nation solely on racial or ethnic identity, the PAIGC claimed legitimacy by promising material benefits.

As a result, visible and sustained action was a necessary component of selling this political movement. Early efforts focused on labor organizing in Bissau, mirroring the ways unions mobilized against empire in British and French territories. Yet Portugal would not abandon its empire. In 1959, a strike by workers at Bissau's Pidjiguiti Docks invited a deadly crackdown that forced the party into exile.[39] Denied the ability to pursue non-violent political action, Cabral gravitated toward models offered by militant Afro-Asian liberation movements.

This shift marked the final element establishing the direction of the PAIGC. Cabral was not opposed to armed conflict, but neither did he seek it. In statements preceding and following Pidjiguiti, Cabral stressed his willingness to negotiate with Portugal for independence.[40] Though these appeals came as the PAIGC prepared for war, there is reason to take Cabral at his word. As late as 1972, he stated he was "not a great defender of the armed fight" even though it was necessary in Guiné.[41] Cabral did not fetishize violence but embraced fighting as the necessary response to Portugal's stubborn use of force to sustain its empire. In justifying this idea, he looked abroad to the "lesson" offered by "the case of Algeria" – that "armed struggle is the necessary corollary to the impossibility of resolving this conflict through the ballot [*voix politique*]."[42] Additional models from China and Cuba encountered after Pidjiguiti bolstered the Algerian model.[43] Progress was necessary to build a movement, and with no other avenues, only armed conflict could achieve concrete victories. With it came an opportunity to unite the nation's disparate peoples through the crucible of war.[44]

[38] Cabral, *Revolution*, 86.
[39] Chabal, *Revolutionary Leadership*, 56–57; Sousa, *Vida e Morte*, 186.
[40] See Memorando enviado ao Governo Português pelo Partido Africano da Independência, n.d. (c. December 1960), Folder 04602.010, Cabral Archive.
[41] Cabral, *Return*, 79.
[42] Cabral, Declaração por ocasião da independência da Argélia, July 1, 1962, Folder: 04612.063.006, Cabral Archive.
[43] Cabral first encountered Maoism in 1960 or 1961. Cabral, *Return*, 87.
[44] Cabral, *Return*, 79.

After recruiting and training small cadres, the PAIGC invaded Guiné from neighboring Guinea in January 1963. The invasion revealed one final element of Cabral's ideology drawn from the Algerian example. The National Liberation Front's (FLN) successful diplomacy revealed that "the strengthening of real and active solidarity of oppressed peoples is an indispensable condition for the common struggle against imperialism and colonialism."[45] By linking material and political solidarity with local anti-colonialism, the exiled PAIGC found the power to challenge Portugal's empire and build its socialist, African nation. With domestic organizing impossible, Cabral understood that the international dimension became "the most important point of our struggle. Without resolute and frank support from the Afro-Asian nations, nothing can be done."[46]

A TRANSNATIONAL AFRICAN STRUGGLE

International support was vital for the PAIGC for two main reasons. It legitimized the PAIGC against competing parties and provided material aid for the guerrilla war and reconstruction of occupied territories. Cabral identified potential allies by drawing on the ideas that informed internal PAIGC solidarity: shared ideological goals and an identity based on common histories, values, and ambitions. He believed concentric circles of collaboration formed beginning with Lusophone liberation groups and then extending progressively to "solidarity on the African, Afro-Asian and international levels."[47] Cabral tapped into the currents of the global process of decolonization and developed increasingly broad networks of support as the party's ambitions expanded.

Because Guiné and Cabo Verde were hinterlands even within Portugal's empire, the PAIGC used ties to important colonies such as Angola to bolster its position. Cabral achieved this goal by institutionalizing the personal contacts and ideological affinities of the Lisbon salon.[48] In 1958, he spearheaded the formation of the Movimento AntiColonialista with MPLA leaders, which evolved into the Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das

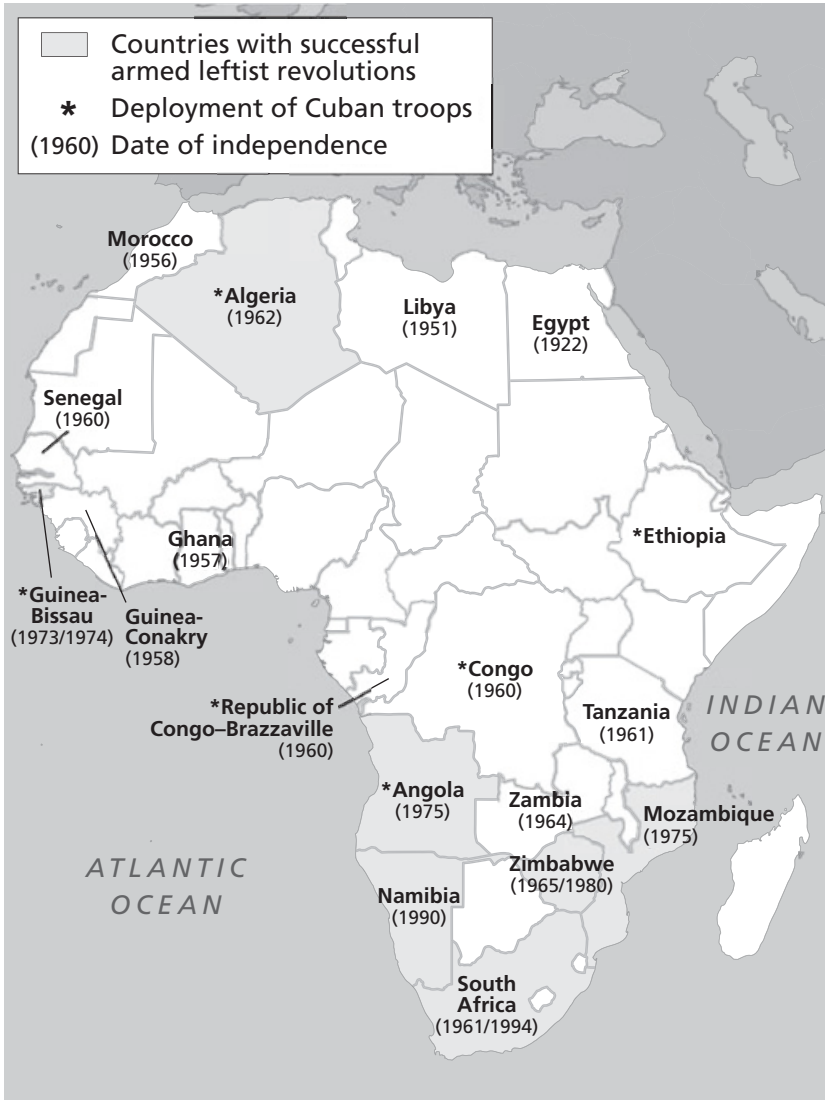
[45] Cabral, Declaração por Argélia.
[46] Mensagem do MLGCV para Abel Djassi, July 30, 1960, Folder 07063.036.026, Cabral Archive.
[47] Cabral, Declaration Sobre a situação actual da luta de libertação na Guiné "Portuguesa," January 20, 1962, Folder 04607.051.004, Cabral Archive.
[48] PAIGC, Amílcar Cabral – O Homem e a sua Obra, July 1973, Folder 04602.130, Cabral Archive.

Colónias Portuguesas (Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies, or CONCP) three years later. This latter group united all the major socialist-inclined nationalist parties in the Lusophone world, including the MPLA, activists from Portugal's Indian enclave of Goa, and the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front, or FRELIMO) after its formation in 1962. These organizations amplified the power of the individual parties by loosely linking the political and military challenges to Portugal. Among its first actions, the CONCP used the international attention focused on the Angolan rebellion to press its broader case against Portuguese imperialism. Later, the existence of three distinct military fronts – Angola from 1961, Guiné after 1963, and Mozambique after 1964 – prevented Portugal from concentrating its forces in any one country (Map 9.1).[49]

Yet the CONCP parties lacked military materiel, international prestige, and refuge from Portuguese crackdowns, meaning they needed allies among newly independent states. Cabral actively cultivated such support from the PAIGC's founding, attending the All-African People's Conference and other gatherings, but decolonization was vital. The PAIGC needed a safe haven from repressive Portuguese authorities. When Sékou Touré led neighboring Guinea to independence in 1958 (a year before Pidjiguiti forced the PAIGC into exile), Cabral reportedly exclaimed, "That's it! Now I have my country."[50] An ardent nationalist and champion of Pan-Africanism, Touré embraced a leftist vision of state development that gave him access to Eastern European largesse. Touré was wary of provoking Portugal, but he opposed colonialism and saw the PAIGC as the best prospect for achieving decolonization. He allowed the PAIGC to establish their headquarters in his country in May 1960.[51]

This transnational solidarity was vital for the party in the years before it was capable of waging revolution, enhancing PAIGC legitimacy as it competed with other nationalist groups. The party's emphasis on material progress and the promise of a new nation required action to legitimize its claims, whereas groups like Mendy's MLG could fall back on static identarian politics. Such problems were not uncommon. In Angola, the Congo-based, Bakongo-dominated Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (National Liberation Front of Angola, or FNLA) attacked the socialist MPLA as *mestiços* and over-educated

[49] See Cabral, *Unity*, 48. [50] Quoted in Chabal, *Revolutionary Leadership*, 57.
[51] Dhada, *Warriors at Work*, 12–14.



MAP 9.1 *Africa, leftist liberation, and Cuban intervention, 1960–1980*
Note: Cabo Verde (1975) – not pictured – sits roughly 600 kilometers West of Cap-Vert, Senegal. South Africa became a sovereign state in 1934, declared itself a republic independent from the British monarchy in 1961, and ended apartheid with free elections in 1994. Rhodesia unilaterally declared independence as a white republic in 1965; an international agreement recognized Zimbabwe in 1980.

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cosmopolitans disconnected from the African masses.[52] These challenges likely informed the formation of the CONCP, since recognition by other socialists lent credibility and provided political momentum before a successful armed revolt could legitimize the individual parties. Later, such connections offered a sense of progress in the up-and-down war against Portugal so long as one CONCP member was making military gains.

The support of independent countries, however, was more concrete: they empowered individual movements through direct political and material aid. This reality was apparent in the period before the armed revolt began in 1963. After failing to establish a broad front, the PAIGC competed with Mendy's MLG to be the voice of Guinean nationalism. From different exile capitals – Mendy in Dakar and the PAIGC in Conakry – each sought to win the contest by assembling international support. The PAIGC focused first on Touré in what became known as the "Battle of Conakry."[53] Unable to fully resolve the mainland-islander divide, they sought assistance to limit the influence of local MLG proponents by asking the government to admit only party approved Guineans. They warned officials of a "small group of would-be Africans ... [who] fostered the politics of racism in the native races and exploited some resentment existing with other Africans, for example Cabo Verdeans."[54] Cabral's able diplomacy and successful navigation of domestic politics gradually won over Touré. He permitted the PAIGC to open training facilities, and Conakry became the conduit for shipments of goods and arms from North African states and Eastern Europe. Cabral achieved less success in Senegal due to Mendy's ties to President Leopold Senghor. Still, MLG efforts to have Senegal champion its position among African states reaped few rewards, so the PAIGC outpaced its rival as Cabral cultivated new alliances, notably with Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana.[55]

The expanding list of allies gave the PAIGC momentum, but it needed a successful military campaign to demonstrate progress. The outbreak of armed hostilities in Angola in 1961 put Portugal on the defensive, but Cabral concluded a second front was necessary to "divide the forces of our

[52] John Marcum, *Angolan Revolution: Exile Politics and Guerilla Warfare, 1962–1976* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978), 49, 169.
[53] Pereira, *O Meu Testemunho*, 122.
[54] Memo, Seidi Camará e Tcherno Mané to Djallo Sheyfoulay, n.d. (c. 1960–61), Folder 07063.036.097, Cabral Archive.
[55] See Dhada, *Warriors at Work*, 12–18 and appendix C.

common enemy."[56] The PAIGC concentrated on achieving long-term results rather than short-term political impact, patiently infiltrating small cadres across the border to observe conditions, cultivate relationships with village leaders, and prepare for a sustained war. In January 1963, the armed campaign began in the densely forested southern portion of the territory. The PAIGC expanded its influence in rural areas over the next decade. Lisbon maintained control of Bissau thanks to a military advantage largely supplied by NATO countries, both bilaterally and through illegal Portuguese transfers of material meant for Western defense.

The armed revolt opened what Julião Soares Sousa has argued was the second phase of Cabral's foreign policy.[57] The PAIGC used its newfound legitimacy to expand its web of support to become the leading party in Guiné and, after the collapse of the revolt in Angola, the Lusophone movement. Arms and money came from several African states, notably Algeria and Egypt.[58] After its founding in 1963, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) further enhanced the PAIGC's profile. Its Liberation Committee sought to organize continental support for decolonization by identifying and aiding nationalist parties capable of waging active liberation campaigns. In the Portuguese colonies, the OAU chose the PAIGC and fellow CONCP member FRELIMO. It initially favored the more active FNLA, which launched the 1961 revolt, but it split its support after 1965 between that party and the MPLA once the latter became the preferred partner of the wider Afro-Asian movement.[59] The messy Angola situation aside, the OAU decision affirmed the PAIGC's position as the preeminent nationalist party for Guiné. Even Senegal gradually warmed to the party, admitting in 1964 (according to PAIGC propaganda) that it was "the most serious" movement.[60]

Pan-African solidarity solidified the PAIGC's position and allowed it to launch the revolution. The party hoped that the OAU promise to coordinate aid would counter the assistance Portugal received from the West.

[56] Comunicado sobre os acontecimentos de Luanda, n.d. (c. 1961), Folder 07073.132.002, Cabral Archive.

[57] Sousa, *Vida e Morte*, 463.

[58] Registo de entrega de armamento e munições, August 12–24, 1964, Folder 07065.084.019, Cabral Archive.

[59] The MPLA lobbied communist and non-aligned allies to freeze the FNLA out of international meetings, including the 1966 Havana Conference, which influenced OAU decisions. Marcum, *Angolan Revolution*, 93–99, 171–173.

[60] PAIGC, Comunicado sobre a atitude das autoridades da República do Senegal em relação à luta de libertação e ao Partido, n.d., Folder 04612.064.063, Cabral Archive.

Yet the reality was that OAU recognition was primarily a diplomatic victory. The Liberation Committee had difficulty securing meaningful commitments from donors and was slow to distribute supplies, most of which came from states like Algeria that already championed liberation. The reality was that as the PAIGC transitioned from a revolt into a full-scale war of independence, it needed more extensive aid than its postcolonial allies could provide.

BRIDGING THIRD WORLD REVOLUTION AND COMMUNISM

Given the limitations of postcolonial Africa, the PAIGC relied heavily on communist states. The Eastern bloc provided the weaponry and services needed to confront the power of Euro-American imperialism, but the PAIGC was more ideologically aligned with Tricontinental anti-imperialists such as Vietnam and Cuba. Cabral viewed Marxism, in Patrick Chabal's pithy phrasing, as "a methodology rather than an ideology."[61] It explained the basic realities motivating empire, but the PAIGC's main goals – national independence, antiracism, democratization under party guidance, and economic progress to provide social welfare – only partially aligned with the hierarchical, proletariat-driven universalism of the Soviet Union. The PAIGC's most natural allies were Third World leftists, who had experienced colonialism and were in some cases transforming their societies through militant struggles for independence. Cabral found early lessons in Algeria and Patrice Lumumba's Congo and drew parallels further afield to Vietnam and Palestine as his party grew in stature. There was informal collaboration with North Vietnam and short-lived assistance from China, but most states had too few resources and too many local demands to send much aid.[62]

Alone among non-African Third World countries, Cuba provided substantial support. Cooperation began in earnest after the PAIGC impressed Che Guevara during his unsuccessful Congo campaign. The PAIGC received shipments of food, arms, and medicine from 1965 onward. Cuba offered training and sent advisors that numbered between 50 and

[61] Chabal, *Revolutionary Leadership*, 169.

[62] Dhada, *Warriors at Work*, 182–186. Relations with China suffered due to Beijing's attempts to pull the PAIGC into its ideological competition with the Soviet Union. See Julião Soares Sousa, "Amílcar Cabral, the PAIGC and the Relations with China at the Time of the Sino-Soviet Split and of Anti-Colonialism," *International History Review* 42:6 (2020): 1274–1296.

60 in any given year.[63] Cabral gladly accepted this assistance, but on terms that reveal his understanding of solidarity. First, he kept tight reins on the struggle and did not replicate Cuban models. There was danger in "blindly applying the experience of others." Referencing Che's statements about the value of mountains for guerrillas, Cabral explained, "[Guiné] has no mountains ... We had to convert our people themselves into the mountain."[64] Cabral looked abroad for ideas, but the PAIGC had to wage its own revolution and articulate its own philosophies in response to local conditions.[65] Second, it had to do so with its own people. Cabral welcomed Cuban expertise, but he turned down offers of large Cuban deployments: "A basic principle of our struggle is counting on our own forces, our own sacrifices, our own efforts."[66] Since the struggle itself would give shape to the aspirational nation, combatants had to be locals. Aid in the form of material and expertise addressed the "disparity of means" between empire and colonized, empowering Guineans and Cabo Verdeans to free their country.[67]

In addressing this disparity, one of the key accomplishments of the Third World network was raising the PAIGC's profile and giving it an international voice. Cuba invited the party to the 1966 Tricontinental Conference alongside a select group of leftist revolutionaries from Southern Africa that included fellow CONCP members, the African National Congress (ANC), and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). Cabral's rousing "Weapon of Theory" speech in Havana introduced the nascent West African revolution to the world and sketched a roadmap for Third World socialist revolution. Cabral argued peasant countries needed a vanguard party like the PAIGC, in which an educated elite (identifying with the masses) parsed the difference between a "fictitious political independence" and true self-determination.[68] The party led a revolution that transformed economic, political, and cultural relationships in order to displace an empire that maintained its power by operating at all three levels.[69] Though these goals were not military in nature, events in Algeria, Vietnam, and Lusophone Africa demonstrated that militancy was needed to combat determined imperialism. The

[63] Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 186–196.
[64] Cabral, "Determined to Resist," *Tricontinental* 8 (September 1968), 117–118.
[65] Pereira, *O Meu Testemunho*, 125. [66] Cabral, *Revolution*, 147.
[67] Cabral, *Unity*, 180. [68] Cabral, *Revolution*, 105; Cabral, *Unity*, 84–85.
[69] Cabral, "Problemas fundamentais da luta," January 15, 1964, Folder 07070.112.004, Cabral Archive.

"criminal violence" that sustained colonialism and empire, Cabral argued, required "liberating violence" in response.[70] Given status alongside representatives of the USSR, China, Cuba, and North Vietnam, the nationalist leader from a small West African colony asserted his place at the forefront of the growing Tricontinental movement.[71]

Cabral's critique of the international system drew from the experiences of the Global South to contend the world's major problem was not class division but the inequality imperialism created between nations. He believed the postwar welfare state blunted the hard edges of capitalism in the North, where technological progress and an emphasis on consumption "enabled vast strata of the population to rise." But the imperial structures that enriched European nations did so at the expense of the colonized, directing investments narrowly and creating extractive relationships in colonies that "instigated, fomented, inflamed or resolved social contradictions and conflicts."[72] Western capitalism was problematic, but imperialism separated the rising living standards of the Global North from the stubborn poverty and war typical in the South.

This worldview aligned the PAIGC with radical Third World nationalists, but its concept of revolution also provided the foundations for relations with the wealthier Eastern bloc. Cabral saw the nascent Tricontinental movement as the successor to international communism, now centered on the needs of the long-marginalized Third World. Cabral praised the October Revolution as "the first major blow to imperialism," though the Soviet model no longer represented the vanguard. In 1961, Cabral cast the Tricontinental idea as the "final phase of the elimination of imperialism":

> even more than class struggle in the capitalist countries and the antagonism between these countries and the socialist world, the liberation struggle of the colonial peoples is the essential characteristic, and we would say the prime motive force, of the advance of history in our times; and it is to this struggle, to this conflict on three continents that our national liberation struggle against Portuguese colonialism is linked.[73]

[70] Cabral, *Revolution*, 107.

[71] Cabral's collected works and radical publications, republished speeches and *Tricontinental* interviews. See Cabral, "The Power of Arms," *Black Panther* III:20 (September 6, 1969), 16.

[72] Estudos relativos à luta armada e ao seu desenvolvimento, January 1964, Folder 07070.112.004, Cabral Archive.

[73] Cabral, *Revolution*, 13–14.

The PAIGC needed the wealth and arms of the East, but the radicals of the Global South had to guide this generation's revolution. Cabral borrowed principles from Marxism – the distribution of international power, confidence in the masses, and egalitarian justice – and deployed them within the colonial context to create a cohesive ideology. "We changed the names," Cabral told a Soviet audience, "and adapted the discourse to the essential reality of the history of our day: the struggle for life against imperialism."[74] The Soviet Union set the stage for contemporary movements by shifting the balance of power in the world toward revolution.[75] Its primary role in the 1960s was to be banker and armorer of Third World struggles led by Vietnam, Cuba, and now the PAIGC.

Nonetheless, the Soviet Union was cautious when Cabral first requested assistance in 1961, likely wary to back armed revolt during a tense period with the United States. It did not, however, object to its allies working with liberation parties. The first linkage was with Czechoslovakia, whose shipments of arms in 1961 helped make the war possible. Philip Muehlenbeck and Natalia Telepneva argue this relationship emerged from ideological solidarity and a consensus among Eastern satellites that the PAIGC was a "serious movement" with prospects for rolling back colonialism.[76] The party built relationships with Romania, East Germany, and Yugoslavia, which supplied materiel, medical assistance, and other goods for liberated territories in Guiné.

Early interactions with socialist states paved the way for expanded ties to the Soviet Union as the PAIGC's status rose. The relationship began with professional training and scholarships requested by the PAIGC and MPLA, which Eastern states hoped would guide socialist economies after independence.[77] A year after launching the revolt, Cabral sought to expand these ties, requesting grants in medicine, food, and arms from

[74] Cabral, Une lumière feconde éclaire le chemin de la lute, 1970, 11, Folder 04602.118, Cabral Archive.

[75] Cabral, *Unity*, 256.

[76] Philip Muehlenbeck, *Czechoslovakia in Africa, 1945–1968* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 106; Natalia Telepneva, "Our Sacred Duty: The Soviet Union, the Liberation Movements in the Portuguese Colonies, and the Cold War, 1961–1975" (PhD diss., London School of Economics, 2014), 59.

[77] See letter, Cabral to Valentin Ivanov, September 26, 1960, Folder 07057.011.003, Cabral Archive; letter, Cabral to Secretary of the Central Council of Unions, May 11, 1961, Folder 04606.046.031, Cabral Archive; and various documents requesting safe passage for militants studying in USSR, Czechoslovakia, etc. in Cabral Archive, 04. PAI/PAIGC, Relações Internacionais, Guiné Conakry, Salvo-Condutos/Títulos de Viagem.

Nikita Khrushchev.[78] The Soviets became more responsive as the armed struggle proved durable.[79] Cabral benefited from Khrushchev's promotion of "different roads to socialism" as a way of combating Chinese influence in the Third World. Telepneva argues that the Soviets, having had uneasy relationships with both Nkrumah and Touré, also appreciated that Cabral distanced himself from "African socialism."[80] Cabral had strong relationships with both leaders and was no strict communist, but he did stand out among African radicals. His "scientific socialism" clearly drew from Marxism and, as historian Jock McCulloch notes, more actively embraced modernization, technology, and solidarity with Northern working classes than either Fanon or Nkrumah.[81]

These tendencies and Cabral's active pursuit of Eastern bloc aid proved attractive to Soviet officials.[82] Other chapters in this volume detail how the Soviet Union's competition with China pushed it in more anti-colonial directions in the 1960s, but Portugal's pariah status and the PAIGC's growing international reputation made the alliance palatable. Rather than fomenting a revolution, the USSR was aiding one. Mustafah Dhada notes that from 1964 onward, the Soviet Union provided military training and an estimated 30–40 percent of light and heavy arms, or what one party document called "articles of primary necessity" for the war.[83] As early as 1965, Cabral – after lamenting the "very inadequate" assistance from well-intentioned African governments – stated that "we rely mainly on the help of our friends, the socialist countries," specifically referencing the USSR.[84] These weapons, including anti-aircraft guns delivered in the early 1970s, allowed the PAIGC to counter the Portuguese military advantage and occupy the majority of the country by 1973.

As with the Lusophone and Tricontinental networks, the alliance helped legitimize both sides. This fact became apparent at the International Conference of Solidarity with the Peoples of Southern Africa and the Portuguese Colonies held in Khartoum in 1969. With the

[78] Letter, Cabral to Nikita Khrushchev, May 26, 1964, Folder 07057.011.007, Cabral Archive.
[79] Dhada, *Warriors at Work*, 13. [80] Telepneva, "Our Sacred Duty," 85–86.
[81] McCulloch, *In the Twilight of Revolution*, 7.
[82] Dhada counts nine trips to the Soviet Union, more than Cabral took to any country outside West Africa. Dhada, *Warriors at Work*, appendix C, tables 3–5.
[83] Ibid., 186. See also Cabral, Breve Relatório sobre a Luta em 1971, January 1972, Folder 04602.069, Cabral Archive.
[84] Cabral, Relatório sobre a situação da luta de libertação nacional em 1965, November 8, 1965, Folder 07057.011.010, Cabral Archive. This attitude remained consistent into the 1970s, see Cabral, *Return*, 84, 89–90.

Soviet-supported Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization, the USSR sponsored the event to burnish its revolutionary credentials after its controversial intervention in Czechoslovakia the year prior. The conference highlighted its aid to African independence movements by mobilizing international support behind what it called the "sole official and legitimate authorities of the respective countries." These parties – the leftist nationalists of the CONCP, the ANC, and ZAPU – included all those invited to the Havana Conference three years earlier.[85] More overtly ideological than the OAU's preferred list, the conference established a clearly delineated set of "authentic movements" worthy of global support, with Cabral and his party heralded as the most successful examples.

Cabral joined individuals such as Che Guevara in providing an intellectual bridge between Global South anti-imperialism and Marxism, ably managing tensions as Tricontinentalism diverged from Soviet bloc communism. Cabral tacked left, but the PAIGC celebrated non-alignment and carefully guarded its sovereignty even as it sought foreign aid.[86] The Soviets and their Eastern allies accepted this ideological independence, since an international coalition of anti-imperial governments served their purposes almost as well as a cohesive communist international. The result was an alliance that, according to one East German official, represented "the cohesion of the three great revolutionary currents of our times ... world socialism, the movement for national liberation, and the people's struggle for peace, security, national independence, and social progress."[87]

WESTERN SOLIDARITY AND THE PROBLEM OF RACE

Cabral's integration of Third World nationalism with Marxism worked well internationally, but tensions remained at the granular level, particularly where theoretical concepts informed localized action. These tensions were particularly visible in Cabral's attempts to build a broad, multiracial solidarity network in the West. Both race and ideology were contentious matters in Guiné, but they faded at the international level. Militant Afro-Asian leaders shared a vaguely racialized anti-colonial identity while

[85] "Guidelines for Solidarity Movements," *Sechaba* 3:4 (April 1969), 3. See Telepneva, "Our Sacred Duty," 178–185.
[86] Pereira, *O Meu Testemunho*, 125.
[87] Cabral, Comunicado sobre a visita da delegação do PAIGC à RDA, October 31, 1972, Folder 07197.160.002, Cabral Archive.

Soviets elided it by focusing on class and empire; all shared ideological proclivities. Yet both issues were front and center in the Western experience of the 1960s, and Cabral clarified the relationships between identity, culture, ideology, and revolution as he pursued a flexible non-alignment that courted support in Europe and the United States.

That Cabral bothered appealing to Western activists at all reflected his concept of imperialism. He believed the global system of exploitation and dehumanization included marginalized European and North American populations alongside the colonies. Portugal itself was ripe for revolution since Salazar's fascist state preserved order and stability at the expense of living standards. Militarily and economically dependent on NATO allies, Lisbon was effectively "employed by world imperialism," argued Cabral.[88] Revolutions were necessary in both colonies and metropole, though these would be parallel movements because they operated in unique contexts and articulated distinct if overlapping goals.[89] This idea became the basis for the PAIGC's effort to mobilize "all the progressive forces" in support of the anti-colonial struggle.[90] Westerners could identify with the political programs of African revolutions, even if they could not become part of the armed revolt or African culture. The PAIGC welcomed government support as it did in the East, but Cold War fears of instability and Soviet involvement led most Western states to ally with Portugal. However, there were hints that civil society groups might be receptive as decolonization and the Vietnam War fueled social disruption.

After all, many Westerners were coming to believe they too suffered under empire. As part of the attempt to "rationaliz[e] imperialism" after World War II, Cabral contended, capitalists created a "false bourgeoisie to put a brake on the revolution" in the colonies and took similar action in metropoles through the creation of the postwar welfare state. The hope was that slight material progress would weaken demands for economic and social justice.[91] Cabral rejected this temptation during his time in Lisbon, and he saw Westerners grappling with similar calculations during the 1960s. Youth raised amidst the dissonance of material luxury, racial

[88] Cabral, "The Death Pangs of Imperialism," July 1961, in Chilcote, ed., *Emerging Nationalism*, 302.
[89] See Cabral, *Unity*, 76, 216.
[90] PAIGC Statement on Proclamation of Independence, Material Support Conference 1973, February 18, 1973, Folder 2, Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea Papers, Bishopsgate Institute (London, United Kingdom). Hereafter CFMAG Papers.
[91] Cabral, *Revolution*, 73.

inequality, and the threat of nuclear destruction rejected the status quo. Many embraced instead a program for reform of social and economic relations associated with the New Left. Their models came not from classical labor philosophers but from Tricontinental revolutionaries such as Fanon who focused on the problems of the day: empire, social inequality, self-determination, and the spiritual malaise of the middle class.

The PAIGC actively cultivated support from this movement. Efforts began in neutral Sweden as early as 1965, where Cabral found a warm reception from Social Democrats under Olof Palme, who approved humanitarian support to PAIGC projects after he became prime minister in 1969. But the rise of New Left activism promised possibilities in the heart of NATO. In 1970, Cabral built on the Soviet-backed Khartoum meeting by spearheading the Rome Conference, a three-day gathering aimed at coordinating nonstate aid to the PAIGC and its leftist CONCP allies.[92] The goal was broad solidarity uniting "effective people of all the tendencies" from across the political spectrum.[93] Because Western support for an armed revolt against Portugal was unlikely, Cabral encouraged aid to rebuild occupied territory. He also asked allies to mobilize political pressure to isolate Portugal and legitimize the PAIGC enough to avoid post-independence interventions. The goal, Cabral told a group of Italian communists, was not armed European resistance but allies who could "find the best means and the best forms of fighting against our common enemy."[94] Dozens of organizations responded, ranging from German Marxists to British churches.

Support for the PAIGC was especially strong from two sources: radical youth and the Black diaspora. Regarding the former, activist students gravitated to the PAIGC's social reconstruction of liberated territories and practical ideas for self-determination that included local control of education and healthcare, economic reform, and gender equality. Cabral's advice "to tell no lies . . . claim no easy victories" became a popular dictum reminding activists to keep their actions constant and grounded in reality.[95] Cabral promoted these aspects of the struggle through extensive travel and publications. Collections of writings and speeches began appearing in 1969, a few years after he became a subject for magazines

[92] "Guidelines for Solidarity Movements," *Sechaba* 3:4 (April 1969), 3.
[93] "Missão de Onésimo Silveira à Suécia, Escandinávia e Bélgica," August 19, 1968, Folder 07198.169.151, Cabral Archive.
[94] Cabral, *Revolution*, 75. [95] Ibid., 86.

such as *Tricontinental* and *The Black Panther*. The PAIGC also invited Westerners to visit Guiné to see the revolution in action. Films and books, such as Stephanie Urdang's *Fighting Two Colonialisms* about women in the struggle, highlighted the most progressive elements of Cabral's philosophy and connected them to Western debates over changing social relationships.[96] Judy Tzu-Chun Wu has described this phenomenon of idealization and application as "radical orientalism," but the PAIGC encouraged these glosses and lionized Cabral to promote solidarity.[97] While activists supported the MPLA and FRELIMO, Cabral emerged as the face of Lusophone revolution and, according to Swedish writer Per Wästberg, "an idol to many."[98]

Cabral's status peaked among the Black diaspora in Europe and North America. Especially in the United States, Cabral was a true *African* revolutionary with whom many identified. His experience of alienation and rediscovery of African identity spoke to the Black Power Movement, while his theorization of "class suicide" legitimized its many middle-class activists. Militants lauded the success of the PAIGC's armed campaign, and Cabral's warning that revolutions were "not exportable commodities" allowed more moderate Black nationalists to argue for assertive but peaceful political organizing.[99] The key for Cabral was using the analytical toolbox provided by Third World socialism to mount a cultural and political response to empire based on local "geographical, historical, economic, and social conditions."[100] In articulating this concept of flexible transnational revolution based on local conditions, Cabral necessarily waded into issues of race, which haunted Western politics during this period.

Cabral's view of race was complex, and he used the term sparingly. He understood identity primarily through the lens of culture. Culture reflected the interaction of genetic, historical, political, economic, and geographic factors, and Cabral believed that "the sociological factors are more determining than the biological."[101] As a result, identity was

[96] Stephanie Urdang, *Fighting Two Colonialisms: Women in Guinea-Bissau* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979).

[97] Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism during the Vietnam Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 4–6.

[98] Interview with Per Wästberg, in Tor Sellström, ed., *Liberation in Southern Africa: Regional and Swedish Voices* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002), 355. FRELIMO's Eduardo Mondlane was popular in the West, but his assassination in 1969 left Cabral the most visible leader during the height of solidarity activism.

[99] Cabral, *Revolution*, 92.

[100] Cabral, "Determined to Resist," 117–118.

[101] Cabral, *Return*, 65.

always in flux as social conditions and material realities changed, and the African continent included a multitude of identities that could be described as forming "several Africas."[102] Racial conceptualization essentialized these complex identities, and Cabral implied it was a byproduct of imperial strategies promoting disunity. Indeed, when the PAIGC leader used racial terms, it was generally while attacking practices of imperialism, apartheid, and segregation. His concept of an African people, which he referenced often, did not automatically designate blackness but rather a combination of geographically defined linkages, historical experiences, and common values or traditions that existed across cultures and provided opportunity for collaboration. Indeed, Cabral dismissed the common delineation between the light-skinned Islamic north and darker sub-Saharan Africa when it was made by one African American interlocuter.[103]

This distinction between fluid cultural conceptions of identity and more static racial categorization is vital for understanding Cabral's Pan-African appeal in the West. Cabral understood Pan-Africanism as a sociopolitical project more than a strictly racial one, which did not automatically exist but was built on the common experiences and aspirations of *anti-imperial* African peoples. In this way, it fit with his humanist concept of a gradual evolution of societies toward larger and more effective party, national, and ultimately transnational groupings.[104] It was practical and political in nature rather than exclusive and ancestral. This idea sometimes caused confusion in the diaspora, especially among Black Americans, because strictly enforced racial borders promoted a race-based theory of Pan-Africanism in which membership was intrinsic and action should occur immediately at the transnational level.[105] Cabral's concept of Pan-African revolution reflected two key components of Tricontinentalism – socio-historical commonalities and ideological solidarity, the brotherhood and comradeship referenced above. He recognized the powerful emotional appeal of the former but emphasized the necessity of political action embedded in the latter.

By conceptualizing Pan-Africanism as a sociopolitical project rather than merely an ethnic brotherhood, Cabral reaffirmed the necessity of cooperative, multiracial solidarity organized at both the international and

[102] Ibid., 51. [103] Ibid., 84.
[104] Cabral noted "before being Africans, we are men, human beings, who belong to the whole world." Cabral, *Unity*, 80.
[105] See Cabral, *Return*, 90–91.

local levels. During one British tour, Cabral explained that "racism is always opportunism," and he urged Black audiences to embrace political action alongside white activists.[106] In response, many Black Power nationalists softened their stance on race in ways that mirrored PAIGC practice, retaining assertive calls for local self-determination and racially exclusive leaderships but cooperating with reformist whites. This process is most apparent in the experience of the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC), which sponsored nationwide African Liberation Day celebrations in the United States beginning in 1972. Partially under Cabral's influence, the nationalist ALSC drifted left, adopting a platform in 1973 that emphasized socialism and opened avenues for multiracial coordination. This decision reflected nationwide political shifts, dramatized by the conversion of the Newark-based cultural theorist Amiri Baraka into a Third World Marxist willing to use democratic structures to take control of local government.[107] This transition from brothers into comrades in a multiracial revolution linking North and South expanded the scope of solidarity organizing in the early 1970s. Successful multiracial campaigns targeting Portugal's colonial economy included the Dutch Coffee Boycott and the Gulf Oil Boycott in the United States.[108]

Political organizing in the West produced inconsistent but valuable results for the PAIGC. A year after Sweden became the first Western state to provide medical and educational aid, the World Council of Churches launched its Program to Combat Racism with grants going to each of the CONCP parties. Groups such as the American Committee on Africa and the Dutch Angola Comité sent smaller shipments of clothes, medicine, vehicles, and other supplies for social projects in the liberated territories. Popular organizing also changed official policies. In 1970, the Dutch government began donating to African liberation groups, and the minority UK Labour Party passed a resolution favoring moral and material support.[109] The PAIGC slowly gained acceptance, highlighted by the 1972 visit to the liberated territories by a UN panel consisting of

[106] Polly Gaster, Skype interview with author, August 7, 2013.

[107] See R. Joseph Parrott, "'We Are an African People': The Development of Black American Solidarity with Portuguese Africa" (MA thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2014), 57–69.

[108] R. Joseph Parrott, "Boycott Gulf: Angolan Oil and the Black Power Roots of American Anti-Apartheid Organizing," *Modern American History* 1:2 (July 2018): 195–220.

[109] See R. Joseph Parrott, "Struggle for Solidarity: The New Left, Portuguese African Decolonization, and the End of the Cold War Consensus" (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2016), chapter 3.

representatives from Ecuador, Sweden, and Tunisia. Its report noted the "marked progress achieved" in liberating territory and building up local services, recommending support for the PAIGC and "concerted action by the international community to exercise pressure on the Government of Portugal."[110] While this declaration did not end the Portuguese war, it affirmed the PAIGC's status as a government-in-waiting and provided the party with highly effective propaganda when it unilaterally declared independence in September 1973.

The growth of Western solidarity alongside earlier Third World and Eastern support reveals that the PAIGC crafted an effective strategy at the international level. Cabral defined a socialist theory of anti-imperialism that traversed both North-South and East-West political divides. Yet at the grassroots level, this inclusive revolution continued to face challenges from ideological, racial, and ethnic divisions. These contradictions appeared clearly in the Western context, where divergent identarian and political motivations for anti-imperialism hampered organizing. The Tricontinental tendency toward localized political analysis and varied modes of revolution fueled sometimes rancorous debates, especially where no dominant party existed to guide discussions. In one European example, hardcore Marxists unwilling to compromise with capitalists criticized the coalition of humanitarians, liberal reformers, and pragmatic radicals, who favored peaceful campaigns on "easily understandable" issues like forced labor on coffee plantations.[111] The CONCP parties desired mass movements that could achieve tangible results, but – focused on their own armed struggles – their irregular interventions did not stop the internecine conflicts that weakened anti-imperial organizing in key countries like Germany.

So too did the embrace of Cabral's theories reveal the uneasy balance between exclusive Third World identities and universal leftist ideologies that defined the Tricontinental movement. Tension between diasporic visions of Cabral as an *African* revolutionary fighting white racism and his leftist philosophy reinforced the bitter divide between race-conscious nationalists and the growing socialist wing of Black Power. In the United States, this view manifested dramatically in the division of the ALSC in

[110] United Nations, Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, A/8723/Rev.1, vol. III, chapter X, Annex I (New York, 1975), 105–106.

[111] See the debate over the Dutch coffee campaign, in which German groups directly reference Cabral: Minutes from Morning Session, Lund Easter Conference, April 2, 1972, Folder 3, CFMAG Papers.

1974. One witness to the debate noted that Cabral represented the "major theoretical author . . . popular with all tendencies in the black movement for their own reasons."[112] For leftists, Cabral was an accessible voice of anti-imperialism and self-determination, promoting practical methods to empower Black leaders within the heart of global capitalism. By contrast, racial nationalists deeply skeptical of multiracial alliances situated Cabral's writings on culture within a Pan-African pantheon of leaders stretching from Marcus Garvey through Nkrumah. They rejected broader ideas of Tricontinentalism, with the influential poet Haki Madhubuti dismissing PAIGC allies Castro and Guevara (along with Lenin) as "another sect of white people . . . using their special system of control, both steeped in and based on white supremacy."[113] Continued unity between these trends proved impossible, and the bifurcation of the ALSC undermined one of the largest Black anti-imperial organizations in the West.

The development of the Western solidarity movement thus represented both the ambition and the limitations of PAIGC philosophy. In September 1973, the PAIGC unilaterally declared independence after a decade of war, seven months before the Carnation Revolution toppled the Lisbon regime. Nearly sixty countries recognized the declaration, but all were from the Global South or Communist East. Even those Western states providing aid did not officially recognize free Guiné until the new Portuguese government accepted decolonization in 1974. Still, Cabral had praised the Western assistance that filled stores in liberated territories and isolated Lisbon. These partial victories implied a de facto acceptance of PAIGC governance that smoothed the transition after Portugal's collapse and had great symbolic value. As Tanzanian Ambassador Salim Salim told Swedish Premier Olof Palme, in the "context of the North-South divide," aid to the PAIGC demonstrated that many Westerners supported "the struggle against colonialism and racialism."[114]

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Cabral did not live to see independence, partly because of the identarian conflicts that his philosophy never fully overcame. In January 1973,

[112] Phil Hutchings, "Report on the ALSC National Conference," *The Black Scholar*, July–August 1974, 51.

[113] Maoism was no less problematic, being the "intermediate step to pull us into the *real-white thing*." Haki Madhubuti, *Enemies: The Clash of Races* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1978), 56, 75.

[114] Interview with Salim Ahmed Salim, in Sellström, ed., *Liberation in Southern Africa*, 245.

a former party officer assassinated him in Conakry. Though debate continues over circumstances surrounding the event, the officer was a Guiné mainlander who, among other issues, resented the party's majority Cabo Verdean leadership. Yet Cabral had fashioned a movement bigger than himself. Portugal recognized the PAIGC's claim to Guinean independence in 1974, only months after young military officers disillusioned by their time fighting in Guiné toppled the Lisbon regime. In July 1975, Cabo Verde received independence. The two shared the ruling PAIGC, a flag, and an anthem, with constitutions that established national unity as their end goal. Without the charismatic Cabral and the cohesion demanded by the military campaign, however, the PAIGC could not make the Pan-African project last. Difficulty transitioning the colonial system to the socialist state and poor economic conditions inspired criticism of the PAIGC in Guiné, and intraparty tensions focused on outsider "mestiços" dominating leadership. In November 1980, a military coup ousted Cabral's half-brother, Luís, and ended plans for union.[115] Amílcar Cabral and the PAIGC liberated both Guiné and Cabo Verde, but they remained separate nations.

These events do not negate Cabral's ideology, but they reveal the challenges faced by, and inherent in, Tricontinentalism. Third World radicalism did not fit the boundaries established by colonialism or the international system. Cabral and the PAIGC merged ideology and identity in the hopes of forging a unity between traditionally distinct but interrelated colonies in Guiné and Cabo Verde. They situated the revolution within overlapping ideological currents, adapting foreign ideas to define the movement and using international aid to enable the struggle against Portugal. More difficult was using these same relationships to overcome the economic and cultural legacies of imperialism without the powerful solidarity provided by war. Though ultimately unsuccessful and perhaps overly optimistic, this was not quixotic utopianism. It was an attempt to restore the sense of agency that imperialism denied colonial subjects while working within inherited social and diplomatic realities. This project was common to postcolonial nations, and it proved difficult because the fight for political self-determination was just one step in a larger project seeking the more diffuse goals of economic and cultural liberation.

Few of Cabral's ideas related to revolution were wholly unique, but his ability to unite different strands into a cohesive global vision made him

[115] Joshua Forrest, "Guinea-Bissau," in Patrick Chabal, ed., *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 250–251.

a leading figure in the Tricontinental movement. His socialist-inspired nationalism coincided or preceded similar programs pursued by others such as Nelson Mandela. Still, Cabral's emphasis on national unity and the power of culture as the foundation for political action spoke eloquently to the context and desires of the Third World. Few individuals more clearly conceptualized these relationships and explained them, especially in the Pan-African context. Part of this had to do with the fact that he led a revolutionary movement in the Tricontinental era, which provided the PAIGC access to alliances in and beyond Africa denied to those who came before and after. The popularity of his philosophy encouraged him to enact and refine specific intellectual ideas because global revolution seemed possible and doing so expanded potential networks of support. Cabral balanced competing tensions by harnessing hope for the future and legitimizing political organizing through the material benefits it promised ordinary people. Cabral's premature death preserved for many around the world the unrealized potential of this ambitious vision of global revolution, even as his assassination and the fate of the Guiné-Cabo Verde union highlight the barriers that obstructed Tricontinentalism.