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Author

Hubbard, Maryinez

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CULTURE AND HISTORY IN A REVOLUTIONARY CONTEXT:

Approaches to Amilcar Cabral

by

Maryinez L. Hubbard

After the death of Amilcar Cabral numerous commentators will be attempting to assess the man's contribution to political theory, the history of his people, the African liberation movements, and third world revolutions. This paper does not purport to make such a sweeping assessment, but merely attempts, through background material on Cabral, Guiné and Cape Verde, to present Cabral's thought with regard to the role of history and culture and their relationship to revolutionary and post-revolutionary phenomena.

It is important to bear in mind that Cabral was waging an effective struggle in difficult circumstances and that the distinguishing factor of his theory is its evolution from local conditions.

*"In our struggle, we established our principles after having become thoroughly familiar with our country's conditions."*¹

He also says that:

*"The PAIGC ideology grew out of confrontation of extremely simple economic and political objectives with the realities of life in Guiné. The PAIGC leaders know little of the workings of the Russian, Chinese and Cuban revolutions but they do know how to get across to the peasants what the Portuguese presence in Guiné means to them and how to explain the changes the party wants to bring about in daily life. It is this empirical approach that distinguishes the Guinean movement from those in other under-developed countries."*²

Cabral was one of the few Cape Verdeans who had attended university before the liberation struggle began.³ He was trained as an agronomist, and between 1952 and 1954 he conducted an agricultural census for the colonial administration. His extensive tour of Guine, during which he became personally acquainted with the actual socio-economic situation and the effects of colonialism, provided the basis for his later strategies for mobilisation and liberation, and for his theory of revolution.

Another distinction of the Guinean situation was summed up by Basil Davidson.

"For the Africans of the territory have not only undertaken a revolt. They have also undertaken a revolution . . . they do not think it worth fighting, above all simply to get rid of imperialism. They think it worth fighting, above all, in order to open the road to an entirely new life . . . They are for national liberation, but they believe that national liberation can mean very little unless it also means revolution."⁴

Gerard Chaliand and Regis Debray, both Marxist commentators, have remarked that the principal difference between Castro and Cabral was the latter's decision to embark on a long program of preparing the peasants for revolution before, rather than after, launching guerrilla action.

Cabral commented on the difference between simple national independence and real national liberation. His contention was that since the process of development of their productive forces has been usurped, the principal characteristic of imperialist domination is the negation of the historical process of the dominated people. "National liberation is the inalienable right of every people to have its own history."⁵ Not only must people have their own history, they must recover their interrupted history. These notions of the factors involved in a people's history do not differ so dramatically from the historical materialism of Marx and Engels. Cabral specifies that the ". . . true and permanent driving power of history" is the mode of production with its accompanying contradictions manifested in class struggle.

For Marx, the basis of all history is the productive forces (tools, resources, etc.), and the relations of production (social divisions - classes) which together form the 'mode of production' or the type of economic organisation of a particular society at a particular time. This was why for Marx, history must be approached in relation to the history of industry and commerce. In assessing Cabral's approach, it is important to note that he was not so dogmatic as to interpret Marx's ideas in a strictly Eurocentric way; therefore, his interpretation of industry and commerce varies from the common nineteenth-century versions.

National liberation becomes more than the right to self-rule; it means revolution; that is, a profound change in the colonized (or neo-colonized) mode of production is required. This was the vital issue for Cabral who said that only when

the mode of production is controlled by Guineans can they avoid " . . . the sad position of being peoples without history."7 Marx was clear on the question of whether or not a society 'possessed' a history. For him, there can be no so-called pre-history as the nineteenth century Germans had asserted; (the term had been devised to cover those periods without factual material upon which to base an interpretation). Cabral certainly agreed with Marx, and, as Magubane stated, he " . . . posed crucial questions which have always been an embarrassment to Africans and ammunition to his enemies."8

Cabral asked: if one concludes that history began with the appearance of class, was it true then that the colonials introduced Africans onto the stage of history? If the answer is yes, then whole groups of humans are placed outside history. Peoples like the Balantes of Guiné who were only slightly influenced by the over-all colonial situation would then be seen as either outside history or as having no history at all!

It must still be emphasized that although Cabral was acquainted with European philosophies and theories which can be an aid for analyzing the African situation and suggesting possible tactics, he saw them as only aids and not prescriptions.

Cabral himself analyzed in detail the historical, social and economic factors of Guiné. It was actually through that study that he was able to understand the true nature of Portuguese colonialism and its devastating effects upon the colonized peoples. Mao Tse Tung had written:

*"It is necessary to consider all aspects of a situation -- the past as well as the present. Only then can one understand the inherent contradictions upon which to base a movement for change."*9

Before we can adequately understand Cabral's theory of culture as a weapon (which includes his theory of the usable past), it is necessary for us to try to understand the historical background of that mosaic known as Portuguese Guinea-Guiné-Bissau and Cape Verde. This is especially necessary since the two areas appear to be strikingly different ones in which to carry out a coherent revolution, and since Cabral himself and many other PAIGC leaders are Cape Verdeans.

Historical Background

The relationship between Cape Verde and Guiné-Bissau is more a technical one; most people are unaware of the great distance separating the two. The islands of Cape Verde (ten

islands and five islets), some three hundred miles from Guiné, are not even directly west of Guiné but are instead more in juxtaposition to Dakar. Cape Verdeans are oriented toward the north, Portugal and Europe, rather than to the east with Africa.¹⁰ The islands were uninhabited when the Portuguese discovered them in the mid-fifteenth century and occupation began in 1462 with a few European families and some Africans from the Guiné area. The Europeans were from Portugal or were Jews who left Europe because of increasing persecution.¹¹ Later, Europeans migrated from Madeira to the islands. The Africans were mainly slaves from the Balante, Papel, and Bijago groups of the Guiné area.¹²

The result is a racially mixed group of people with cultural patterns similar to those of rural Portugal including a strong Catholic influence. Yet Cape Verde does not represent a cultural bloc; individuals have been grouped by the Portuguese for administrative convenience and do not reflect cultural or ethnic ties. This is the situation on all the islands except Santiago where there are more Africans and more noticeable vestiges of African culture, whereas on the other islands, Africans lost their cohesiveness as social and cultural groups; hence, many customs, food habits, and manners of dress were forgotten. The language, varying slightly from island to island, is a creole dialect comprised of archaic Portuguese mixed with African languages.¹³

Between 1650 and 1879, Guiné was administratively dependent on Cape Verde, and Guiné was considered a private trading ground for Cape Verdeans. Then in the 1830's Guiné was made a separate district with authority still centralized in Cape Verde. In the middle of the century, the territory was 'allocated' to the Portuguese with British support against French advances and was then called "Portuguese Guinea," or just Guiné. In 1879, the Portuguese separated the administrations of Cape Verde and Guiné; and finally, in 1886, the frontiers were officially delimited.

Cabral's Analysis of The People

Cabral, unlike many African revolutionaries, was an astute observer of the ethnic situation of his own country. He was aware of the potential strengths and problems among the people of Guiné. He did not delude himself that they were a homogeneous mass who would respond to the liberation struggle in similar ways.

Anthropologists recognize about twenty ethnic groups in Guiné -- the five largest being the Balante, Manjaco, Fula,

Mandingo, and Papel. Generally in Africa, ethnic distribution is more or less regionally distinct which is not the case in Guiné where it is somewhat mosaic. Although settlement is not as 'neat' as one might wish, the majority of the Islamicized peoples are in the northeast and central-east areas, while the 'animist' groups are mainly located in the southern and coastal areas. Again to generalize, the Balante, Manjaco, and Papel peoples occupy unhealthy coastal land into which they were driven by the fifteenth century Mandingo invasions. Then, in the nineteenth century, the Fula incursions occurred, making it easier to understand why these 'animist' groups were not so easily conquered by the Portuguese.

The Fula (Peul or Fulani) and Mandingo (Malinke or Mandinga), who represent about 38 percent of the population,¹⁴ are Islamicized ethnic groups who have a form of centralized authority exercised by lineage chiefs. Cabral considers the Fula the representatives of a semi-feudal organization stratified into three major groups: the chiefs, nobles, and religious lineages: then the artisans and dyulas (itinerant traders): and, finally, the peasants. These ethnic groups are polygamous and their women possess no political rights. He reported that while there are some traditions of collective land ownership, the chiefs and their entourages have considerable rights in the areas of land ownership and utilization of people's labor. The artisans, who play an important role in the socio-economic life of the Fula, represent what Cabral referred to as an 'embryo of industry.' The dyulas possess the potential of accumulating money, a most important factor to be considered in the post-independence period. The peasants are the most exploited stratum -- this exploitation is internal to these societies, an example of a contradiction utilized by the liberation movement.

The Mandingo, descendants of the Mali empire, are well-known as traders and have played an important role in spreading Islam. "They also engage in agriculture and frequently feud with the pastoral Fula among whom they live -- the eternal feud between farmer and herder."¹⁵ Cabral was aware of this historical tension and did not consider the Islamicized groups an entity in contrast to the 'animist' groups. An economic analysis of the societies must be thorough; each source of contradiction must be identified, for it is the contradictions which provide the possibilities for a development of consciousness among the various strata of even the most apparently homogeneous society. Consequently, Cabral was aware that the peasants among these Islamicized peoples have grievances entirely different from those of the dyula, for example.

Among the 58 percent of the population considered 'animists,'¹⁶ Cabral carefully analyzed the Balante, who represented the opposite extreme of the semi-feudal Fula. They are primarily monogamous, with a small percentage practising polygamy. With the exception of the Manjaco, these tribes are segmentary, their principal form of organization being age-sets and village-based lineages. He emphasized the lack of social stratification among the Balante among whom, for instance, the land belongs to the village. Also, the women own what they produce, which gives them a fairly independent position. (It is relevant to note that the Balante are the strongest supporters of the PAIGC.)

Cabral examined the various intermediary groups between these two extremes. There are a small number of African farm owners whom he indicated are important in the national liberation movement. It must be understood that the problem of land alienation does not exist in Guiné since there are no European settlers.¹⁷ This was a significant reality for Cabral, for land alienation forms an important basis for so many liberation movements elsewhere in the third world.

Rather than vaguely refer to the 'workers' or 'proletariat' as an indiscriminate block, Cabral carried on his careful analysis of the specific situation in Guiné. He delineated urban Africans into categories of higher officials, middle officials, and some professionals -- these three forming one group. Next are minor officials, clerks with contracts, and small farm owners -- a group he called the 'African petit-bourgeoisie,' although in reality he did not separate this group from the first. Then there are the wage-earners who are those employed in commerce without a contract, i.e., dock workers, boat porters and domestics. With precision typical of Cabral, he carefully avoided labelling these people the 'proletariat.'

He then defined another group, *déclassés*, whom he subdivided into two categories: i) the real *déclassé*, people such as beggars and prostitutes (again he explained that they would probably be labelled the 'lumpen-proletariat' if there were a real 'proletariat.');

and, ii) the nominal *déclassé*, people who, for lack of a more precise term, are referred to as such -- they are the urban, up-rooted recent arrivals, mostly restless young people connected to the petit-bourgeoisie or workers' families but who are unemployed and retain close ties with the rural areas as well as with the towns. This last group is vitally important in the liberation movement as a link to the peasants, whom Cabral admitted were extremely difficult to mobilize. He insisted that the most difficult battle facing the people is the battle against themselves.

Although it may appear in this section that I am emphasizing the ethnic diversity of Guiné-Bissau, I remind the reader that Cabral de-emphasized it. He was conscious of the potential strength in that diversity. Conversely, he was aware of potential Portuguese manipulation of that very diversity. He said that the divisions will disappear after independence and these groups will be absorbed into a new societal order. He referred to the protracted struggle as being instrumental in developing unity. It is certainly true that the political awareness of considerable numbers of Guineans has increased.

Cabral explained that the importance of an analysis as his rests in its connection to the actual struggle. The central aspects of his analytical method were:

- i. defining the position of each group, measured against their degree of dependency upon the Portuguese;
- ii. determining the basis for the position each group adopts toward the liberation movement;
- iii. understanding each group's nationalist capacity; and
- iv. assessing their revolutionary capacity in the post-independence period.¹⁸

I have only highlighted Cabral's much more specific and inclusive analysis of the social structure of Guiné (which is presented in some detail in the Stage I book).¹⁹ I wish to emphasize the specificity resulting from his empirical method. In addition to a detailed social analysis, there are other factors which also greatly affect the liberation movement and consequently, the evolution of Cabral's theories.

I am referring to economic considerations; again, Cabral dealt with the realities of his country. Guiné is primarily rural, containing a few towns, the most important of which is Bissau, the capital, with 26,000 people. Next is Bolama with about 5,000; Bafata with about 3,600; then Farim, Teixeira Pinto, Mansoa, Nova Lamego, Catio and Bissora which are relatively important townships.²⁰ Also to be considered are the 'resettlement' villages formed by the Portuguese during the war in Guiné.

There is only a small percentage of dissatisfied Africans on the fringes of the towns and, as Cabral said, no real proletariat. Certain conditions and groups present in nineteenth-

century England are not present in twentieth-century Guiné and though this may seem glaringly apparent, there have resulted terrible blunders when leaders of liberation movements have lost sight of it.

Continuing his analysis, Cabral realized the necessity to familiarize himself with another aspect of Guiné -- the geography. The type of terrain, obviously, will determine many factors of the struggle. Guiné is a low-lying country containing at no point elevations exceeding 950 feet above sea level. The coastal area is a complex pattern of river estuaries, salt and freshwater swamps and marshes, mangrove mud flats, and sandy offshore islands. The total area of the country is only 13,948 square miles or about one-half the size of metropolitan Portugal.²¹ Cabral, during his two-year study of the territory, and from the time the liberation movement began until his death, had been able to visit most of the villages, even in the most remote areas. This was a tremendous advantage for him and one which may not have been available to an individual in Angola and Mozambique.

Cape Verdean - Guinean Differences

Although this has been a cursory description of Cape Verde and Guiné, I hope that it is fairly obvious that a Cape Verdean is distinct from a Guinean, just as the terrains are different. Still, there are further distinctions. In the realm of education and economic development, Cape Verde has been clearly favored by the Portuguese. Unlike Guiné, Angola, and Mozambique, the Cape Verde Islands never suffered from the so-called 'native statute' which automatically kept the majority of the people from elementary citizen's rights, including the right to an education. With more than double the population of Cape Verde, Guiné received only 58 percent of the amount of money allocated to Cape Verde for education.²² Consequently, Cape Verdeans have become known for their intellectual aspirations, although illiteracy may be still as high as 80 percent.²³

Another important aspect about which the PAIGC is aware and has been able to reconcile during the course of the struggle, was that the Portuguese encouraged incipient development of a privileged class. The PAIGC is aware that Guiné is not yet a classless society. The Portuguese have tended to view Cape Verdeans as potential 'assimilados' through whom a sort of neo-colonialism could persist. Recognizing the need to break down this incipient class development, the PAIGC has so far been able to fairly successfully incorporate it. The reality of the current situation is that Cape Verdeans are still highly migratory.²⁴ The Portuguese encourage their emigration and

settlement in Angola, Sao Tome, and Principe. Cape Verdeans also constitute the majority of the small petit-bourgeoisie of shop-keepers, clerks, etc., in Guiné. For these and other reasons, the Cape Verdeans are generally viewed by the Guineans as outsiders²⁵ -- one of the supreme challenges of the PAIGC.

The problem was how Cabral and other Cape Verdean party members could successfully gain the trust and support of the Guineans. Some commentators feel that Cabral's 'Cape Verdeanness,' although it presented alienation problems in the beginning, ceased to be a serious obstacle. A friend of Cabral's commented to me sometime ago: "it is not relevant to see Cabral as a Cape Verdean . . . he had a strong personality and knew Guiné well . . . probably better than anyone else."²⁶ The strides PAIGC has been able to make in negating these differences are a vital element not only for the struggle itself, but for the future application of Cabral's theories.

Cabral's Theories of History, Culture and Liberation

Having established the background necessary to an understanding of the specific theories Cabral developed, I shall now examine his view of history and culture and their relevance to the present. The analyst of Cabral must extract the theories from disparate sources as there is no all-encompassing philosophical work in existence.

Naturally, Cabral was primarily occupied with a very real war. Therefore the majority of his writings and speeches revolved around that reality. Most of the interviews, for instance, reveal facts about the struggle, the terrain, the Portuguese, and so on. Those statements he did make on history, including the speech at Syracuse University, were necessarily related to the all-consuming event being played out. It is, of course, possible to infer wider meanings implicit in Cabral's words, but I offer this warning because of the nature of the 'vehicles' for most of his ideas. For example, in the key speech given at Syracuse University February 20, 1970, he used a terminological shorthand, at times utilizing an all-too-familiar jargon designed for a specific audience. For his own people, Cabral reifies the situation rather than describes it in abstract terminology.

Unlike Nkrumah, Lenin, Mao Tse-Tung, Castro, Nyerere, and most other men whose ideas are 'exported,' Cabral unfortunately simply did not translate into the written word enough of his ideas for us to construct a detailed historiographical analysis. There is, as I have stated, sufficient material for intelligent inferences: but unfortunately, these are overwhelmed by the plethora of commentary on Cabral.

He was deeply concerned that the people of Guiné regain their own history, by which he meant reclaim the right to the process of development of the national productive forces. Only after that has occurred can there be genuine liberation. This seemingly doctrinaire statement²⁷ actually means that Guiné -- not Portugal or any outside power, -- must be in control of its own productive forces so that these forces are free to evolve within their own historical process. Cabral felt that overdependence upon external aid would destroy the very motive for the struggle.

*It would rob my people of their one chance of achieving an historical meaning for themselves; of reasserting their own history or recapturing their own identity.*²⁸

He discussed the difficulties within the struggle, the greatest being the struggle against one's own weaknesses, which are an expression of the internal contradictions in the economic, social and cultural (therefore historical) reality of the country. Consequently, a national liberation and social revolution are not exportable commodities.

*They are essentially determined and formed by the historical reality of each people . . . and successful to the degree they overcome the contradictions between the various categories characterising that reality.*²⁹

Ideology, then, is relevant to a movement only to the extent that it is related to the historical reality of the people involved. Cabral often emphasized the fact that the motive force of history is the entire mode of production,³⁰ not just the class struggle. He explained that:

*. . . The principal characteristic of every kind of imperialist domination is the negation of the historical process of the dominated people by means of violently usurping the free operation of the process of development of the productive forces. The mode of production whose contradictions are manifested . . . through the class struggle is the principal factor in the history of any human group.*³¹

For Cabral, to speak of the material relations which exist between man and his environment and the relationships among the individuals and collective components of a society is ". . . to speak of history, but is also to speak of culture."³²

Cabral, modifying Marx, referred to 'class' carefully explaining that class is not the major determinant in history.

Man will outlive classes and continue to produce and make history, since he can never free himself from the burden of his needs, both of mind and body, which are the bases of the development of the forces of production. 33

He did not lose sight of the importance of the class character of culture in the development of the liberation movement, even when class structure is embryonic. Such distinctions are of greater importance than those existing among ethnic entities. Using the Fula and Balante as examples of a vertical and horizontal social structure, respectively, Cabral pointed out the apparent difference but went no further with the analysis to discover differences and tensions not so readily apparent in a more or less homogeneous or horizontal group such as the Balante.

For example, Cabral pointed out the alliance of some high officials and intellectuals of the liberal professions, assimilated people, and a significant number of the rural ruling class with the Portuguese. This can be understood in terms of economic interests and cultural influences. The high official or assimilated intellectual, characterized by total cultural alienation, identifies with the traditional or religious leader who has experienced no significant cultural influences. This is a perfect example of the supremacy of class or economic interests. But ". . . culture is the vigorous manifestation on the ideological . . . plane of the physical and historical reality of [a] society."³⁴

Culture is the product and at the same time, determinant, of a people's history by acting as either a positive or a negative influence on the evolution of relationships between men and their surroundings and among individuals and groups. To Cabral this makes culture the vital factor in national liberation. Foreign domination is successful only when there is organized repression of a people's culture. He emphasized the fact that culture contains within it strengths and potentialities that no one, including leaders, is fully aware of until the actual testing of it in the struggle. Since culture has as its material base the level of the productive forces and the relations of production, i.e., the mode of production, it possesses the capacity for the evolution and progress of a society, including, as Cabral phrased it, the seeds of opposition.

Cabral explained that, since imperialistic domination must oppress culture, national liberation is an act of culture, the organized political expression of the culture of the people undertaking the struggle. The question that occurs to me concerns the Fula and the Mandingo, each possessing distinct cultures and certainly both components of Guiné. Yet, thus far, they have preferred for the most part to cooperate with the Portuguese, as they have much to lose with the PAIGC. Cabral did say that the liberation movement must represent the mass character of the country which adds to the question of their role in an independent Guiné. To him, the cultural characteristics of each group are important, and even though there is a mass character to culture, it is not uniform in that it is not equally developed in all sectors of society. Each group's attitudes towards the liberation movement are dictated by its economic interests but are also deeply affected by its culture. The chiefs, their entourages, and the trading sections of the Islamicized societies obviously would lose their advantageous positions in a genuinely socialist state.

Cabral was aware that the colonialists provoked and even developed cultural alienation among the various ethnic groups. For example, the Cape Verdeans were allowed to develop a prevalent petit-bourgeoisie in Guiné, and it is now necessary for members of this class who are involved in the liberation struggle to re-Africanize themselves.

Everyone who joins must accept a cultural conversion and recognize that there is an African culture, and this is what must be preserved. There are some people who have not yet totally accepted our principles. We are all fighters and must fight on all fronts. 35

Re-Africanization actually begins before the physical struggle. In drawing upon his own experiences in Lisbon and then in Guiné with the colonial administration, Cabral agreed with Che Guevara that this Africanization, which in some ways he equated with removal of elitist attitudes, develops gradually during the struggle. Consequently, the longer the struggle, the better in this respect: the people at all levels develop a new consciousness which is vital for a successful social revolution after the liberation. He was aware of the possible dangers of an elitist group persevering through the struggle and emerging with independence. As he put it, ". . . the political leaders -- even the most famous -- may be culturally alienated people."³⁶

The social class characteristics are even more apparent in the rural areas. Using the Fula as an example, Cabral saw

egalitarianism as nonexistent in this group in which the traditional authorities preserve, in essence (not reality), their basic cultural authority over the people. The great danger inherent in this is the potential manipulation of the same hierarchy by the colonialists which, in fact, is occurring, with the Portuguese now recognizing for the first time certain traditional leaders. For instance, the Portuguese utilized and opposed whole ethnic groups to gain control of the territory. The Fula were encouraged in their hostilities toward the Papel and Mandingo; the Balante against the Mandingo. Thus the first task, before being able to mobilize the people or develop their consciousness, was to explain to them why the Portuguese had conquered them and how.³⁷

The movement must contain the cultural values of the people and, for the harmonization and development of these values within a national framework, the movement must bring, as it progresses, diverse interests into harmony. Cabral explained that a serious error of the colonizers was to underestimate African cultural strength:

*African culture survived all the storms,
taking refuge in the villages, in the forests
and in the spirit of the generations who were
victims of colonialism.* 38

Therefore, it was Cabral's opinion that the struggles for liberation, and not merely independence, in Africa today are the beginning of a new era in the history of the continent. In form and content they are the most important cultural element in the life of the African peasant. "The time is past when it was necessary to seek arguments to prove the cultural maturity of African peoples."³⁹ For Cabral, culture, like history, is a developing and expanding phenomenon. Its principal characteristic is the highly dependent and reciprocal nature of its linkages with the social and economic reality of the environment, with the level of the productive forces and relations of production of the society which created it. "Culture, the fruit of history, reflects at every moment the material and spiritual reality of society."⁴⁰ Here, Cabral is in agreement with the Marxian view that culture is a social reality, independent of the will of man; yet, man does have initiative within the realm of possibilities.

The New Guiné-Bissau

What are some concrete changes occurring in Guiné as a result of the movement? The important phenomena in the

liberated areas are not military, but the social and political changes which are occurring. In accord with Cabral's theory that history is culture, which is based upon man's relationships with the environment and other men, and that the liberation movement is accompanied by actual changes, material and social, the PAIGC is deeply involved in real projects and with real effects. Development begins now, not after independence. Unless this revolution begins now, there would be no possibility for genuine liberation.

*We can wage the struggle and win the war but if once we have our country back again, people are unable to read and write, we will still have achieved nothing.*⁴¹

The PAIGC has effectively destroyed the Portuguese Company, CUF (Compannia Uniao Fabril), an import-export monopoly which was once the source for those items not produced in Guiné. There are now People's Stores based upon a system of barter⁴² which effectively removes the liberated areas from the Portuguese economy. Fifteen thousand children are now able to attend school in the liberated areas. Seven hospitals and twenty-four clinics have been established which are staffed by people the PAIGC sent outside Guiné for training.

The liberated areas have been divided into thirteen regions which are further divided into zones. The latter are subdivided into sections which are each composed of several villages. At the village level there is a committee of five containing at least two women. Each village also has a people's militia for those times when the PAIGC units are not near. There are people's elected courts for minor infractions, and, interestingly, they base themselves on traditional codes.

The PAIGC decided late in 1971 to institute Popular Assemblies at local, regional and national levels which will reinforce an already developing national sovereignty among the people. The Assemblies will be separate from but in rapport with the PAIGC. Then, beginning December 3, 1971 the PAIGC began eight months of explanation and preparation for the elections which have now been completed. The National Assembly is composed of 80 elected representatives and 40 PAIGC cadres. Those officials elected from Portuguese controlled territory hold only temporary mandates as their positions will have to be confirmed by the people after the Portuguese leave.⁴³ The elections were conducted peacefully and Guiné is on the verge of the dramatic announcement that it is the first African country to free itself from Portuguese

domination. Cabral had constantly emphasized: "Our struggle is entirely a political one . . . armed struggle is just a part of it . . ."44

The PAIGC is planning far ahead so that at the time of independence, projected for 1973, the country will be able to function without depending entirely upon the military cadres. This is an ambitious attempt and Cabral was well aware of the potential dangers such as the development of new elites in addition to the perseverance of some of the old. However, a worse alternative is an independence such as that of Zaire which found itself with no national consciousness to speak of and a group of conflicting interests when it suddenly 'achieved' independence.

Conclusion

One is tempted to speculate on the effects that Cabral will have on history. Of course, this depends a great deal upon the future course of events after the independence of Guiné and Cape Verde. One possibility is that a revolutionary movement such as the one in Guiné may demonstrate how to gain successfully the support of the peasants, how to create or develop their consciousness, and how to 'move' them into new ways of life. These factors would be of major historical significance.⁴⁵ Another view is that when Guiné is successfully wrested from the Portuguese, and when it achieves liberation in Cabral's sense of complete independence from outside alien powers, then it will be the first truly independent country in Africa. This would be a revolutionary occurrence with far-reaching effects on the history of Africa.

Footnotes

1. A. Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea*, p. 109.
2. Rene Lefort, *Le Monde*, (Lefort is a film maker who spent two months in Guiné.)
3. Biggs-Davison, (London M.P.), *African Affairs*, Vol. 70; 281, Oct. 1971, p. 387. Biggs-Davison went to Guiné four times to personally observe the situation: Oct. 1962; Feb. 1966; May 1968; and Aug. 1969. He asserts that Amilcar Cabral's mother is a Mándingo from Bafate and the father Cape Verdean. However, this was the only such reference I found.
4. Davidson, *Tricontinental*, No. 8, Sept/Oct. 1968, p.90.

5. A. Cabral, "National Liberation and Culture."
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Magubane, "Amilcar Cabral: Evolution of Revolutionary Thought," *Ufahamu*, Fall 1971, p. 77.
9. Mao Tse-Tung, "On Contradiction," p. 18.
10. Interview with friend of A. Cabral, May 4, 1972.
11. Abshire and Samuels, *Portuguese Africa: A Handbook*, "African Peoples," by M. A. Samuels and N. A. Bailey, p. 108.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
14. Abshire, *Op. Cit.*, p. 110.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
16. Christianity is represented by only 4 percent of the population (Abshire, p. 110). This is an important factor as the possibilities arising from religious conflict -- syncretism would not exist in regard to Christianity. However, there is tension arising from the Catholicism of the Cape Verdeans.
17. Abshire, *Op. Cit.*, "The reputedly harmful climate of the seaboard, noted for malaria, yellow fever, and other disabling tropical sicknesses before the era of modern medicine discouraged substantial white settlement." p. 20.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.
19. See A. Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea* for more detail.
20. Agencia-Geraldo Ultramar, *Portugal Overseas Provinces*, Lisboa, 1965. p. 27.
21. Abshire, *Op. Cit.*, "Physical, Human, and Economic Setting," Irene S. van Dongen, p. 17.
22. U. N. Report, Oct. 5, 1970.
23. Ronald Chilcote, *Portuguese Africa*, p. 85.

24. Abshire, *Op. Cit.*, As many as 4,000 Cape Verdeans a year must emigrate for economical purposes. Educardo Cruz de Carvalho referred to the aridity of the islands.
25. Eduardo Cruz de Carvalho, May 4, 1972. Cape Verdeans own the only sugar plantations in Guine where there are no refineries. They have been able to circumvent the spirit-making conventions for colonies and the Portuguese, when questioned about this, are unable to explain where the sugar goes.
26. Interview with friend of A. Cabral, May 4, 1972.
27. Cabral's writing has been criticized for containing ". . . bits of dogma, propaganda and doctrinaire nonsense. He is at his weakest, his Marxist worst, when he expounds certain broad theories of causation and 'exploration'." Douglas Wheeler, Review of *Revolution in Guinea*, in *Africa Report*, May 1970.
28. Kenneth Grundy, *Guerrilla Warfare in Africa*.
29. A. Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea*, p. 74.
30. For Cabral's latest theoretical views on the nature of culture, history and national liberation, I found extremely useful the speech he gave at Syracuse University, February 20, 1970.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. A. Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea*, p. 78.
34. A. Cabral, Syracuse speech.
35. Luis Cabral, *Africa Report*, May 1970. However, according to Eduardo Cruz de Carvalho, the longer the struggle, the deeper the division between Cape Verdeans and Guineans will become as the latter develop a self-consciousness. There are also Muslim-Catholic differences.
36. A. Cabral, Syracuse speech, p. 7.
37. Luis Cabral, *Tricontinental*, No. 15, Nov/Dec 1969, p. 146.
38. A. Cabral, Syracuse speech, p. 10.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
41. Gerard Chaliand, *Armed Struggle in Africa*; Review by Gerald Bender in *Africa Report*, May 1970, p. 35.
42. Rene Lefort, *Le Monde*, Sept. 16, 1970.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Christopher Allen and R. W. Johnson, eds., *African Perspectives*, Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 326.
45. *Afrique-Asie*, November 1972.

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Maryinez Lyons Hubbard earned a Bachelor's degree in English from San Diego State University in 1965 and has taught high school in San Diego for two years as well as in London for three years. In 1972 she earned a Master's degree in African Studies at UCLA and is currently enrolled for a Ph.D. in African history, with emphasis on East and Central Africa.