

SYMPOSIUM ON AMILCAR CABRAL

MESSAGE FROM THE AFRICAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE,
DAKAR, PRESENTED BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL,
E-O. APRONTI

Your Excellency the Head of State

Excellencies

Comrade Participants + friends

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Headquarters Secretariat of the African Cultural Institute and its 20 member states would like, through me, to thank ~~you~~ ^{the price} for the kind invitation to attend this symposium which honours the memory of one of the most brilliant sons of Africa, Comrade Amilcar Cabral. Permit me, then, to convey to you the apologies of my Director General, Dr Basile Kossou, who is unavoidably away from this gathering.

The government and people of Cape Verde have done their historic duty in organising a symposium worthy of the stature of Comrade Amilcar Cabral,

whose life and work are an exceptional testimony to the brilliance, talent and tirelessness of the revolutionary that he was. The Comrade Head of State traced for us last night, the formative influences that shaped the ideology of Comrade Cabral. And yet he was not the only African that passed through those childhood experiences. What appears to have distinguished ^{his} ~~was~~ the total love of his people, which in turn led him to ~~make~~ make his own the sufferings of all the oppressed people of the Portuguese colonies in Africa.

This was a devotion that far exceeded the geographical boundaries of the islands of his origin, and led him to propound theories, and translate them into revolutionary action, to such an extent that today, ten years after ~~the~~ his regrettable elimination from physical existence, he is a martyr of global proportions, a symbol of

of hope for all the oppressed people of the world.

The learned participants of this symposium will no doubt invite us to explore the amazing attributes of the man that was Comrade Amílcar Cabral - agronomist, poet, political theorist, military strategist, brilliant combatant, ~~his~~ ^{his} ~~department~~ great lover of the oppressed masses, compassionate teacher. In an assembly where his comrades in arms bear witness to the man by whose side they fought for years, ~~so~~ you would perhaps permit a person like me who met him only once and very briefly at that, to recall the impression he made on me.

This was a few weeks before that criminal and treacherous ~~hand~~ ^{finger} pulled the trigger that ended his life. It was in Accra, ^{Ghana}, at the meeting of the OAU Liberation Committee and I was privileged to hold a brief conversation with him.

When I mentioned the few PAIGC comrades that I had met, he was generous in his praise for their work, and full of confidence for the future. His simplicity, his sincerity and the clarity of his opinions gave life and form to what he has taught us about Culture, to mention only this subject which is the primary concern of the African Cultural Institute.

Comrade Amílcar Cabral correctly insists, that Culture is nothing without its material basis, that culture is a social reality independent of the wishes of men, of the colour of their skin, the form of their eyes or of geographical limits. He insists with equal force, that Culture, like History, is a phenomenon that evolves in dynamic interaction with the social and economic reality of its environment, with the levels of development of the productive forces and of the mode of production.

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of the society which has created it. He sees culture also as the creative interaction of man with his environment, ~~the~~ ^{we} each one acting on the other, but with man being the dominant force, capable of breaking the bonds of nature as he is of breaking the bonds of exploitation.

Two decades after ^{the} independence, ^{of most African states,} the life and thought of Comrade Amilcar Cabral invite us to look afresh at the evolution of African society, at the processes of development attempted so far, at the level of democratization actually attained, at the extent to which the aspirations of our popular masses have or have not ^{at the extent} to which our economies have ^{been disengaged from} ~~been met,~~ ^{international dependence} ~~the~~ who foresaw so clearly that political independence meant nothing if it was not linked with the restructuring of our economies ^{the needs of our own people first} to serve ~~our vital human needs,~~ invites us today to ponder the question whether the kind of mass

mobilization and popular democracy he worked for, based on the highest canons of the values of a mass culture, do not offer us a way out of the crisis that faces our continent today.

The African Cultural Institute, as an intergovernmental organisation engaged in making the values of our culture the cornerstone of the building of a prosperous and just Africa of tomorrow, would like to thank the government and people of the Cape Verde islands for the gift of ~~the~~ they have offered to Africa and the world in the person of Comrade Amílcar Cabral.

His words have such a relevance to us today that we can say with confidence that his physical elimination ten years ago was only a stage in the ~~progress of~~ battle he began twenty years ago with the commando attack on the camp at Tite. ^{is to see to the completion of his mission on a continental level} The best monument we can raise to him, his work will never die. Thank you.