

# *A Luta Continua!*

(Re)Introducing Amílcar Cabral to a  
New Generation of Thinkers.

Edited by  
P. Khalil Saucier



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Chapter  
8

*Pedagogy in Revolution, for the  
Anti-Revolutionary Stretch:  
Pan-African Correspondence Across Space  
and Time*

Tryon P. Woods

Hope is true and well founded only when it grows out of the unity between action that transforms the world and critical reflection regarding the meaning of that action.

—Paulo Freire (1983)

More than that, there is also the problem that so long as one does not make a revolution, one tends to be continually at a disadvantage when facing up to other people who have made a revolution. It is very easy for Cabral's view to be generalized because those views represent the views of a revolution, and a revolution that has succeeded, not just of a revolutionary.

—Walter Rodney (1990)

This chapter explores Amílcar Cabral in correspondence with Pan-African revolutionary praxis across the Diaspora. From the long era of anti-colonialism in Africa, to civil rights and Black Power in the Americas, to the present struggles against neo-colonial, colorblind, "post-racial" antiblackness, Cabral's wisdom and leadership articulates with the varieties of black consciousness centrally immersed in the throes of global black social movement—the inexorable drive to make a world hospitable for human beings. Walter Rodney's warning to not extrapolate Cabral's insights from the national liberation movement in Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau announces my intention to read Cabral heuristically. I neither contextualize Cabral's teachings, nor apply them prescriptively across contexts. Instead, I hope to stimulate thought, more methodologically than ideologically, along the lines of what Malcolm X, Cabral's revolutionary contemporary, once noted as the imperative to "'return' to Africa philosophically and culturally and develop a working unity in the framework of Pan-Africanism" (X 1965, 63). Cabral for a new generation, no less Malcolm X and the numerous other Pan-African freedom fighters, is as much about re-discovering *how* to think, for ours is a time of counter-revolution *and* anti-intellectualism, at once and together.

What does a Pan-African *methodology* yield, not exclusive of, but also not restricted to, *ideology*? In May of 1975, Paulo Freire and his colleagues in the Department of Education of the World Council of Churches received an official invitation from the newly independent government of Guinea-Bissau to collaborate in the field of literacy education for adults. The collaboration between Freire, the celebrated Brazilian anti-imperialist and critical pedagogue, and the Guinean nationalists lasted until 1977 and is recorded by Freire in his 1978 book *Pedagogy in Process: The Letters to Guinea-Bissau*. At the time of this invitation, Freire had already been briefly imprisoned and exiled by the military junta in Brazil that came to power in a coup d'état in 1964. He then spent five years working for agrarian reform in Chile as part of the formation of a socialist reconstruction that culminated with Salvador Allende's emergence as President in 1970. After spending a year at Harvard University, Freire moved to Geneva as special education advisor to the World

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Council on Churches, where he worked with the anti-colonial movements in the former Portuguese colonies in Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau.

As Freire notes in his introduction to *Pedagogy in Process* (1983), the struggle of the people of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde to throw off the shackles of colonial rule was "not in any way strange to us. We knew what this struggle had meant both for the majority of the people and their leaders and also as a basic factor explaining the twenty-fifth of April in Portugal" (1983, 7). Freire implicitly recognized the Pan-African tendrils of anti-colonialism, from Africa to the Americas; and further, noted the global impact of black struggle, with the national liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde leading directly back to the overthrow of the fascist regime in Portugal. Not incidentally, Cabral had always argued that the end of colonialism would hasten the end of fascism.

Freire goes on to observe, "we knew that we would be working... with militants engaged in a serious effort at reconstruction" (1983, 7). His letters to the Guinean leadership demonstrate that Cabral's pragmatic commitment to work from the material reality of his people and his land, unadorned by ideology and individual desires, was reflected in Freire's own praxis: "Authentic help means that all who are involved help each other mutually, growing together in the common effort to understand the reality which they seek to transform" (1983, 8). The reality at hand, the need for reconstruction, then and now, remains as outlined in Frantz Fanon's anti-colonial treatise, *Wretched of the Earth*: "The struggle for freedom does not give back to the national culture its former value and shapes; this struggle which aims at a fundamentally different set of relations between men cannot leave intact either the form or the content of the people's culture. After the conflict there is not only the disappearance of colonialism but also the disappearance of the colonized man" (1963, 245-246). Fanon called for the creation of a "new humanity" by providing an education that is both modern (breaking from the imitations of tradition) and expressly anti-colonial (unlearning the colonizer's values). On this score, we may regard Freire's classic and defining text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, as a rejoinder to *Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon's reverberations through the Americas

in Freire, in turn, "return [us] to the source" on the continent, in the form of Cabral's call for liberation schools in Guinea-Bissau that can be used in "the training of cadres" to combat "the negative aspects of the beliefs and traditions of our people" (1979, 242).

The conditions described by Fanon and confronted by Freire both in the Americas and in his collaboration with the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC) reappear, with differences that matter but do not disassemble the unity, across time and space in urban North America. Today, Chicago has attained notoriety for its high levels of gun violence, among black youth especially. Although Americans across race and class practice gun violence at rates far outpacing other nations, what is of interest to us here is how gun violence by black people is construed as qualitatively different from other people's use of guns. When President Obama spoke after the school shootings in Newtown, CT in early 2013, he proclaimed that the whole nation suffers alongside Newtown. Shortly thereafter, the President came to his adopted hometown of Chicago where far more children have died from gun violence than in Newtown; instead of affirming that the death of black children, this time, is also a loss for all of us, Obama pointed a finger at black parents to do more to guide their children away from violence. Violence in black communities like those in Chicago is naturalized in more ways than one. On a recent trip to Springfield, MA, I noticed a handwritten sign pleading with residents to put down the guns in that city, to stop the violence, proclaiming "Springfield is not Chicago!" The numerous problems with the discourse on gun violence and on "black-on-black" crime have been well adjudicated in other venues; my interest in Pan-Africanism as methodology leads me to enter this discourse by way of statements made recently by journalist Bomani Jones. While the racist tape-recorded comments by Donald Sterling, owner of the professional basketball franchise Los Angeles Clippers, absorbed the spotlight during the spring playoff season in 2014, Jones saw the Sterling imbroglio as an occasion to, once again, put the violence in Chicago, and the discourse on black pathology, in perspective:

Housing discrimination is the biggest reason we can point to historically for why we got all these dead kids in Chicago

fighting for turf, fighting for real estate with poor accommodations and facilities and everything you're supposed to have within the city, poor education and everything else, because the tax dollars and everything else decided to move away. And a lot of people like to use as a strategy to avoid that [situation] to find an apartment in one of those nice neighborhoods so then [they] can send their kid to nicer schools and have a chance to have their kid go somewhere in life. Instead when you can't do that you wind up basically where you have neighborhoods created by apartheid and they're desolate and they're dangerous and they're frightening and there's whole generations of people that we've given up on. And the biggest reason that this sort of thing has happened is that jack wagons like Donald Sterling make this decision that they do not want black people, or Mexicans, or anybody else, to live next to these pristine white people who are trying like hell to get away from us and then point at us and wonder, like, why all yo' stuff is messed up.<sup>1</sup>

Examining violence in relation to apartheid social conditions exemplifies the necessity of dialectical thinking when conducting social analysis. In this way, Jones recalls Rodney's classic work *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1974). The definitive exposition of Pan-African dialectics, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* teaches that underdevelopment only occurs in dialectical relationship to development, where human social development everywhere proceeds unevenly. Any study of underdevelopment, then, is necessarily comparative and an examination in relations of exploitation and dominance. The essential lesson Rodney imparts, therefore, is that the reasons for underdevelopment lie not within a given social space, but rather can only be discerned by looking outside, at the external relations of exploitation in which the space is enmeshed and produced as underdeveloped, or as impoverished, violent, abandoned, and so forth. Rodney pointedly explains that not only are these conditions themselves produced by acts of racism, but moreover, any suggestions that such circumstances are due to factors internal to the community in question are nothing less than racist sleight-of-hand:

When the “experts” from capitalist countries do not give a racist explanation, they nevertheless confuse the issue by giving as causes of underdevelopment the things which really are consequences. For example, they would argue that Africa is in a state of backwardness as a result of lacking skilled personnel to develop. It is true that because of lack of engineers Africa cannot on its own build more roads, bridges, and hydroelectric stations. But that is not a cause of underdevelopment, except in the sense that causes and effects come together and reinforce each other. The fact of the matter is that the most profound reasons for the economic backwardness of a given African nation are not to be found inside that nation. All that we can find inside are the symptoms of underdevelopment and the secondary factors that make for poverty (Rodney 1974, 21-22).

Following Rodney, Jones’ comments could be classified as a treatise on ‘how white society underdeveloped black Chicago.’ Jones had previously elaborated on the policy designs that created segregated neighborhoods, before expounding (in the excerpt I reproduce above) on the costs of such policies.

Recently Ta-Nehisi Coates recounted this history again, this time for a mainstream audience in his May 21, 2014 essay for *The Atlantic Monthly*. In “The Case for Reparations,” Coates revisits the historical terrain of antiblack terror and racist policymaking that created the present apartheid conditions by robbing black families of property, land, stable social spaces, and constantly deferring their ability to accumulate wealth. Concentrating on housing discrimination, Coates reprises the historical and sociological terrain of black studies, such as the work of Thomas Sugrue in *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (2005) showing the explicit racism embedded in federal housing policy and the violent aggression of white homeowners against their black neighbors, Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro’s account in *Black Wealth/White Wealth* (1995) of how the deep historical roots of wealth inequality are reproduced and extended today through race-neutral practices in the banking and real estate industries, Clyde Woods’ analysis in *Development Arrested* (1998) of how

the New Deal’s extension of “democracy” relied upon Jim Crow apartheid, Robert Sampson’s recent study *The Great American City* (2013) that describes the symptoms of black underdevelopment in terms of the “ecologically distinct” quality of black neighborhoods versus white neighborhoods, Walter Johnson’s (2001) history of the slave markets showing how slaves literally embodied the possessive investments of white people, and historians of Reconstruction from W.E.B. Du Bois (1969) to Eric Foner (2002) who discuss at length white working class terrorism.

While there is no shortage of evidence in the historical archive, let alone in the voices of black residents themselves, as Coates reminds us, to assess the status of black underdevelopment in urban North America in the same terms Rodney applied to the African continent, this narrative remains marginalized. Or Jones’ seethe about the Sterling case on ESPN radio would not have been necessary. Also unnecessary would be the manner in which Chicago, and many other North American cities like it, blame the black community for the relations of exploitation that have produced its underdevelopment by further eviscerating the public school system. For the 2013-14 school year, the discourse on black pathology took the form of the Chicago School Board voting to close 49 schools, the majority in predominantly black neighborhoods on the South and West sides.<sup>2</sup> The school year prior, 2012-13, saw Chicago’s teachers stage a historic strike in which the points of contention with the city, beyond teacher salaries, were health care benefits, performance evaluation, imposed curricula, and conditions in school buildings. These points of debate themselves are what Rodney was referring to when he noted the tendency to “confuse the issue by giving as causes of underdevelopment the things which really are consequences” (1974, 37): the closing of schools, straitjacketing educators with imposed curricula and standardized assessment protocol, and privatizing the costs of worker health care coverage are all symptoms of what Freire in his correspondence with the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau termed the mechanical relations between education and the society. Freire noted that the Commissioner on Education in newly independent Guinea-Bissau, Mario Cabral, recognized the limits of formal education and, conversely, the importance of an educational system serving the

formation of a new mentality, “coherent with the objectives of the new society to be created” (1983, 20). The new education system, writes Freire, needs to be “constituted dialogically in relation to the infrastructure of society”—schools, in other words, and all that goes on inside and in relation to them, are part of a larger process (1983, 41).

Of particular concern for the PAIGC in the reconstruction of Guinea-Bissau was the relation between production and education. Mario Cabral, in a 1977 interview with *Lisbon Daily*: “Of all of our efforts and our tasks in the Commission on Education, the relation between production and education is the one that has most affected me and the one I most like to talk about” (Freire 1983, 155). Cabral’s PAIGC comrade Carlos Dias elaborated on the PAIGC’s view that conceiving of work separate from education would be counter-productive and contradictory. A dialectical relationship between work and study promotes the overall plan for the society to be created by basing education on material conditions, offering incentives for change and increased production, and a new concept of distribution. Dias explains: “In the transition from the society in which we now live to one without exploiters or exploited, there are two objectives of the relation between study and work—work that is useful, rich, and creative: one is to throw light on the contradiction between manual work and intellectual work, since we are still far from overcoming the separation between the two; the other is to make possible the gradual self-financing of education, without which it will not be possible to make it truly democratic under present conditions in our society” (Freire 1983, 157). As Freire points out, this approach to work and study is quite distinct from the work-study programs in capitalist societies (variously called in North American urban schools, “internship,” “big picture learning,” and “real world learning”) wherein future workers are inducted into the relations of exploitation necessary for capital accumulation. The PAIGC also presage the current student loan debt crisis in which contemporary wealth inequality is extended well into the future through educational apartheid.

Freire’s reflections on the PAIGC’s implementation of its plan for a new society deepen his theory for critical pedagogy outlined in

*Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1994). In the earlier work, Freire states that for authentic revolutionary educators, the “object of action is the reality to be transformed by them together with the other people” (Freire 1994, 75). By contrast, in the educational process prevalent across North America, as in capitalist societies everywhere, teachers act upon the students to “adjust them to a reality which must remain untouched” (Freire 1994, 75). Innovative instances and good intentions matter little in this regard: the issue made critical through the correspondence between Freire and the PAIGC is that pedagogy cannot but replicate the intrinsic relation between production and education. As Freire reminds us in his letters to the PAIGC, pedagogy is always a vessel for politics and ideology. Amílcar Cabral referred to this issue as the dynamic equilibrium between production and the political system.

As historians of the PAIGC, such as the late Patrick Chabal, have noted, Cabral formed his understanding of the realities of production in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde through his years as an agronomist. Traveling the country doing agrarian research, he talked extensively with the peasants regarding their reality, both identifying future PAIGC leaders and grounding his pragmatic approach to national liberation. This experiential tutorial in populist materialism is itself not without precedent across the Diaspora. In Haiti, Jean Leopold Dominique’s formative years as an agronomist working with peasants in the countryside eventually led him to become the “voice of the people,” founding Radio Haiti Inter and becoming the first person to broadcast in Haitian Creole, the language of the masses (Demme 2004). Dominique challenged each successive Haitian government to live up to the promises of democracy and the Haitian Revolution, until he, too, was assassinated, on April 3, 2000. Cabral’s detailed 1953 agricultural census reveals a nascent critique of colonialism and an implicit caution regarding the neocolonial economies that would come to characterize the postcolonial era. We hear premonitions regarding the pitfalls later encountered by postcolonial regimes which pursued national development strategies through exploitation of a single export commodity and the utter vulnerability of these countries to the peaks and crashes of the global economy (the case of Nigeria stands out here): “The current trend

towards groundnuts as a monocrop... is rapidly creating the prospect of making all or nearly all of Guinea's economy dependent on production of groundnuts (or rather on the potentials for the export of groundnuts). To the technical disadvantages of a monocrop there is the additional contingent character of the value of this product, which is strictly dependent on international factors in the oil-seeds market" (Cabral 1979, 13). Practical questions such as, what is to be produced, and, how can economic productivity increase to meet the people's needs, translate into political questions of what should people know, what ought to be the objective of education, and how can political consciousness of the overall plan for society enhance economic productivity?

Cabral's enunciation of the needs of his people as an expression of the society's total relationship with the land came to be refracted in the PAIGC party principle to "advance towards the struggle secure in the reality of our land" (1979, 44). This principle underscores how land signals the singularity of African anti-colonial struggle to global black liberation *and* the connective issue binding blacks across the Diaspora. Cabral understands "land" to refer at once to the specific time-space coordinates of territory, how this territory is a "product of culture but also a factor of culture," as well as the political economy of production (1979, 152). Pan-Africanism has long understood the land's importance in this multiplicity of ways. In his 1963 speech "Message to the Grass Roots," Malcolm states that in the final analysis all revolutions are fought over the question of land. Citing numerous historical cases, from Algeria to Russia, Malcolm tells his militant audience, "Land is the basis of freedom, justice, and equality" (1965, 9). A few years later, in a 1970 speech, Kwame Ture observes that before Malcolm, Marcus Garvey organized around the concept of land (2007, 198). Ture goes on to raise the issue of settler colonialism as integral to how we think Pan-Africanism methodologically, noting "In order to be a successful settler colony, one must commit genocide against the traditional owners of the land" (2007, 200). As it unfolded, however, settler colonialism in the Americas required not simply the genocide of the indigenous Americans, but also of the Africans, the slave trade being the precondition for the European "voyages of discovery." Any ran-

domly sampled passage from Du Bois' *Black Reconstruction* (1969) would include reference to the fact that slavery was the continually renewed primitive accumulation of the African and the land, bound up one in the other. The slave trade, therefore, sits at the center of Pan-Africanist methodology: on the one hand, it was the condition of possibility for settler colonialism in Africa (a fact of enormous analytical significance, the silence about it notwithstanding); while on the other hand, as an act of genocidal nation-building, it reminds us that in order to become masters of their domain, whites must occupy black bodies. Black sovereignty is colonized at the most base level in order to construct a white supremacist society in which black people do not appear as humans at all. When we speak about "land" in the Pan-Africanist tradition, therefore, we are also referring "body."

When we consider these points alongside the Pan-African call for unity, from Du Bois to Malcolm to Nkrumah to Cabral to Ture, the conceptualization of land and body further crystallizes into "race." For instance, take Malcolm again, this time in "The Black Revolution" from 1964, in which he asked the audience to not blame him for igniting the fire of revolution when they find their doorstep aflame. Malcolm explained the relationship between the local and the global, at once an analysis of the dialectic between racial particularity and universality characteristic of the Pan-African method:

So 1964 will see the Negro revolt evolve and merge into the worldwide black revolution that has been taking place on this earth since 1945. The so-called revolt will become a real black revolution. Now the black revolution has been taking place in Africa and Asia and Latin America; when I say *black*, I mean non-white—black, brown, red or yellow (1965, 49-50).

In Malcolm's vision, the world will be liberated under the mantle of blackness. Pan-Africanism, then, is a Diasporic positionality organized under an explicit race consciousness. In another speech that year, "An Appeal to the African Heads of State," Malcolm beseeched the newly independent African states to recognize that

your problems will not be solved until and unless ours are solved. You will never be fully respected until and unless we

are also respected. You will never be recognized as free human beings until and unless we are recognized as free human beings (1965, 75).

Racial blackness, not national belonging or colonial status, is both the clarion and the bellwether for human liberation. In this way, the centrality of recovering stolen lands, whether the territory of the African colony, the stability of black neighborhoods, or the body of the Diasporic black subject, is an imperative of black revolution.

Freire's analysis, with the PAIGC, of the dialectical relations between production and education further elucidates the situation in Chicago. The black community's embattled and tenuous admission to home ownership in North America has proceeded apace with the divestment of the community on the part of the state and capital. The abandonment and concomitant dangers of the black community have led to a degree of out-migration, as Jones alludes to in his comments cited above. In its announcement of the record number of school closings for the 2013-14 school year, Chicago Public Schools claimed that enrollment had decreased by 100,000 students. Again, as Rodney reminds us, structural abandonment and the responses it compels in residents are the symptoms of a larger political economic disposition—of the genocidal protocols of settler colonialism, to recall Ture's analysis. In this manner, we can begin to see why charter schools have become a burgeoning industry on precisely the very terrain of abandonment swallowing up the public schools, why they succeed in attracting resources and students where the public schools have only wrought "failure." The charter schools are the education system's version of gentrification. Almost exclusively a feature of urban school districts serving black and brown children, charter schools mark capital's reinvestment in the spaces of underdevelopment that it created through earlier periods of exploitation and divestment. As with urban decay and subsequent gentrification, charter schools first require the abandonment of urban space made possible by white flight. With the charters, white children do not return, but capital investment does. Charter schools nationally raised \$1.3 billion in bond offerings during 2013, the most since they were first issued in 1998 (Marek 2014). Despite poor investment ratings and a recent Securities and Exchange Commission penalty action

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against one Chicago charter entity for defrauding bond holders, the municipal bond market is "clamoring" for more charter school bonds, most of which are junk bonds.

New Orleans post-Hurricane Katrina has been a crucible for this process of education abandonment and privatization. In the immediate aftermath of the hurricane, the Louisiana legislature assumed control of 107 out of 128 schools in Orleans district and began the process of closing or converting them to charter schools. At the same time, the state fired all 7,500 employees of the school district (Buras et al 2010; Goodman 2007). Today almost 80 percent of Orleans district students are enrolled in charter schools. To return to Rodney's Pan-African methodology, we can say that the assault on public education today is the symptom of a more fundamental war within the social body. The present educational "reform" movement does not have a set of circumstances that demand prescription and "fixing" in the inner-city if not for the assorted and articulated toxic conditions of racism that produce an underdeveloped urban space. Insofar as the plight of urban schooling is trotted out as justification for educational reform, what you have is the long, steady, and unbroken history of antiblackness serving as conditions of possibility for ending public education. White society is once again resuscitating itself parasitically on its black host.

While Hurricane Katrina provided the "shock treatment" necessary to pursue such dramatic change in New Orleans in a short period of time, the recent imposed bankruptcy in Detroit, on the other hand, represents the culmination of a long, slow process of destroying a black city through abandonment and privatization (Klein 2008). Long before the state deployed anti-democratic measures such as the emergency manager to send the city into bankruptcy and the selling off of city assets and public pensions, Michigan restructured Detroit schools. With school closures and privatization, today a majority of Detroit school district students now attend charter schools (Gilberti and Hanover 2013). Israeli-born hip hop artist and activist Invincible powerfully depicts this process in her adopted hometown of Detroit in her song "The Locusts:" "Locusts and buzzards circle and hover above the/Abandoned houses shattered windows with the crooked shutters/Cross the street construct a cookie cutter condo-



minimum" (Unvincible 2008). The centrality of land in the context of the Americas is therefore not the straightforward matter that it is in the context of postcolonial Africa. What, exactly, is to be reclaimed in Chicago? At what point do we begin to trace the pattern of territorial dispossession in Detroit—which would quickly lead, of course, to following black Detroiters back to their roots in the Southern U.S. from which they migrated during one of most significant demographic shifts in American history, and then we find ourselves discussing, once again, slavery and the co-accumulation of land and African bodies, and before that, the empty void overdetermined by black suffering that was the Middle Passage.

Invincible's take on the calculus of underdevelopment in the black metropolis corresponds to Cabral and Freire's contributions to Pan-Africanist methodology that teach us that land is also a factor of culture, where culture is the broad terrain on which a people come to know themselves as a people and endure the assaults of colonial occupation. Cabral states that the "value of culture as an element of resistance to foreign domination lies in the fact that culture is the vigorous manifestation, on the ideological or idealist level, of the material and historical reality of the society that is dominated or to be dominated" (1979, 141). He reaches these insights, of course, under the pressures of war: "to take up arms to dominate a people is, above all, to take up arms to destroy, or at least to neutralize and to paralyze their cultural life" (1979, 140). Armed resistance, in a subtle call and response with Fanon, is thus the vector for renewed cultural life: "For us," explains Cabral, "the worst or best we can say about imperialism, whatever its form, is to take up arms and struggle. That is what we are doing and will go on doing until foreign domination has been totally eliminated from our African countries" (1979, 121). Again, thinking methodologically, we can make connections here that neither Cabral nor Freire explicitly present. The lengths to which an educational system goes to promote human liberation is related to the degree of armed revolutionary praxis in the society. Rodney asserted in 1975 "the armed liberation struggle has become the highest form of struggle on the African continent," because it surpasses the anti-colonial period to deal squarely with the class stratifications that stand in the way of truly revolutionary

change (1990, 51). Although the contributing factors are complex, we might consider the armed conflicts today in Africa as symptomatic of Rodney's argument here. We have certainly observed in the neocolonial era how the transition from colonialism to national independence may mean nothing more than a substitution of the face overseeing continued domination, oppression, and exploitation. Kwame Nkrumah wrote in 1970 that underlying every coup or attempted coup in Africa is a basic situation on the one hand, a fundamental tension played out between the neocolonialist powers and their reactionary bourgeois power elites, and on the other hand, the growing awareness of the African masses as to the hidden hand of neocolonialism shrewdly cloaked in black government (1970, 51).

Rodney suggests that the people engaged in armed struggles are able to reach a level of cultural reconstruction that enables certain concepts to emerge that have not arisen in other places. "They have advanced beyond the type of questions that are *not* being tackled even in the neo-colonial stage. They are raising and resolving questions that are *not* being raised and resolved in the so-called independent countries" (1990, 51). He goes on to support this assertion with a pointed question: "Where has Paulo Freire's new *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, about the way one should teach and communicate in a Third World framework, been tried" (1990, 51)? The answer being, only in those countries that emerged into independence through protracted armed struggle, such as Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau.

Although Freire has become something of a darling with progressive education theorists in the U.S., there is remarkably little Freirean education happening here in the U.S., especially where it is most needed, in places like Chicago's black neighborhoods. This contradiction, of course, is not surprising, given the aims of Freire's pedagogy, Rodney's observations about the relationship between this kind of education and armed struggle, and the political squamishness on the part of most progressive academics where matters of black liberation are concerned. The hard question remains: does the relationship between education and armed struggle lend something methodologically to how we conceptualize the issue of violence in North American urban spaces such as Chicago where edu-

cational abandonment is one means by which the genocidal program is waged against black children?

When Cabral says “the worst or best we can say about imperialism, whatever its form, is to take up arms and struggle,” he is restating a basic premise of black social movement across time and space: in a historical context (since the slave trade raised the dawn of the modern era) where the world approaches black people through a violence that is purely gratuitous, rather than individual, incidental, instrumental, or contingent, self-defense is an imperative for self-determination and is a crucial gesture of black politics. Moreover, in this statement Cabral implicitly recognizes, in his own pragmatic way, what Fanon establishes in *Wretched of the Earth* (1963), that black violence is the precondition for subjectivity, meaning without violence black political expression goes unheard and the existing historical structures cannot be called into question, and that black people’s violent response to the gratuitous violence of civil society is not only legitimate but necessary. From Fanon: “From birth it is clear to him that this narrow world, strewn with prohibitions, can only be called in question by absolute violence” (1963, 37). Following Fanon, Frank Wilderson suggests that such response by black people may itself be the most ethical moment in the liberation struggle: “Only gratuitous freedom can repair the object status of his or her flesh, which itself is the product of...gratuitous violence” (2010, 141).

Certainly in Chicago, where the black community was repeatedly terrorized by the naked attacks on black militancy during the very period of the PAIGC’s successful revolutionary struggle in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, the truth of Fanon’s analysis registers deep in the collective psyche. Efforts to grapple with violence on Chicago’s streets today, however, proceed as if this violence is strictly intramural, interpersonal, and pathological. A prominent 2011 film called *The Interrupters*, nationally broadcast on the PBS series “Frontline” in 2012, highlights the efforts of the organization Cure Violence and three of its workers in Chicago who attempt to protect their communities by “interrupting” violent situations before they escalate. Cure Violence promotes a conception of violence as a health issue that can be reduced using disease control and behavior change methods. *The Interrupters* narrative follows the work of

the three protagonists, former gang members themselves, “as they go about their work, and while doing so reveals their own inspired journeys of hope and redemption.”<sup>23</sup> Although this model of countering the tragic destruction in black neighborhoods presents itself as a progressive alternative to the punitive approach of the criminal justice system, prevention rather than prosecution, in fact it naturalizes violence as strictly an interpersonal, rather than structural, affair, and as a condition of blackness. With an astonishing lack of racial awareness, the premise of Cure Violence is that black people are pathological—or in its parlance, diseased.

Viewers of *The Interrupters* never learn about the assassination of Fred Hampton, deputy chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party, and his comrade Mark Clark by the Chicago Police Department, December 4, 1969. As a consequence, the effects of COINTELPRO, the FBI’s program for destroying black political organizations, including the creation of a vacuum of leadership amid enhanced terror in black communities, is never presented. Nor do viewers learn about the direct role played by the state in creating black street gangs and facilitating the illicit economies in drugs and guns. Viewers are never treated to the analysis of segregation, deindustrialization, and housing discrimination that Bomani Jones offers up his listeners on ESPN radio; nor do viewers learn about the structural divestment from Chicago’s public schools. There is no mention of the landmark 2000 Supreme Court case originating out of Chicago, *Illinois v. Wardlow*. The Court decreed in *Wardlow* that even though its own precedents establish a person’s right to avoid a police encounter, this right is null and void if the person is in a “high-crime area.”<sup>24</sup> Since crime rates are a reflection of policing, rather than criminal activity, “high-crime area” is simply an updated proxy for “black neighborhood,” the spaces hosting disparate police attention, not disproportionate criminal behavior. One might think that the further evisceration of the right to be protected from unlawful police search and seizure of your person and property, a premise for the right to self-defense and self-possession, would have some bearing on how to understand the violence in black communities.

PBS’s “Frontline” had previously produced a documentary in 1998 by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Two Nations of Black America*,

in which Gates reveals that the racist conception of black people in *The Interrupters* is readily promoted by the black elite themselves. In one scene from the film, Gates interviews his Harvard University colleague William Julius Wilson about the “two nations of black America,” to which Wilson responds, “To think that our situation is comparable to that of the inner-city black is ridiculous.” Gates concurs, “I find it hard to concede that these hoodlums are part of the same community I belong to... This guy from the street seemed like a Martian to me.” Elaine Brown, former chairperson of the Black Panther Party, writes in her book *The Condemnation of Little B: New Age Racism in America* (2002) how black leaders abandoned the black masses at a crucial historical juncture in the aftermath of COINTELPRO’s decimation of black militant political organizations of the 1960s and 1970s. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s black leaders condoned the punitive build-up of the prison and policing apparatus, the dismantling of the welfare state, and the reallocation of stable working class jobs out of black communities, all the while disparaging poor black people and their varied responses to civil society’s antiblackness. Brown writes: “It was this New Age Racist-era abandonment of principle, this shrugging of shoulders and turning of backs by blacks and former friends, that had set the stage for the unchallenged prosecution of a thirteen-year-old black boy... Nobody—nobody that mattered—was concerned about a Little B anymore. Everybody—everybody that mattered—wanted him to go away, forever. Little B was at once a problem and a solution, expendable and expedient” (2002, 259).

Fanon has dealt at length and in scathing terms with this state of affairs, with the role of the colonized elite in transmitting the line between the civilized sectors of society and the savage natives, between the capitalists and the dependents in the spaces of underdevelopment: “Objectively, the intellectual behaves in this phase like a common opportunist. In fact he has not stopped maneuvering” (1963, 49). Ture, for his part, makes it clear what is wrong with diagnoses of black underdevelopment such as those on offer in the discourse of black pathology promulgated in *The Interrupters* and *The Two Nations of Black America*:

#### *Pedagogy in Revolution, for the Anti-Revolutionary Struggle*

I don’t deal with the individual, I think it’s a cop-out when people talk about the individual... For one thing, it will be seen that the black man’s alienation is not an individual question, it is a question of socio-diagnostics. The Negro problem does not resolve itself into the problem of individual Negroes living among white men, but rather of Negroes as a class that is exploited, enslaved, and despised by the colonialist, capitalist society, which is only accidentally white (2007, 77-78).

Cabral, as well, notes the basic strategy of occupation: “In the case of so-called neocolonialism, whether the majority of the colonized population is aboriginal or of foreign origin, imperialist action takes the form of creating a local bourgeoisie or pseudo-bourgeoisie, in fee to the ruling class of the dominating country” (1979, 129). Pan-Africanist methodology provides ample arsenal for disposing of the mystification and subterfuge of antiblackness from which ever quarter it issues forth.

The abandonment of black children, and their diverse responses to the chaos of the antiblack world, is also a rejection of black violence, misrecognition of the gratuitous violence facing black people, and a preference for state violence. To put it differently, the abandonment of black children signals a rejection of Pan-Africanist methods. Something more is at stake than mere exploitation, neglect, or abandonment. There is the shadow of it in Cabral, but nothing more. While Cabral always maintained (correctly, as it turns out) that fascism in Portugal would not survive a successful anti-colonial movement in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, he did not believe the reverse to be true: changes to the political economy of Euro-American dominance would not necessarily curb the Western tendency towards racial violence and dominance of the Third World. He was also correct on this score, as various cases reveal: the case exemplar being the United States, where each successive era of white supremacy was destroyed, always by means of a resistance that took up arms for its cause, only to be replaced each time by a renovated regime in which antiblackness had become more fundamental to its operations. The 1857 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* offers a prescient and preemptive rebuttal to all subsequent challenges to antiblackness. In addition to the notorious proclama-

tion that black people are “so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect,” the Court made the far more consequential statement that blacks, “whether emancipated or not, yet remained subject to” the authority of whites, “no distinction in this respect was made between the free [N]egro or mulatto and the slave, but this stigma, of the deepest degradation, was fixed upon the whole race.”<sup>5</sup> The political squabble over “free” states versus slave states animating the superficial conflict in both *Dred Scott* and the Civil War to follow was immaterial to the Court; the subjugation of blacks was not a juridical or legal matter, but rather a self-evident case of racial degradation that endures despite changes to how the political economy of the society may organize this racial hierarchy in a given historical moment. The political economy of law is subordinate to the culture of politics; the symbolic economy of antiblackness provides social norms supreme to the law itself.

We can turn to the present inheritors of a black-radical Pan-Africanist tradition for the leading language on this distinction in power that Cabral only acknowledges indirectly, incompletely, and insufficiently (and for which Freire has no awareness at all). Wilderson describes the structure of gratuitous violence as an “idiom of power” in which “violence is at the heart” of a positioning matrix in which black people do not enjoy bodily integrity nor do they contest the basic “dramas of value” undergirding the social hierarchies humans construct in order to achieve dominance (2010, 247-249). Drawing upon Lindon Barrett’s (2009) exposition of the phenomenon of value, wherein value is both the masking of social relations as well as the mystification of the form of its own circulation, Wilderson explains that black positionality is beyond the scope of this drama of values because blackness has no relational capacity to the social in the first place. In other words, the positioning matrix of gratuitous violence marks black bodies not as lesser subjects on the scale of higher valued entities, but rather as existing outside the scope of value altogether, exiled from the world of human capacities (2010, 251).

Cabral tepidly approaches a recognition of this level of existential violence when he notes the need for “re-Africanization” and “class suicide” on the part of the Portugal-trained and -based Cape

Verdean students among whom anti-colonialism congealed into a national liberation movement. His self-reflection of this process is revealing:

It was after the Second World War that a need to struggle to put an end to colonial domination was born and grew in people’s thoughts. At that period, a group of students from the Portuguese colonies began to seek how to *re-become* Africans, for the cunning of the Portuguese had always lain in not allowing us to be Africans in order to turn us into second-class Portuguese. Anyone who had the luck to go to school was used by the Portuguese as an agent, as an individual who would disown Africa to serve the colonialists. So our work lay in searching out again our African roots. And that was so wonderful, so useful and laden with consequences that even today the founders of that group are all leaders of liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies... Then one after another we returned to our countries and met others who thought as we did, and we sought to awaken in each person’s mind the sense of freedom. It was not at all easy.

So it is not by chance that I went to Guine. It was not material hardship that drove me back to my native land. Everything had been calculated, step by step. I had enormous potential for working in any position in the Lisbon agronomy centre, as a researcher, for a post as an Engineer second-class in Guine.

...It was thus to follow a calculation, the idea of doing something, to make a contribution to arousing the people for struggle against the Portuguese. And I did this from the first day I set foot in Guine (1979, xxv).

Cabral unwittingly elucidates the difference between slavery’s economy of violence and that of the colony. The slave is captured in a matrix of violence that is purely gratuitous and without remedy within the world as we know it. The terms of this violence are accumulation and fungibility: the purpose of the slave is to exist as a thing for the captor, to enhance the master’s status in every way

(psychic, symbolic, material, sexual, political, economic). Colonized people, on the other hand, meet violence primarily under terms of displacement and dispossession. Alienation, exploitation, and oppression for the colonized are functions of being displaced from their native land, or rather, from *political sovereignty* in it. For the colonized, suffering is remediable by kicking the colonizer—the settler colonial, as Ture characterizes the American “revolutionaries”—out of the picture. What would a remedy to slavery look like for the slave? The slave, *by definition*, is excised from human history, severed from territory, culture, and kin, ascending and descending generations. The slave exists as a “genealogical isolate,” “an object among other objects,” exiled not simply from territory and sovereignty, but from human relationality altogether (Patterson 1982, 10; Fanon 1967, 109). Colonized people, in short, can fight *against* the colonizer and *for* sovereignty or national liberation, whereas the slave can only fight, continually, *against* slavery, but not *for* something specific, since anything approaching the restoration of what was lost in the Middle Passage remains purely theoretical and as-yet-unimagined.

For Cabral, “re-becoming African” is a strategic move to forward an agenda of repossessing that which was stolen, political control over the territory that as a result of colonialism had come to be known as Guinea-Bissau. The political and historical significance of this move precedes, and as a result, far exceeds as well, the sequence of events that led to the end of direct Portuguese colonial rule in Guinea-Bissau. Cabral and his Cape Verdean contemporaries experienced an idiom of power that positioned them with choices: they could choose to return “home” to struggle against the Portuguese; or they could make “home” in Portugal and realize their “enormous potential.” In short, although dispossessed of their native land, they still were in possession of their humanity, bodily integrity, and social honor—as subjects, albeit degraded to “second-class Portuguese;” they could pursue an education, a home, a profession, a livelihood. The decision to “return,” actually meant a degree of loss itself, in Cabral’s view. This “calculation, the idea of doing something,” as Cabral put it, could just as easily, it seems, have gone another way. Moreover, Cabral acts as if the fact that he

was able to study in Portugal arbitrarily fell to him and was unrelated to his position as a light-skinned Cape Verdean within a racialized colonial context. His lack of self-awareness on this score, rejoicing in the fact that this cadre of students from the colonies all became leaders of national liberation struggles, ominously foreshadows the ensuing racial politics underwriting the neocolonial era in these very same former colonies.

Cabral’s calculations, then, function as obfuscation and mystification. He purports to choose to (re-)become African, to become a postcolonial liberated from national occupation, his “prior platitude” fully restored (Wilderson 2010). But his estimation of the calculus of postcolonialism is shortsighted. He correctly realized that he and his cadre would need to, at least nominally, disabuse themselves of their elitism in order to achieve the unity between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau requisite for successful national liberation. To put it differently, Cabral sought a non-racial solution to a problem created through racism (colonial violence) and racialism (colonial rule: color/caste/kind distinctions as an effect of violence). The PAIGC, accordingly, preferred the language of “class” over “race” in every instance. Rather than view this move as one dictated by political necessity, a strategic calculation, as Cabral would have it, we should see it as Cabral making a choice overdetermined by his formation as a colonized intellectual.

Rodney commented on this question of race and class in the Portuguese colonies:

The Mozambican and Angolan and Guinean revolutionaries, for instance, have a way of always insisting upon the priority of class over race, in a language that sounds rather similar to the language now being used in the United States, but the context is quite different, because they are not locked in a struggle of black against white. When they talk about race, or when they say a position should not be racist and that it should be class-oriented, more often than not what they have in mind are certain contradictions in their own society between the so-called mulattoes and the blacks (1990, 83).

Certainly Rodney is correct to caution against overgeneralizations across the Pan-African world, and to call for historically specific and

contextualized analysis. But he is only correct to a degree that the struggle in Guinea-Bissau is not black against white; it is more accurate to say that it was, and remains, a struggle against antiblackness. In other words, in postcolonial Africa, white supremacy no longer appears as the obvious adversary, the principle that whites are superior having been rejected with each successful national liberation movement, up to the end of apartheid rule in South Africa in 1994. However, what postcolonial Africa has proven time and again is that rejecting white supremacy does not in any way mean rejection of antiblackness. The principle that blackness is the bastion of all things dangerous and disgusting, savage and sub-human was created through racial slavery, not through colonialism. Rodney, therefore, is incorrect in this sense: it is not that the PAIGC is *not* dealing with a black-white struggle, but rather that it is not dealing with *slavery* which is *the* historical context for the construction of “black,” “white,” and “Africa” in the first place. Cabral is choosing not to deal with *the* principal act of racism that created the conditions of possibility for colonialism that would then displace indigenous sovereignty. As a product of Cape Verde, an early outpost in the slave trade, this move of mystification is politically suspect.

The organizing rubric of race is very much present in the Pan-African method, as explored above with Malcolm X. Additionally, consider a contemporary of Cabral’s, Steve Biko:

For the liberals, the thesis is apartheid, the anti-thesis is non-racialism, but the synthesis is very feebly defined. They want to tell the blacks that they see integration as the ideal solution. Black Consciousness defines the situation differently. The thesis is in fact a strong white racism and therefore, the anti-thesis to this must, ipso facto, be a strong solidarity amongst the blacks on whom this white racism seeks to prey. Out of these two situations we can therefore hope to reach some kind of balance—a true humanity where power politics will have no place (1986, 90).

The context of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa may appear to be very different from the national liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau, but in fact the situation in South Africa is merely

a more advanced form of settler colonialism. In such an advanced state, as with Australia, New Zealand, and the North American states as well, racial discourse becomes more explicit while aiming to appear more naturalized. I would suggest, moreover, that as a result, the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa (or Black Power in the U.S.) possessed a purchase on reality that was in fact more conducive to mobilizing precisely the kind of Pan-African unity warranted by the antiblack world. Present-day scholarship in the black radical tradition offers new language to lay over the Pan-African tradition to renew and deepen recognition of the analytical and political importance of slavery’s *afterlife* (Saucier and Woods 2015). Although current reflection on slavery’s afterlife has yet to adequately broach the postcolonial condition, I advance here that it impresses us to recognize that colonialism is not the primary idiom of power operative on the continent—slavery is. Consequently, ejecting the colonialists and reclaiming the land is not enough as long as antiblackness remains the organizing principle of global modern society and black people throughout the Diaspora suffer exile not simply from occupied land, *per se*, but also from their very own occupied bodies. As it turns, anti-colonialism and national liberation need not be all that *revolutionary*.

From the perspective of Pan-African methodology, the fact that Cabral’s conception of the problem to be overcome was hamstrung by race, which is to say, by racial *blackness*, may itself be invaluable pedagogy. As Khalil Saucier’s (2015) ethnographic work in Cape Verdean immigrant communities in the U.S. reveals, part of Cabral’s legacy remains a severe generational divide within the immigrant community precisely on this matter of blackness. For our consideration of Pan-African methodology, this state of affairs leads me to conclude these reflections at three resting places on the journey between study and work, between education and movement, on *praxis*. First, study and black struggle are synonymous. Cabral and Freire reiterate the importance of this relationship. As do numerous other testimonies across the black radical tradition. Charles Payne’s (1995) history of the organizing tradition in the early Mississippi freedom struggle shows that the well-known civil rights movement of the 1960s was predicated on the activism of an earlier, socially invisible generation of activists whose methods were essentially to

build education into their community relations. Two generations after the early Mississippi activists, the Black Panther Party was famous for its political education classes. Safiya Bukhari (2010) and Mumia Abu-Jamal (2004) both write about how these classes often served as vehicles for developing Party leadership. Wilderson writes of his own maturation through study with the Panthers, revealing a context of warfare only different in degree, not in kind, from the context in which the PAIGC set up schools in the liberated zones during the war.

Darnell pondered this, but offered no insight. He told me to read more (in bed with a flashlight) and think about my own questions some more; to come back in a week and tell him what I'd come up with. I came back not in seven days but everyday that week, hoping against hope that he would simply lay it all out for me. But this period was the height of CONTELPRO's war against the Panthers, and Darnell and the others were as busy with fortification activities as they were preoccupied with dread. There was tremendous hustle and bustle in that office and fewer and fewer after-school lessons on anti-imperialism and police brutality. One day I arrived after school wide-eyed and read, only to find that the office was no more. The storefront windows were demolished. Glass and bullet casings were strewn across the sidewalk.... I just stared at the jagged glass dangling like loose teeth from the window frames, at the bullet-ripped posters of Eldridge Cleaver and Huey P. Newton, and at the crystals and cartridges glistening at our feet like gems. You left me bullets and glass in Fred Hampton's place in Chicago. I thought. You leave me glass and bullets here. The woman who held my hand was savvy enough to know that though I needed her to hold me, to press me tightly to her, my ego could not bear that much love. She eased closer to me and carefully and clandestinely put her arm around my shoulder—so as not to stir my friends. Without turning to look at me, without taking her eyes off the yellow tape drawn across the ruin, she said, "You've got to learn if you want to stay alive (2008, 247-249).

Study for survival. Study is black struggle.

Second, the assault on public education at all levels that we are enduring today is made possible by longstanding practices and institutions of antiblackness. Just like the first public schools were started by ex-slaves during Reconstruction, following on the clandestine study circles that slaves conducted to prepare themselves for freedom so that they walked off the plantations and straight into the halls of Congress—so too, were the political education classes conducted by the BPP true "public" education. As Stefano Harney and Fred Moten (2013) put it, to study is to engage the fugitive sociality that is a hallmark of the black freedom movement (although not exclusively). Reading power methodologically, we can see that the attack on black self-determination paved the way for the undoing of public education writ large. Conversely, then, the only adequate way to promote public education is to become pro-black and forge solidarity with black communities, people, and movements worldwide. Such solidarity—and *nothing else*—offers the only solid ground for a people created through landlessness and dispossession in the extreme—wanton destruction and uses of the human body, the body of blackness. As Ture reminded his audience, having taken up residence and study in Guinea, from where he sent his message back to the U.S. in 1969, "All of these experiences and lessons have taught us that we must look only to *each other* in finding the solution of our problems—our solution cannot be found within America, even though those of us who live in the United States may remain there physically" (2007, 176). While the land question necessarily looks very different in Chicago, New Orleans, and Detroit than it does in Guinea-Bissau, the problem of dispossession is really a matter of degree and not of kind, once again: the body of blackness is dispossessed of its humanity all across the globe and *that* factor above all else is what both sutures and ruptures solidarity.

Third, given the ground we have explored here, from Cabral and Freire, corresponding with the Pan-African tradition, we can now see that anti-intellectualism, the tenor of our times, is more properly understood to be the fear of praxis. Moreover, anti-intellectualism is thus a central tenet, or crucial modality, of antiblack violence. As

such, anti-intellectualism is not only antiblack, but it is counter-revolutionary.

Study!

## Notes

- 1 Jones was speaking on the Dan Le Batard Show on ESPN radio. His comments were later posted on YouTube on April 28, 2014 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6bLKe9-Mto>.
- 2 See webpage [http://graphics.chicagotribune.com/school\\_utilization/](http://graphics.chicagotribune.com/school_utilization/)
- 3 <http://cureviolence.org/resources/the-interrupters/>.
- 4 *Illinois v. Wardlow* 529 U.S. 119 (2000).
- 5 *Dred Scott v. Sandford* 60 U.S. 393 (1857). <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=29&page=transcript>.

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