



starting
points

People and Technique

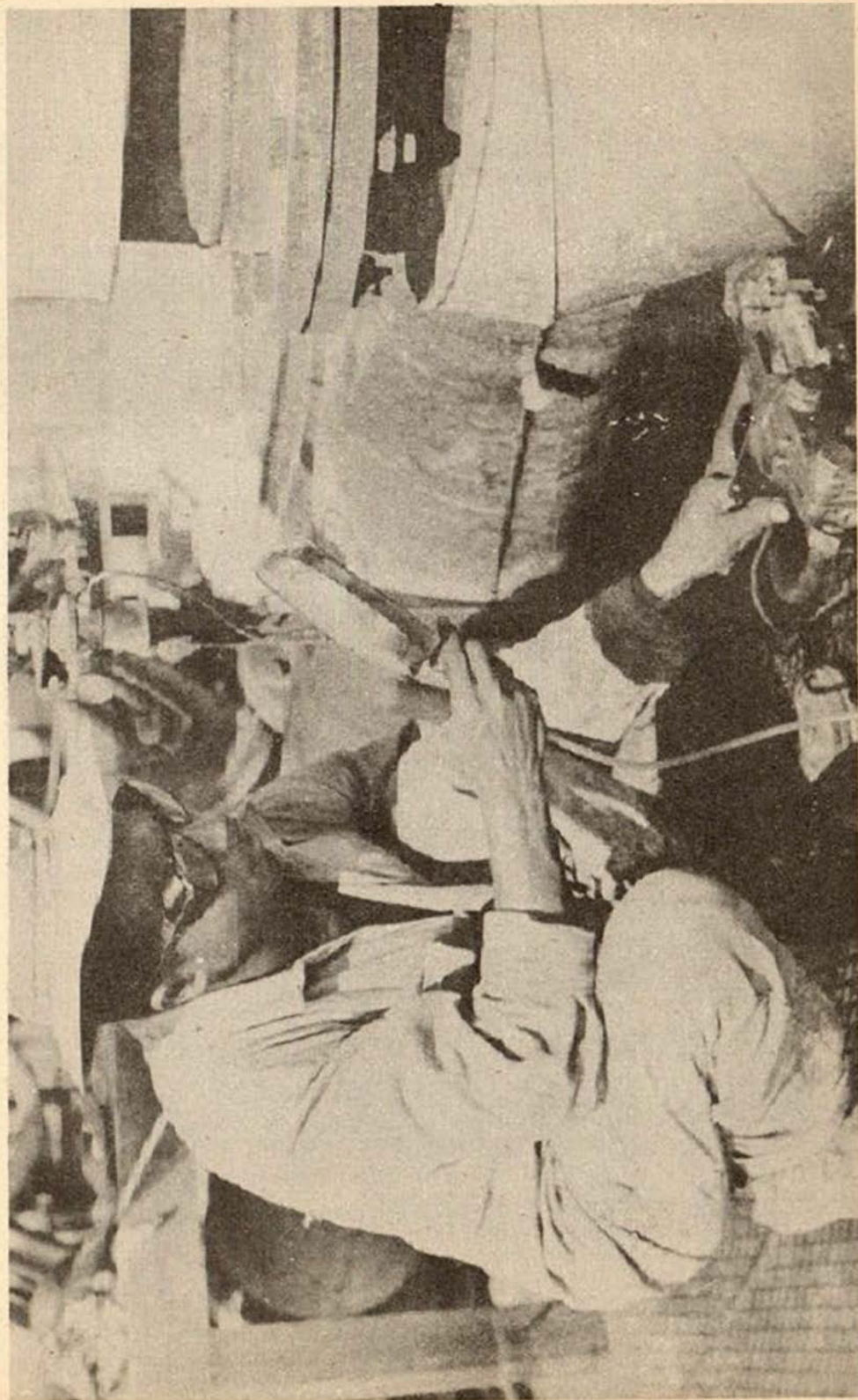
Louis Behanzin

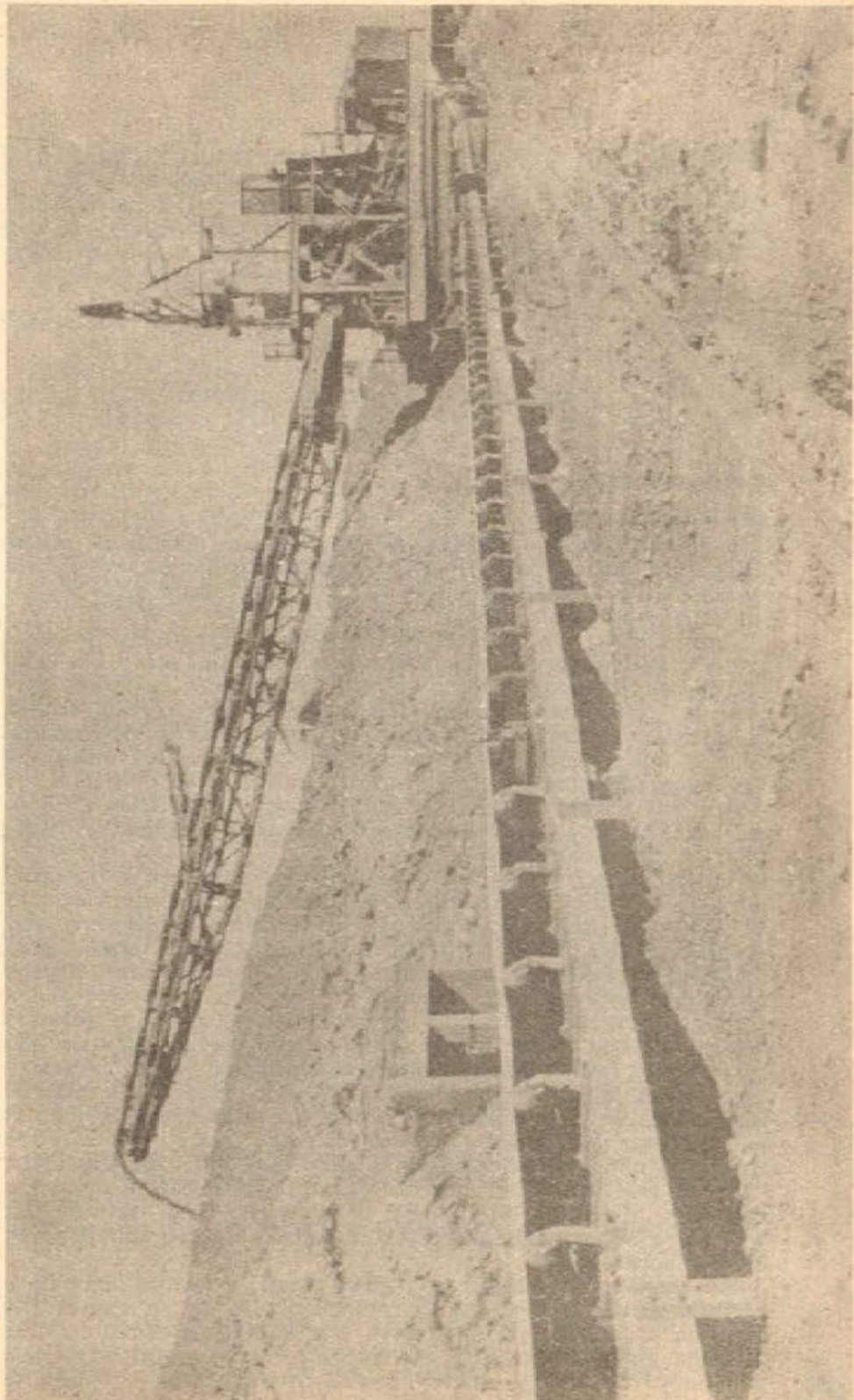
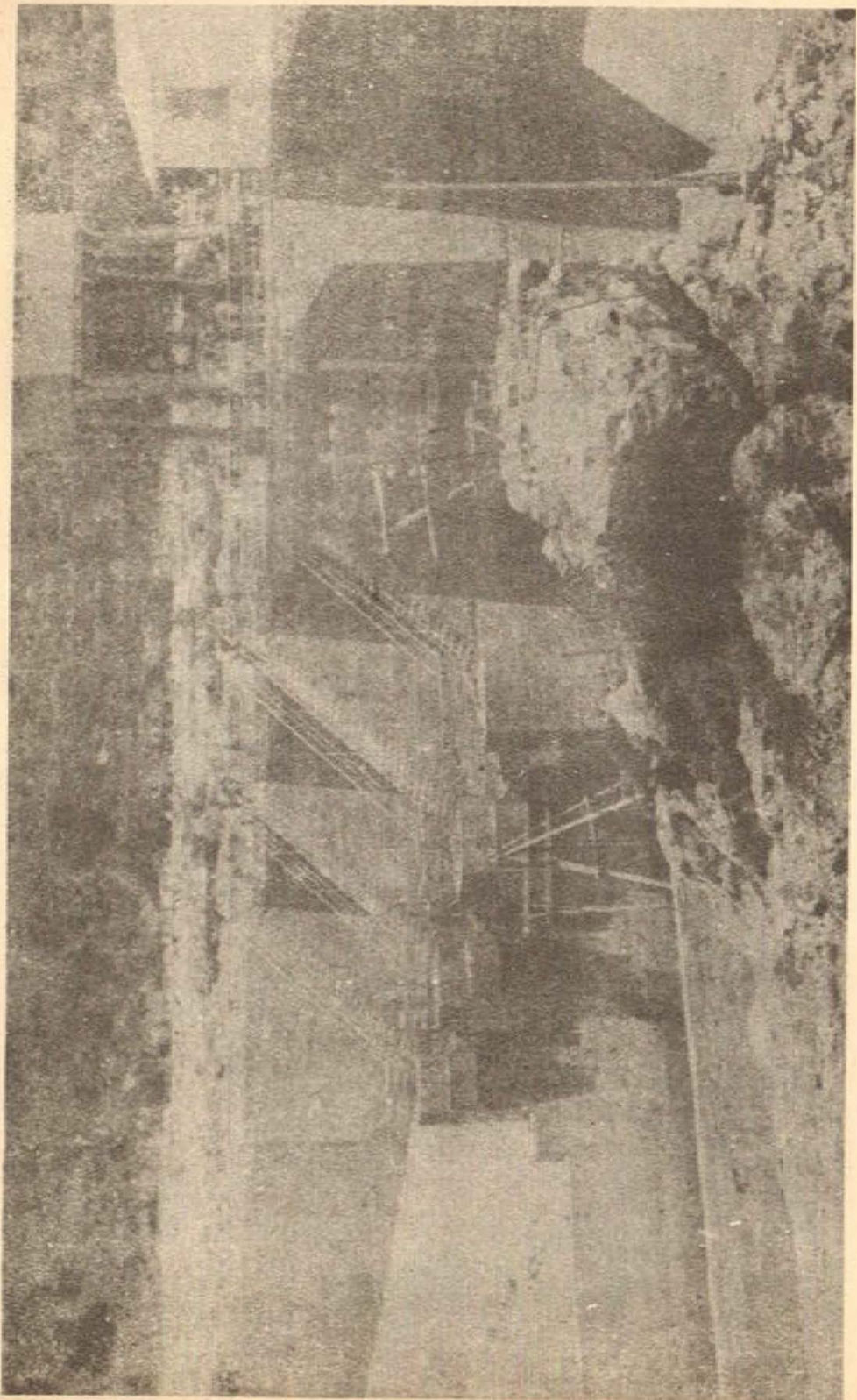
Guinea, the only African country that said NO to the referendum imposed by French colonialism on its possessions, mobilizes and maintains alert its people's militias to say NO to the imperialist aggressor, and arms its technical, political and administrative cadres ideologically and culturally to say NO to cultural colonialism and the intellectuals who make a show of their Africanism, but play the game of their foreign bosses.

In foreign universities, many Guinean students are receiving technical and scientific knowledge to collaborate in the structuring that will permit the economic development of their country.

Each summer the PDG organizes a seminar for returnees from foreign universities, in which the principal political and administrative leaders of Guinea participate.

On this occasion Tricontinental publishes the remarks made at the 1970 seminar by Louis Behanzin, Secretary of State for Ideology, who was in charge of planning and initiating the educational reform that became general middle-level education in the Centers of Revolutionary Education (CER), where the basic content of general culture is mixed with Marxist theory and practice in the curriculum.





Culture and Action

Focus of the Subject

ALL HUMAN ACTION — whether it transforms or dominates nature, or destroys certain social relations and transforms society — is a cultural act, a manifestation of culture at the same time that it acts as a generator of culture.

That culture is a product of the people through the work of creating their material life and the organization of social life is an established truth on which we will not dwell. Actually, only practical application, the struggles within society to transform it, the activities to improve life, effectively create and develop culture. Now, it is the people who carry out this work and not those who live from the work of others; it is therefore clear that it is the people who create culture, but under specific conditions and situations. The people create culture under conditions and in situations of responsible work.

Culture is not a biological matter but a historic-sociological matter. To affirm that culture is not a biological matter does not in any way signify that any species of animal, including any primate species, in its activities to satisfy its vital needs, automatically creates a culture, although some monkeys often display disturbing behavior and attitudes. No, a certain division and a certain distribution of man's genetic material (man in general) determines that the activities of the human species maintain and recreate life, lead to generation and accumulation "of the necessary facilities and material means" — that is, of the mental and material tools for better maintaining and ultimately recreating this life. Let us start here with genetic material common to the species as the first data and without starting any polemic with the geneticists.

As we said before, we have no intention of debating again the definition of culture, the genesis of knowledge and culture. Nor will there be any debate for the moment with the specialists in genetic epistemology.

Our intention is simpler and more direct: it is to reexamine a cultural sector, to evaluate its components, to try to analyze the function of culture, to see what can inhibit or stimulate this function, given the fact that the recognized active agent of all this is clearly the people, under normal circumstances, or an elite

under abnormal circumstances. In the course of this exposition we will touch on problems that affect the genesis of culture only to the extent required for lucid presentation. What we will stress are the components of the cultural sector, particularly those responsible for a certain type of activity, activity leading to scientific and technical progress: this is our focus.

The Cultural Sector

There is no activity without culture and any nonmutilated culture has its activity. But the culture of a society is not something that belongs, in its totality, to each individual in that society. It is not, as the bourgeois theorist states, "what remains when we have forgotten everything." The culture of a society is a sector, "the cultural sector," which we understand to be the sum of the material and nonmaterial goods created by a specific society as it recreates itself. It is also the sum of social behavior and customs (and individual behavior and customs when typical and not abnormal are social) that characterize every "acculturated" being in it.

Why give this importance to the cultural field?

It is because, first of all, culture engenders certain forms of action, and this action reforms culture so that, in the last analysis it intervenes in the reformation of society. In the second place, a culture which nevertheless is not native to a specific society, culture as a force which exercises its influence far from its origins, can very well influence the activities of this society and even, in the final analysis, mold this society in its own manner.

The area of class struggle extends to the cultural field. We will see some examples of this.

The cultural camp is characterized by its ideological nature (this is its chief characteristic) and by its dynamism, which can vary first of all quantitatively and then qualitatively.

That is to say that a specific cultural sector can be classified by its nature as a reactionary ideology (of man's exploitation of man, or of submission to exploitation) or as a progressive ideology (a liberation ideology), and on the other hand it can be classified by its dynamism as contemplative or active. This gives us four types of cultural sectors:

- a) Reactionary and contemplative culture.
- b) Reactionary and dynamic culture, therefore hegemonic (the current example is what we are obliged to call imperialist culture).
- c) Progressive but contemplative culture which, to tell the truth, because of its degree of contemplation, is not a progressive culture.
- d) Progressive and dynamic culture. This is the culture toward which all the peoples actually committed to the construction of socialism tend.

Our interest lies in analyzing this latter cultural sector and deducing from it the means by which it works and the conditions of its movement. But we are obliged to turn briefly to the question of imperialist bourgeois culture, reactionary and dynamic, which

for many African countries constitutes a real danger. This imperialist cultural camp (reactionary and dynamic) is fundamentally the cultural camp that is ideologically the enemy of that cultural camp which is indispensable to the success of the democratic revolution. We have purposely retained only those characteristics of the cultural camp useful within the limits of this course.

We repeat:

The cultural camp can go beyond its genetic territory, its original social territory, just as another cultural sector can be superimposed on it. The debate on culture, far from being a simple intellectual exercise, is a basic debate, a radical expression of the class struggle. We must ask ourselves whether certain individuals, caught in a reactionary but dynamic cultural camp, in addition to their original culture, do not wind up being influenced in every way by this camp. We must ask ourselves whether certain African intellectuals, who boast of their Africanism but whose concrete behavior betrays this Africanism, are not already persons profoundly influenced by the neocolonialist, imperialist cultural camp, and taken in by it.

On this level, we must analyze closely the problem of relations between the cultural camps, the more so when tremendous development of the mass media and of techniques of psychological conditioning, permit neocolonialist imperialism to extend at its whim its cultural hegemony, and manipulate everything manipulable.

To study this problem we will have to turn first to a very simple example, although comparisons are not always valid.

We admitted that wild animals have their "instinctual area" engendered over the course of and through the work they perform from generation to generation in order to survive. We know that when we capture them, with the objective of making them our helpers, we must place them within our cultural context; not in order for them to become "cultivated" like us but so that they react in accordance with techniques of communication appropriate to our environment; we tame them, we domesticate them — that is, we condition them to the rules of the house, which are cultural rules, and we know that we cannot be the real rulers of these beasts until we have really succeeded in our training efforts.

In the class struggle, in the bosom of human societies, especially in the cultural field, the method is not very different in its intention or in its methodology. Here the only essential difference comes from the fact that the original cultural field of those one wants to capture and domesticate is often superior on the human scale, to those who decide to do the domesticating. That doesn't matter. The fact is that this attempt at domestication through cultural influence exists and that when it occurs with influential individuals in the bosom of the original society, it is the responsible and free future of this society that is compromised.

And neocolonialist imperialism knows how to use this weapon. Neocolonialist imperialism knows how to substitute physical violence and violation with cultural violence and violation, or

cultural drugs designed to tame the number of native agents necessary to achieve a passive attitude on the part of the entire people in the cultural camp, and thus assure the successful fulfillment of the objectives of domination.

When we speak of the culturally ex-colonized, ideologically alienated, we mean not only those trained and domesticated and specifically selected from among the graduates of the universities of the imperialist countries. The recruitment is broader and more varied although the graduates, when they are culturally alienated, are more dangerous because they have a greater mastery of certain cultural instruments of the imperialist power, and are therefore more effective as imperialist agents. But all of them, graduates and others, when they are culturally domesticated by imperialism, act, with a tragically contemptible conviction, as virulent agents of neocolonialism, and serve as a brake against any national cultural revival, as well as against the entire cultural revolution. It is a true drama in which various African nations today provide sorrowful examples. An analysis of the dialectical relationship between culture and action cannot ignore this.

The ground is prepared to touch on what concerns us.

Culture and the Need for Development

Culture is not simple. It is a multidimensional whole with various organic components dialectically related, and in certain moments in the history of a people, it happens that one of these components takes precedence over the others. Culture is ideological philosophy (which gives it the nature of its totality and which directs it), artistic culture, scientific and technical culture, practical culture, behavior, attitude, etc., and we could not reduce it to any of its components without mutilating. But the ideological-philosophical component — that is, the one which dominates all others — appears at all times and in every circumstance, is the basis for the other components. It is at the heart of each course presented in this seminar and is systematically dealt with by the comrade who is the highest leader of the revolution. This is not the place to deal with it, then, and if we do so it is because we cannot speak, write or act in any way without evoking ideology, which always has its place as the guiding principle of the leadership. Nor will we deal with the component of culture known as "art."

We are concerned with an extremely important chapter. We will limit ourselves to culture as science, technique, practical and transformative application. But we have stressed that all cultural components are organically and dialectically related in a way that should never permit us to seriously consider one and ignore the others.

We cannot examine closely the cultural components that interest us without concerning ourselves with another concept which governs them and endows them with the intensity of its dynamic, the human need for achievement — that is, the need for fulfillment, the need for the transformation and domination of nature beyond

present needs; every necessity felt as an obligation, as a vital necessity of life, beyond immediate life, manifests itself in practical and transformative application, not only as a necessity dictated by material, biological and other requirements, but also as a necessity for fulfillment of our nature as man! Everything occurs as if the genetic material responsible for the human species possessed a potential energy for a need to achieve that goes beyond the biological, an energy responsible for the supremacy of our species in our universe. Furthermore, it is with great circumspection that we approach this concept in order not to permit ourselves to move toward a metaphysical idealism. But this fear cannot permit us to turn our backs in cowardly fashion on the evidence that there is this need for achievement which manifests itself here and there in various degrees, so varied that we reach true differences not only quantitatively but also qualitatively.

Let us say that the result of the antagonism between two cultures is more the function of the difference between the intensities of their need for achievement than between the qualities of the cultural material instruments they presently possess. This problem preoccupies all present cultures, and before going any further we are going to see how the bourgeois theoreticians of present-day imperialism handle it. The quotations we will give are taken from a typically popularized text, since the object of the text is to reach the masses it hopes to conquer. We quote:

Why do some nations achieve a rapid development in the field of economic and social expansion, while others remain stagnant or decline?

This question has always fascinated historians.

Why did the Greek city states, and particularly Athens, begin to develop in the 6th century B.C. to the extent that 200 years later, its culture had left an indelible stamp on all the origins of Western civilization? Or, to move to more recent times, why did one part of North America, that colonized by the English, achieve a rapid economic peak while the part colonized originally by the Spanish even though they actually possessed much richer territories there, developed more slowly until recent times?

Why did Japan, as compared to China, achieve greater economic progress in the 19th century? What is the generating force of economic progress and modernization? What is its nature, its origin?

And our professor replies:

Psychologists have made an unexpected contribution to this enigma. . . They work in laboratories to isolate what we might call, for convenience, a certain type of "mental virus," that is a certain comparatively rare vision which, when it manifests itself in an individual, causes him to behave in a particularly energetic fashion. . . The mental virus in question was given the curious name of N. Ach. (abbreviation for "Need for Achievement").

And our professor studies various communities contaminated by the "mental virus of the Need for Achievement" and concludes: "The characteristic of all these communities is the intense feeling,

based on their religion, that they are superior to other human groups that surround them and that, in one way or another, they hold the key to salvation, not only for themselves but for the whole of humanity as well. . ." And further on, since we can never leave aside ideology, our professor completes his analysis:

In the present century, the communists have been able to inculcate their militants very strongly with these psychological convictions and it is therefore not surprising to see that the percentage of the contamination by the N. Ach. factor has increased in the literature of Russia and Continental China since the communist revolutions in those countries. It is truly paradoxical that the communists have been able to set in motion a rapid economic growth in a country such as Russia, not as is believed because of socialism, but rather because of its fanatic conviction of its own superiority. This means that here, as in other places, a people's conviction of its own superiority has caused the propagation of the virus N. Ach. which is more directly responsible for the accelerated rate of economic growth than is the socialist nature of the organizational system.

From this long quotation, we retain the idea that "the need for achievement" takes precedence over the material instrument of achievement since it is what creates the instrument; that this "need for achievement" is of an ideological nature and can be common to an ideology of slavery and mystification and an ideology of liberation. We also note the comical naiveté with which our doctor in social psychology distinguishes the fanaticism responsible for the socialists' need for achievement from the nobility of conviction responsible for the "normal person's" need for achievement. But we merely observe this in passing, each one must carry out his task with conviction. That the words of this author are not accompanied by any text of scientific analysis and are not based on any group of facts does not surprise us either. For the author it is a question of succeeding in attracting the alienated intellectuals fascinated by the imperialist culture of neocolonialism, and not in looking for understanding and explanation. What is important to us is to be aware that imperialism knows the decisive role that the need for achievement plays and is convinced that the day when this need becomes the need of the majority of the dominated peoples, it will be the end of imperialism.

But this need does not take possession of people by magic; the process that gives this potential its kinetic and its development is a historic process that unfolds under certain determined conditions and circumstances.

We already know how within a given social order, subject to the limits of the evolution of history, class consciousness is born among the exploited in the course of their struggles against the exploiters: first through resistance, then through offensive and revolutionary acts. We know how after the next to last great historic revolution, the bourgeois revolution, individuals arose, managers of great enterprises who later would give birth to the present gentlemen of imperialist technocracy; and we know to what point the famous "need for achievement" pushes them, and

at what price! We also know that with the help of propaganda, thanks to that super need for achievement, imperialism subjugates the leaders of certain African countries to a point where, without fear of the tragicomic, those folks gravely meet to study the measures to be taken to create, in the bosom of the socialism they proclaim, "heads of modern private enterprises." Historic progress requires us to live through a particular situation. The bourgeoisie took advantage of feudalism in a relatively easy way due to the limits of the development of productive forces, and to the feeble dynamism and "contemplative" character of feudal culture, although on the other hand it was cynically brutal in its enslaving nature; whereas today in their revolutionary struggle, the people face a bourgeoisie of owners or profiteers of a particularly enterprising imperialist culture, which dialectically imposes on the liberating revolution a still more enterprising dynamism.

The determination of socialism to overthrow capitalism in the area of the "need for achievement" is classified by our professor as fanaticism.

It is clear then that in social practice, in practical application in the transformation of nature, nothing is or will have been accomplished until we feel, within us, this need for development and self-improvement. The ideological content, conditions and the organizational circumstances in which this need must arise will be created by the party; it is the militant will of the leadership cadres that must propagate this need. The collective study of the means of this propagation is one of the points that interests us.

The Bases for the Propagation of Our Need for Achievement and Development

The precondition for the creation and propagation of our need for achievement, our need for development, is our socialist conscience. It is not that socialism is a fetish that can transform everything it touches; rather it is our deliberate choice of the people's liberating revolution, of the people's global cultural development, for progress, against all exploitation of man by man or of a people by another people, against all submission, against obscurantism and irrationality, it is this totality of options freely taken that we call Socialism; it is we who make socialism what it is and not the other way round; to say that the precondition of socialist conscience is the propagation of the need for development, is to say that the precondition is the lucid and meaningful recognition of the need for achievement to the point that we would have to be sick to allow ourselves to be impeded from realizing it. It is first of all, then, a question of arriving at the conviction that we really have opted — that is, that we are in perfect agreement with the principles of the party; and once this conviction is acquired, everything becomes clear and we are affected by the "virus" of the need for achievement, the ideology of invincibility that frightens the enemy, who, understanding nothing, calls it fanaticism. It is fanaticism then, the fanaticism of the revolution, and when it possesses us we are prepared to snatch the fire from Lucifer and

use it in exchange — however little we may utilize the method that such an act requires — for revolutionary technology.

Let us presume we have achieved this preliminary condition of our absolute sincerity as energetic members of the party, and the only difficulties we face are technical.

That the people of Guinea, organized in the PDG, feel the profound need for achievement, development and self-development, there is the testimony of their vote on September 28, 1958, and all that has taken place since. One concrete example we can offer of one of our federations, in Yomou, demonstrates sufficiently the impatient desire of the masses to be able to achieve. This year the valiant people of Yomou proceeded to construct a bridge across the river Ule, undertaking, in collaboration with an engineer, the functions of workers, foremen, and in critical cases, in which methods had to be rectified, that of student engineers. And in our surprise at the wisdom of the people, we realized that we ourselves still have not totally converted ourselves to socialism, which postulates the inexhaustible genius of the people. Their ingenuity has been proved, but, by what technique can we mobilize the transforming and creative genius of the masses that is presently paralyzed? The genius of an individual, however exceptional, is nothing compared to the immeasurable genius of the people and it is that genius that is revealed through inventive and practical application. It is therefore necessary to initiate this practice everywhere.

For decades and in some cases for centuries, the exploiting powers that dominated Africa paralyzed the genius of the African peoples, and although the PDG provides us with arms and shows us the way, we have still been unable to liberate and make completely operative the immense genius of the people of Guinea. We have gathered here to determine methods of itemizing our needs in certain areas and how to meet them. It is certain that in science, technology and practical application, our people are perfectly capable of rapidly catching up with the best, then surpassing them and finally helping them advance. In the cultural and artistic field they have proved this adequately. How have they done this? They have done it because today in Guinea there exist some 10 000 peoples' academies of the arts (dramatic arts, choreography, music, etc.) which are functioning well and which cover as many active base committees devoted to a true search, and to applying the results of their search; while in the field of natural and technical sciences there is no such investigation. We know well that we have our 2000 Centers of Revolutionary Study (CER), first, second, third and fourth cycles, but their mere existence calls for an academy of applied popular sciences for each Local Revolutionary Power (PRL) which assembles all accumulated traditional experience, cultural capital that has been freed of all that is irrational, all that is inhibiting, in order that science and technology can be immediately translated into highly efficient practical application. These people's academies will have as their responsibility, among other things, aid to the CERs while receiving from the latter all that they have been able to master in science and modern technology.

We have encountered skeptics whom we have not always been able to convince of the truth of the fact that the people are a wise man with many heads and always solve well-formulated problems, however difficult they may be; that the people even have a genius for wisdom since they bring together elements of all individual wisdom. These skeptics have not been convinced but have felt themselves strongly challenged when we called their attention to this proven and actual fact that people who were thought to be completely defeated have invented and successfully used arms that have neutralized the effects of the death machines invented by famous men (with or without reason) for the strongest forces in the world and have severely punished the enemy's arrogance. Problems of the utmost importance have been raised and the people, in their search for adequate solutions, have drawn on their ingenuity. Thus it is our duty to conceptualize the problems and state them well — that is, to select them in terms of their interest to the people and organize them methodically in terms of priorities and available energies.

We do not pretend to exhaust here the areas in which problems arise which up to now have an evident interest for the people, but we will nevertheless mention some.

Speaking of domination, of transformation and of the utilization of nature, how can we not mention first in Guinea, the West African water tower, the problem of water as a potential source of energy, as an indispensable necessity for the survival of man, of animals and of plant life, as a source of transportation but also as a devastating enemy, depending on whether the people dominate it or whether they are dominated by it. All the objective conditions exist in Guinea for it to be not a country with hydroelectric resources but a hydroelectrified country; and if this is not the case, we must consider this situation to be abnormal, and we must normalize it, since the fundamental subjective conditions also exist for the presence of the PDG as it is and for what it is. If despite the fulfillment of all the fundamental subjective conditions, of the determination of the people organized in one strong party forged by the revolution, Guinea is not a hydroelectrified country, it is because the problem has not been presented by us as it should be and at the rank-and-file level where its reality is evident.

The control of the water supply is imperative and its fulfillment demands of us a culture that is perfectly within our possibility at the same time that this fulfillment constitutes a fertile source of culture for us. There is no rural village in Guinea where certain hydraulic projects, ably organized by the people, have not improved the material and cultural life.

A second area in which culture and action of the people can immediately result in qualitative achievements and practical application which in itself will insure important and permanent development, is that of applied biology and all the transformations to which it gives rise. We know that biology at the plant level requires solar energy, water, earth; and animal biology is to a large extent an offshoot of plant biology. We then recognize that our intertropical zone, Guinea's entity, enjoys an exceptional privilege with respect

to biological resources, a privilege which, as such, is ambivalent in its impetus to action; that is, because of the facilities that it offers, this privilege can become a brake to action if the ideology of accomplishment does not intervene, but if the consciousness of development which must characterize each revolutionary intervenes, it offers automatically the means for great achievement. We must also observe that, contrary to the hydroelectric question that we considered earlier, in various areas of biological data, we have accumulated in Africa a rich experience but one that unfortunately has remained unexploited and sometimes even unexplored. The immense natural privilege we enjoy on the level of chlorophyllic assimilation, of photosynthesis, the mass of experience that our people have in plant knowledge, obliges us to hold in the biological field and on a world plane, a scientific penetration and a decisive productivity. Our ambition must be at this level and it must be achieved at whatever cost, and if this determination is fanaticism, we must as revolutionaries accept this fanaticism.

We know very well that the people are not transformed, that they transform themselves, but we say that because of the concrete role we play in the hearts of the people, because of the mass of information we have, when we do not lay out — not for the people but with the people — the true problems that concern them, then we represent an obstacle to their progress.

These two examples indicate how the areas of our possible activities are determined by the conjunction of our needs to be satisfied and the existence of raw materials to transform. We then understand how unnecessary it is to present a complete list of these areas, given the immensity and variety of Guinea's natural resources and the level that the PDG gives to the need for achievement, that the people must feel imperatively.

The immensity of the effort we must make in the area of culture applied to action is in direct relation to the abundance of natural resources we possess and we ignore this point at our peril. We must not ignore the fact that the countries that are poor in natural resources but rich with respect to their scientific and technological cultural component go all over the world in search of natural resources which they take, realizing the benefits that the transformation of these resources will provide for them. We are even witness to that practice on the part of certain technical and industrial powers which, although they possess the necessary natural resources as raw materials for their industry, decide to conserve them unexploited and use the enormous means that their economic power gives them to extract and exhaust those same raw materials in other places, thus keeping their own natural resources as a necessary future reserve. We can thus imagine the political error we would be committing if we were not to accumulate the necessary scientific and technical culture to transform our natural resources into developed goods that we ourselves produce, in addition to the agreements that permit us to acquire abroad certain technical equipment necessary for such processing. But before this technical equipment, before these capital goods, even more than this equipment and this capital, comes the will to achieve and once we have acquired socialist

science, we cannot fail to be motivated by the need for achievement, which is one of the characteristic features of socialism.

One day, a spokesman from a technically and industrially advanced country, intoxicated with the scientific and technical culture that is the pride of these countries, affirmed with arrogance: "I don't care about owning natural resources; I know that the locomotive engine that I manufacture with raw materials taken from other places is worth a million times more than the iron ore contained in the weight of the iron of that engine" and we answered him: "You are on the wrong track, because the value that you attach to this iron ore derives from a potential scientific cultural energy common to all peoples and which at any moment can be converted into a kinetic cultural energy among some when the society follows the elite line, among practically the entire people when the political regime is revolutionary and follows a mass line. Very well, this phenomenon of revolutionizing society is operating in the technically backward countries which at the same time hold the majority of natural resources. This is precisely Guinea's case, where the party follows its revolutionary ideology in all its structure, within which this very cultural, scientific and technological potential of the people must be born.

Resolutely and methodically, we must arm ourselves and the people with the mental weapons necessary for this change.

Now is the time to make ourselves familiar, everywhere and everyone, with certain material and mental tools. We know that certain peasant and artisan comrades are suffocating because they are unable to give free rein to their ingenuity. Moreover, since the nation's independence, certain peasants have invented machinery whose success and complexity indicates sufficiently the high technical cultural level the people of Guinea would have reached today if they had not suffered colonial hindrances for decades. Moreover, there is nothing surprising in the fact that the continent that initiated the world to working in iron should have given birth to those peasant inventors. But recalling this first historic departure is of interest now only as a measure of our responsibility in the present and future.

We are responsible for the fact that today in our countryside not even the simplest machine is used: the water from our wells we get by lowering a pail directly, although the use of a pulley or a crane would give us much more. We use neither winch, nor lever nor hydraulic wheel. We hardly use carts and wagons and we fail to replace, wherever possible, muscular human energy with that of draft animals, of the mule which can be perfectly adapted, at least in Upper Guinea, Middle Guinea, and in certain parts of Forestal and Coastal Guinea. An example with the daba: a good industrious worker can plow only a hectare and a half per year; with a plough yoked with a pair of oxen or even with one (this is possible as the Bentis CER demonstrated in 1967-68) the same peasant can plow 15 hectares — that is, ten times what he can do with the daba. Even if the combined utilization of simple machinery and draft animals does not multiply the peasant's yield tenfold in all cases, we will be within a totally reasonable estimate if we say

that in overall productive activities of people in the rural zone, the judicious utilization of these means would double or triple their yield and, consequently, total production.

If we add the improvement which we would, by other means, introduce in agriculture through the better use of applied biology and chemistry which could multiply by three or five times our actual average yield per hectare of distinct agriculture products, there is no doubt that a national application of a culture that we can easily have, a correct application of such a culture in our daily activities, in the daily activities of the people, would surely increase quintuple our overall production, without mentioning the decisive contribution our modern industries make to the happiness of the people.

It must be added that such a productive policy as it becomes more powerful, with the cultural support it receives, will introduce into the bosom of the people a still more profound and potent culture which, in a later phase, will have the effect of broadening the action. Today we have all the weapons to initiate such a process.

In the rural zone, let us take a specific rank-and-file committee in which Local Revolutionary Power, created by the party, is in fact organized. Then let us take a government situated at the territorial level of the rank-and-file committee, which, within the framework of the PDG, has absolute powers. Let us take a government whose level of rational structure leaves nothing to envy any other government and which, moreover, has the exceptional advantage of being organically tied up with the overall administrative population. Here there is no delegation of power or duties: people, party and state are organically mixed. In fact we find ourselves faced with the ideal biological-political-economic and cultural complex for communicating to the collective conscience, the movement that must allow it to achieve the particular victories over nature that the satisfaction of the people's needs requires.

Revolutionary consciousness, progressive consciousness, when it is not also oriented toward physical nature in order to analyze it, know it, change it and make it ours instead of hostile, make it help the people; revolutionary consciousness that does not act in this manner, then behaves like an energy that could not spark any motor, or else a motor that is functioning in a void. In any case, it is through its movement that consciousness is manifested, which leads us to affirm that the revolution is not only conscious movement but also and above all, consciousness in movement. It is in the long run and by means of this movement of consciousness that it is formed and developed.

Through the party's program, the comrade Secretary-General of the PDG had the opportunity to show that the class struggle contains, as a facet of struggle, the fighting front that we maintain to dominate nature. If we emphasize this it is because the Secretary-General's reports demand of each of us that we face the problem, that we try to understand it, that we meditate and that we apply the solutions indicated.

In the class struggle, which we understand better through the PDG program, the boss uses his domination so that he produces,

Through the slave who processes goods, the instrument which together with the slave, constitutes for the boss his productive forces, which produce more and more profits as the slave transforms the goods for the boss and toward this end is reified through this activity. But it is also through this activity, as a demonstration of the technical mastery of the slave over nature, which is after all the master of the boss's existence since apart from nature there is no existence, it is through this activity that the consciousness is born and develops which forms and radicalizes in the slave the antagonism which questions the existence of the boss as such. Thus it is essentially productive activity that is fundamental to the "boss and slave" couple; it is productive activity that cements the antagonism which rules this couple; it is productive activity which transforms and dominates nature that, in each of the antagonistic classes, throughout history, provides the best arms for the struggle, and particularly the will to struggle. Thus it science and technology are universal, it is class consciousness that moves them, leads them, guides them.

"The sciences can be useful in three ways. They are oriented according to the ideology of whoever has them, of whoever teaches them, of whoever applies them." This is the theme for development that the party proposes this year to the candidates for the bachelor's degree.

Science and technology, in their creations as well as in their utilization are the heart of the revolution.

We could not speak indefinitely of consciousness in motion if we left our agricultural technology where it is. If we left our soil to become barren and eroded by the three to five meters of rain that fall annually, instead of forcing it to work for us.

The effort to construct hydroelectric dams, fulfilled by the people through their state, is gigantic; but precisely this concentrated force must be complemented at the level of each collectivity with a multitude of small scale actions, possible in each place, actions whose cumulative effect surpasses in importance works of great magnitude. The challenge that our abundant vegetation offers and the violence of our rains are additional factors that motivate our intervention with techniques that provide the precise response: it is in our country where this abundant vegetation exists, it is in our country where this heavy rainfall occurs, it is in our environment and by us that the elements thus unleashed must be tamed and made to serve us, and, in the light of logic, and above all of revolutionary consciousness, to expect solutions from outside is not justifiable. The only correct position is to make foreign solutions serve as a support for the authentic and original solutions we provide, and to turn foreign solutions into our solutions, in both their application and their further development when we force them to respond to our needs.

Zeus was right to have Prometheus chained by Hephaestus, since he remains Zeus only as long as the people fail to dominate the fire of the sky. In the same way the colonial powers were correct throughout colonial domination to try to destroy in us every initiative for technical progress, whether by corruption, substituting

a few consumer products for us to finish, whether by cleverness, intimidation or savage repression. A conscious people, a country of "engineers" are not dominated, and every conscious people transform itself into a people of engineers. The PDG knows this and, since national independence, has made the Guinean school the home of science, of technology and of practical application. And this determination to immediately convert all knowledge into know-how and into action constitutes an important chapter in the course of ideological formation. There is nothing surprising in the fact that this year our young candidates for the first part of the bachelor's degree had to prove in their ideological dissertation, that it was not a question of knowing everything and being incapable of putting into practice what one knows. It is a question of being able to carry out what one knows, however little one knows.

The party therefore takes care to methodically form our youth, in our Centers of Revolutionary Education, in the work of constructing the new society, which will more and more insure the capacity to place the forces drawn from nature at the service of an increasingly integral democracy. But the CER is not isolated, it is organically immersed in and allied with the totality of the national working population, whose every technical advance instantly provides a super technical advance within the CER; super advance because it is taken and improved by the CER which, as the demographic seed-bed and the cultural and revolutionary sources of the nation in change, are in the best position to carry out their historic role.

It is therefore very important that the entire population engage with ardor in the battle for the improvement of technology, the invention of other techniques, scientific experimentation, rationalization of productive work.

To stress this need for generalized technical and scientific activities, the party, in addition to the many measures it has already taken, has created two other sections, one of scientific investigations and the other of ideology of tele-teaching and literacy education. The first section is to promote, organize and control research in pure and applied sciences at the level of each productive unit, each institute, each establishment and each service. Almost one thousand rural base committees of the PRL together with CERs in the second, third and fourth cycles amounting to more than 90% of the active population, constitute potentially, through all their activities, the most significant productive units and are therefore the objects of special attention by the research section which has broken with the academicism and elitism characteristic of such institutions in other regimes. As for the second section, it is in charge of all continuing, theoretical and practical popular education, and thus has to try to make of each base committee, of each production unit committee, a center of adult revolutionary education — that is, to transform the entire nation into "a university of the masses" within which each one of us is both teacher and student, within which there is a permanent flow of communication of knowledge and know-how in accord with the decisions concerning the socialist cultural revolution issued by

the party on August 2, 1968, in Kankan.

Right here we recall that the party has always taught that any divorce between our actions and the revolutionary positions we take is to be avoided, that one must live the revolution and not make dissertations about it. This called to mind Lenin's phrase that communism is the Soviets plus electrification. Thus, in a concrete way, it is up to us to make sure that in Guinea socialism is, in each base committee, a PRL which, having acquired full revolutionary consciousness, becomes increasingly a politechnical producer and at the same time a multifaceted apprentice, a multifaceted engineer, doctor, administrator, professor, researcher. And if such a conviction seems fanatical to anyone, it is only the fanaticism of the democratic revolution.

We must not forget the important report of the Secretary-General of the Party on September 14, 1958, at the National Conference of the PDG: "Colonialization has always been and certainly can not be anything but an arbitrary fact owing to the technical and military superiority of the imperialist regime." And the party has determined to make not only such domination but even the thought of it impossible for all time.

Ten years later, with the graduation of the first class from the Politechnic Institute of Conakry (Lenin class) the chief leader of the revolution added:

It is because it has a strong hold on science and technology that imperialism is what it is. Today, through science and technology neocolonialism is trying to dominate anew the peoples recently liberated from the colonial yoke.

Technology, that material resource, carries increasingly greater weight over people's destinies than does capital. The imperialists, the neocolonialists know this, are convinced of this. Yesterday, the unfortunate colonized peoples, alienated by colonial oppression, were victims, above all, of the colonizer's arrogant and peremptory word; today the defeatist elements that still exist within the proletarian nations are mortal victims of the technology utilized by imperialism. They are overwhelmed by this scientific theory, overcome by imperialism's technical achievements and they conclude that they must surrender their arms and kneel down before imperialism.

No! The conscious, revolutionary struggle of the peoples can vanquish imperialism!

If it is true science and technology constitute the resources that create all other means of production, there is, above science and technology, the technique of the revolution. It arms the people, organizes them, restores to them their science and technology which develops beyond all limits, no longer to enslave but rather to serve the people.

We do not know whether it is of revolutionary benefit to allude to the skepticism of certain people concerning our ability to achieve technical equality with the best of those who already find our orbit too small for their scientific activities. A basic axiom never contradicted by historic fact, proves that men are equally capable of technical advancement and that only the

political, economic and social conditions in which they find themselves determine the importance and speed of this advance.

We know of people who today explore interplanetary space and thus surpass provisionally the scientific and technical level, other people who were already enjoying a quite advanced civilization at a time when they were still living in trees or caves like our animal forebears, and if we recall the irrational skepticism of some people, it is because the authenticated existence of alienated thought obliges us never to overlook psychiatric theory. Here also the party was right to invite the young candidates for the first part of the bachelor's degree for the 1970 session to think about this truth that the comrade Secretary-General of the PDG taught us: "Ability is not given, it is won, since all knowledge is accessible to anyone, provided he has the best conditions for acquiring it."

The best conditions. A mechanistic and superficial analysis can suggest that wanting to speed up scientific and technical progress through motivations other than biological is idealism. We answer that such necessities, despite being necessary motivations for progress, do not occupy a predominant position on the scale of motivations except during a well-defined period in humanity's infancy, and moreover have never been sufficient. Creatures of culture since ancient times and no longer natural creatures, man's evolution continues by means of culture, and we wonder whether the biological modifications that the species has experienced have not become biocultural modifications. In every case, it is in cultural terms that man more frequently tends to state his vital problems. The elemental biological necessities are the same for all, the technical advance that can satisfy them has not been the same everywhere — that is to say, this progress in itself creates new necessities that require additional advances for their satisfaction. Thus culture becomes more and more dominant; in other words, the people who create and will continue to create their culture are at the same time a product of it. This is why we insist that the people, with their permanent but not constant development, create and recreate themselves endlessly. This is why the cultural camp is not culturally closed — that is, the problems the people raise are not always resolved at once. But if the problems are well presented, the people know how to extend and deepen their cultural experience so that such problems can then be resolved. One example is illustrative; the tremendous scientific and technical progress of the imperialist powers who use it to become more imperialist — that is, to dominate the peoples more astutely. This tremendous progress which hypnotizes and paralyzes many governments of neocolonial countries and increases in them the spirit of servility in the face of domination, presents a grave problem for all the peoples committed to revolution. Each day, contemporary history shows how, by developing its culture, the people find solutions to these problems that put imperialism on the defensive. Is it necessary to add that one of the most brilliant demonstrations is the action of the heroic people of Viet Nam?

The best conditions! But it is not enough to raise their technological level by providing each village with a new machine,

although this is useful and necessary in some cases. To strengthen the technical-cultural base of the village, there must be in each of the town's activities, a rationalized use of time, of space and of material, for the optimum yield of efforts. The machine, a cultural tool, must be adopted by the entire culture to give its maximum effect. We wonder if perhaps this is not the time and place to denounce the misuse which shortens the life of the machines and other implements which we do not yet produce, and which we import with foreign exchange for cash, to assure our development. And when we say "shorten the life" we have to have the courage to recognize that we are engaged in systematic destruction. The intelligent utilization of each foreign machine we acquire, beyond the use for which it has been made, can give us a knowledge of its mechanism and place us in an intellectual position, if not of improving it, of at least reproducing it when we have the material resources. We evidence good technical understanding when we make an automobile run 20 000 kilometers more than its manufacturer envisioned, without making a new motor. One of the tasks of PRL and the production unit committees is to see that the peasant and worker comrades acquire the know-how that permits them to be better operators than those who manufactured the implements they are using.

Speaking of culture and action, this course must have considered the entire cultural area in order to study the action indicated. Out of prejudice, we have chosen to be partial and to limit ourselves to certain components of culture, among the many responsible for technical progress.

Thus, this whole report appears to be polemic. In fact it is a polemic, a discussion among ourselves to destroy in us every tendency to reduce the factor of technical progress to the minimum, to evaluate it and to describe the quality of productive practice. But this polemic does not seek to place technology above everything else, but rather to view it as one of nature's components. Moreover, all technology is part of a theory to which it is dialectically linked, so that it is really a question of "theory-technology" and "technology-practice"; these cannot be isolated from the totality of mental tools and materials, attitudes and behavior, of opinions, etc., that constitute culture. All the courses given here now and in the future, will demonstrate increasingly that the entire cultural field must be taken into consideration in order to successfully guide a social action in all its implications. Once more we return to the problem of the base of cultural sustenance, which must be broad enough to insure movement without threatening equilibrium. Down to the hamlet level, we will have to be concerned with cultural components as varied as:

- a) Philosophy-ideology, base and guide for all the rest.
- b) Art, which stimulates and develops all our sensitivity at the same time that it holds face to face with other areas, the most effective role in the communication of knowledge.
- c) The written word, whose importance we will discuss further on.
- d) Mathematics as a universal auxiliary mental instrument,

which each one of us without exception must consciously learn.
e) The experimental sciences and all the techniques that emanate from them.

Contemplated theoretically in this fashion, such a program appears utopian. In reality this is not so. Not to place things within the possibility of fulfillment would be unrealistic, "all knowledge is accessible to any one who has the best conditions to acquire it." We have stated this before and the best conditions created by the PDG come from Local Revolutionary Power.

The proper functioning of PRL is a prelude to the rapid explosion of the people into a technical civilization guided by a high level of revolutionary consciousness.

Despite everything, alongside the basic condition that constitutes the proper functioning of PRL, we must point out that an important secondary consideration is the people's domination of the written word. And this secondary condition is at the same time one of the conditions necessary, not only for the people's effective conduct in the socialist cultural revolution, but also in the true exercise of democracy by the people — that is, of power and of all powers. Concretely, our civilization is presently in a preponderantly oral stage, which does not mean that our African civilization has as a fundamental characteristic oral communication and discussion, as some African authors state. The fact that this historic situation of oral communication constitutes a serious obstacle to the progress of the revolution, is something we must recognize. Worse than obstacle, it is a danger for the revolution when it reaches a certain level in which all further development requires written thought, measurement, quantification of time, space, social relations, precision and fidelity in the transmission of information, messages, etc. A comrade here has lamented our tendency to be vague in our estimates; he noted that when we speak of an object it seldom occurs to us to say that it is such a size, weighs so much, but instead we say "it's as big as this, as that." It seems to us that the general lack of practice in writing is responsible for this. Actually it is not only the ordinary method for communication, it is also used for the mathematics necessary for any quantification and for all true appraisal of relationships. There are those who will tell us that in our country the illiterates are not the only ones who are imprecise, and that, therefore, our explanation is false. We will reply that the great majority of the people are not yet literate enough to write down their thoughts. The cultural environment (created by the people) in which we all live, is that of predominantly oral communication and therefore our reactions, our behavior, our spontaneous cultural manifestations in this area are preponderantly imprecise. Thus those of us who consider ourselves "educated" are generally illiterate. We will be truly literate the day we succeed in eradicating the people's illiteracy. Another danger for the revolution in illiteracy, is the distortion it causes in information. Everyone knows that in the class struggle which opposes revolution to counterrevolution, the revolution has a greater necessity for disseminating truth, circulating official communications in a form that is true to the

original. And we know how a twisted truth, a distorted report can become a countertruth, a counterreport and can unleash actions and behavior favorable to the counterrevolution. And rare are the oral transmissions (those not transcribed) that are free of distortion. And since the action follows information, there is the danger of initiating a distorted action. When it is necessary that the information be extensively disseminated, as in the case of messages from the party to the people, which must reach every sector of the people, distortion and its consequences can reach dangerous proportions. We insist on this, since in the class struggle, the soldiers of the revolution are the entire people and it is they who must be correctly informed and the content of this information must maintain its revolutionary exactitude — that is, it must place facts in the precise context that explains them as elements of a process in which revolutionary action must take place, to give at the same time, the data and lines of revolutionary action and not present the event as fortuitous, extraordinary, even catastrophic and without solution. For the revolution it is no light matter that each militant is unable, today, to read and meditate on the works of the PDG, it is no light matter that today they cannot read and analyze weekly the organ *Horoya*. This temporary situation must be changed rapidly. We must also stress the fact that there is a tendency toward mystification, toward deceiving the immense majority that is in exclusive possession of such an efficient and highly important instrument as writing. This fact is exploited by the counterrevolution. To be the only one who has the privilege of being able to translate documents is not without danger. And to eliminate this danger it is not enough to improve the translator; his privilege must be suppressed in revolutionary fashion, by extending it to all!

Comrades, starting from the necessity to intensify the struggle in the area of scientific and technical progress as a living expression of the necessary union of culture and action, we have gone on to the various conditions necessary and sufficient for the fortuitous conduct of this battle, and we have taken as a fundamental condition the proper functioning of Local Revolutionary Power, and as an indispensable secondary condition, the ability of virtually all people to write. We don't intend to push the problem aside since neither of the two conditions is beyond our ability to solve. We continue to proclaim, "Ready for the revolution," as a precise commitment, a commitment that we must carry out.

And now that we are discussing culture and action, conscience and action, and at the same time are strongly insisting on the need to try to quantify all magnitudes, before ending, we see a little more clearly the gap that sometimes separated our ideological positions from our social practice, and we will try to quantify it. Let us try to take inventory of our purported theoretical and ideological knowledge and our concrete action, and consider the differences in the two lists. This difference indicates to us what might be called our ideological distortion. And when, through our action, we have succeeded in closing the gap, we will know that we are truly Ready for the revolution.