In truth, the massacre on the quays of Pijiguiti showed our people and our national party the true path to pursue in our liberation struggle. With the glorious and useful sacrifice of the workers assassinated in Pijiguiti, we learned that, faced with the criminal character and lack of scruples of the Portuguese colonialists, we have to mobilize our people, both in Guinea and Cape Verde, unite them around our party, organize them, and prepare them for the struggle. We learned also that our struggle must not be waged in the cities and that, faced with the arms of the Portuguese colonialists, the only form of struggle we can wage is armed struggle.

A Situation of Permanent Violence
Amilcar Cabral

Excerpt of testimony by the Secretary-General of the PAIGC to the Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs of the US House of Representatives, chaired by Rep. Charles C. Diggs, Jr., on 26 February 1970.

We tried during the years of 1950, 1953, 1954, 1955 and 1956 to convince the Portuguese Government that it was necessary to change. In that moment, even we didn’t think about independence. We hoped in that moment to change, to have civil rights, to be men, not treated like animals in general, because the Portuguese divided us into two groups, the indigenous people and the assimilado people.

At that moment, after the adoption of the resolution in the United Nations granting independence for all colonies the Portuguese changed a little on paper, but not in practice.

We wanted at that moment, when we were beginning to demand our rights, to pass from the situation of Portuguese of second class to Portuguese like Portuguese. We received, as answer, only repression, imprisonment, torture and in 1959 after the creation of our party, when we called a strike in the Port of Bissau, the Portuguese troops killed about 50 workers in 20 minutes and wounded more than 100. This massacre showed us that it was not well, it was not good, it was not intelligent to fight against the Portuguese with empty hands.

We didn’t want, absolutely not, to resort to violence, but we realized that the colonial Portuguese domination was a situation of permanent violence. Against our aspirations they systematically answered with violence, with crimes, and we decided in that moment to prepare ourselves to fight.

In that moment, as you know, sir, Africa began to become independent. The ‘wind of change’ was blowing over Africa. The other colonial powers decided to decolonize. Portugal signed the United Nations Charter and later Portugal voted for the proclamation of the right for independence of
The National Liberation Movements

all people.
But Portugal never accepted to apply this international decision. Portugal insisted, the Portuguese Government insisted that we were provinces of Portugal.

If in the beginning of our colonial life we were exactly like the Portuguese, we had all the rights the Portuguese had, maybe it would be possible to convince us that we were Portuguese in the Portuguese provinces. But in our country we never had rights, the minimum rights of man, and in that moment it was very late to convince us that our country was a Portuguese province.

We saw Africa beginning with independence, in many African states, and we decided to do our best also to get our right to self-determination and independence. That is the reason for 7 years of fighting.

We have liberated more than two-thirds of the country. In the liberated areas of our country, facing the Portuguese bombs, we are trying to build a new life. In the liberated areas, for example — I can tell you that all of this has been confirmed by journalists and filmmakers and writers, like some men from Sweden and other countries that have been in our country for 1, 2, or more months. We have organized the education, the services of education. We have now more than 130 schools. The Portuguese, in all Guinea, in the time of colonialism, had 45 missionary schools, so-called elementary schools, and 11 official schools.

We have now about 15,000 children in the schools. Before, in my country there were only 2,000 children, but the indigenous people; that is, 99.7% of the population, couldn’t go to their official schools, only to the missionary schools.

Now, in our country, we have established in the liberated areas, in spite of the bombing, permanent bombing by Portuguese planes, four hospitals — not very nice hospitals, but what we can do in this stage of our life. We have trained nurses during these years, more than 250 nurses, men and women. We have more than 100 sanitary posts in order not only to assist the wounded or sick fighters, but to assist the population of the liberated regions.

We have organized and developed in the liberated regions, our party, our political organization, our administration, and in this moment we can say that our country is like a state of which a part of the national territory is yet occupied by the colonial forces.

Portugal controls only the urban centres and some little parts in the countryside. We control the major part of the countryside, and in the contested regions we are fighting each day in order to complete the liberation of our country.

One can ask how Portugal, an underdeveloped country also, one of the most backward in Europe which has some regions with more than 46% of illiterates — I am referring to official figures — how can Portugal fight all of these colonial wars in my country, in Angola and in Mozambique?

The Portuguese people are progressively realizing that colonial wars are not only against the African people, but also against their own interests.

We think that with this war the Portuguese Government is losing or making
it possible to lose one of the best chances Portugal has in history, because our hopes were and still are, in spite of all the crimes against our people, that we could, in independence, like an African people, develop the best relations with Portugal, even to study and to decide together some problems concerning the development of our country and the progress of our peoples.

Message to the Portuguese People

MPLA

In June 1960 the MPLA sent this open message to the Portuguese people. It was signed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Viviano Cruz, Mario de Andrade, and Lucio Lara.

The MPLA directs this message to the Portuguese people in the spirit of the love of liberty, fraternity, and universal peace.

The Angolan people and the MPLA are not fighting Portugal. Respect for the survival, liberty, and aspiration to progress of Portugal is one of the fundamentals of the survival, liberty, and progress that the Angolan people and the MPLA seek for Angola.

The Angolan people and the MPLA are not fighting Portugal. We do not believe that this people which, throughout its history and faced with invaders and oppressors, offered the example of struggle through love of liberty, wishes today to sanction wars and massacres that will lead its sons to death for the exclusive benefit of a handful of exploiters.

The Angolan people and the MPLA are struggling rather, and will struggle until final victory, against Portuguese colonialists. The history and experience of contemporary struggles between colonialists and colonized peoples has always shown that, confronted with the freedom struggle of oppressed peoples, colonialists of a given country do not all have the same reaction, adopt the same tactics or approve unanimously the same way of handling the colonial problem.

Under the irresistible pressure of the struggle of colonial peoples, two viewpoints tend to emerge among the colonialist group: those who are obstinate and those who are partisans of negotiations.

In our era, no colonizing country can win a colonial war. The Angolan people and the MPLA propose the liquidation of Portuguese colonialism by peaceful, democratic means, by negotiation.

An honest analysis of the situation in Portugal and its colonies can only lead to the conclusion that Portuguese colonialism is a proven enemy of the colonized peoples and of the Portuguese people themselves. A people that oppresses another people cannot truly be free.

Colonialism is our common enemy. The Angolan people and the MPLA do