

Not an Isolated Struggle

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From a message by the President of MPLA, broadcast on 6 June 1968 on the 'Voice of the Angolan Freedom-Fighter' on Radio Tanzania.

One of the more debated of problems in recent times is the presence in our territories of Portuguese, or the descendants of Portuguese, whose ideas coincide with ours, whose lives have been dedicated to the struggle against fascism in Portugal, and who understand and accept the right of the peoples of the Portuguese colonies to regain their Independence and self-government, like any other sovereign people.

On this point we have sometimes observed negative reactions on the part of some of our combatants and of our friends. It is those negative attitudes that can prejudice and deter the success of our struggle for freedom. I speak of the problem of racialism.

In our countries we are not making a racial war. Our objective is not to fight against the white man solely because he is white. It is that we fight those who support the colonial regime. All those in our territories who show raised unarmed hands, or who show themselves willing to give their collaboration to the guerrillas, providing them with foodstuffs and products that are unavailable in the forests; all those who in any manner show their desire not to cooperate with the colonial regime must not be despised or treated as enemies. They constitute a force that operates in our favor, in the same way as on the international plane. There we do not seek support only in the countries of Africa south of the Sahara, called Black Africa, where the skin of the inhabitants is darker; but we also go to look for the aid of countries of North Africa, where the people have a light skin. We go even further to Europe to look for political, diplomatic and material help from countries where the majority of the population have white colour, and in other continents where the racial differences are even more evident. If, on account of racial differences, we despise that formidable force that is represented by progressives of the whole world, and by the underdeveloped countries, we will only be digging our own grave . . .

Therefore, we invite the Portuguese, the sons of Portuguese people, who are in uniform and armed in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau, to desert the ranks of the colonialist army and not to soil their hands with the blood of innocent men, women and children whose only objective is to be free – acting in the same manner as did the heroic Portuguese themselves during the Arab occupation of Spain. Instead of assassinating defenceless people, they must raise their arms in surrender when confronted by the guerrillas of MPLA, FRELIMO or PAIGC. They will be received as men and will be given the choice of a destination in those countries that accept political refugees. Or better still, we make an appeal to the Portuguese to desert with their arms and cross to the side of the nationalists, avoiding the shame of participating in an unjust war that is as dirty as the war in Vietnam.

During the course of the war in Angola, MPLA have had occasion to admit to neighbouring countries some Portuguese who had deserted. And there, in various countries, some of them are actively engaged in struggle against the Salazar regime, while others go about their work so that they and their families may live in peace.

Therefore, if there exists in some of our combatants the idea of a war against the white man, it is necessary that it be immediately substituted by the idea of a war against colonialism and against imperialism; a war against oppression, for the liberty and for the dignity of all men in the world. This idea will fortify our struggle. It will offer more guarantees and new prospectives that open up a brilliant future for all men. In a time of hatred we will have fraternity and understanding.