

MESSAGE DU CONSEIL MONDIAL DE LA PAIX

Message du Camarade Damantang Camara
Vice-Président du Conseil Mondial de la Paix

Au Symposium International A. Cabral
(présenté par Alpha Ibrahima SOW)

Camarade Pedro Pires, Premier Ministre
Illustres participants au Symposium
Amilcar Cabral

C'est avec honneur et non sans émotion que je prends aujourd'hui la parole pour lire à l'intention de notre auguste assemblée le message amical et militant formulé par le Camarade Damantang Camara, Président de l'Assemblée Populaire Nationale de la République Populaire Révolutionnaire de Guinée au nom du Conseil Mondial de la Paix dont il est le Vice-Président. Son programme de travail l'ayant empêché d'être parmi nous il nous a particulièrement chargé de vous transmettre le message ci-après.

Citation:

"En ce moment solennel où les peuples, les forces éprises de paix, de liberté et de démocratie de par le monde, sont réunis à Praia, pour rendre un hommage mérité à cette grande et éminente figure de la Révolution Démocratique Africaine qu'est Amilcar Cabral, permettez-moi d'adresser à tous les participants à notre Séminaire International initié et organisé par le Conseil national du PAICV, le message de soutien et de solidarité concrète du Conseil Mondial de la Paix.

Pour l'Afrique et pour l'ensemble de l'humanité progressiste le Camarade Amilcar Cabral fut plus que le leader illustre des peuples de Guinée-Bissau et des Îles du Cap-Vert.

Combattant de la liberté, Amilcar Cabral fut, dès la fleur de l'âge, sa vie à la lutte pour la libération des peuples colonisés par le Portugal. En rendant hommage à ses qualités de révolutionnaire de notre époque, nous ne pouvons pas également ne pas souligner le rôle décisif qu'il a exercé pour la consolidation et l'accélération du pro-

cessus révolutionnaire dans le monde ainsi que son action permanente et stimulante en faveur de la Paix dans l'ensemble des relations nationales et internationales.

Encarnant les plus nobles qualités d'un dirigeant de peuple, A. Cabral était profondément convaincu du caractère irréversible du processus de libération qui place les combattants africains à la pointe de l'après combat contre l'Imperialisme et ces bastions en Afrique, à savoir le régime de l'Apartheid en Afrique du Sud, celui raciste de Ian Smith en Rhodésie et le colonialisme Portugais.

Prompt dans la détection des manœuvres de division des Mouvements de libération, Amilcar Cabral travaillait d'arrache-pied pour l'unité stratégique et tactique de ces mouvements anti-impérialistes.

Le Conseil Mondiale de la Paix dont Amilcar Cabral était membre de la Président considère l'oeuvre théorique et pratique de Cabral comme une contribution inestimable à l'avènement d'un nouvel ordre international fondé sur la justice, la démocratie et la liberté.

A. Cabral, à toutes les étapes de sa vie héroïque, a oeuvré inlassablement pour libérer les peuples africains du joug colonial et néocolonial. Pour réaliser cet objectif stratégique, A. Cabral, tout en mobilisant son peuple dans la lutte armée contre le colonialisme, n'a jamais cessé de placer au poste de commande l'éducation idéologique du peuple de même que l'action politique et culturelle de transformation révolutionnaire de la société.

A. Cabral, ce faisant, a conduit avec lucidité, pertinence et constance la guerre populaire des peuples de Guinée-Bissau et Cap-Vert contre le colonialisme portugais rétrograde. Mais son profond humanisme l'empêchait de faire la guerre pour la guerre. Ne déclarait-il pas: "Nous ne faisons pas la guerre parce que nous sommes des guerriers et que nous aimons la guerre. Nous ne faisons pas la guerre pour conquérir le Portugal. Nous la faisons parce que nous sommes obligés de la faire pour conquérir nos droits humains, nos droits de nation, de peuple africains qui veut son indépendance; mais l'objectif de notre lutte est un objectif politique, c'est à dire, la libération totale de notre peuple de Guinée et du Cap-Vert, la conquête de notre indépendance nation-

le et de notre souveraineté aussi bien intérieure que sur le plan international".

Dix années après son assassinat cruel par les forces colonialistes portugaises à Conakry, nous pouvons dire que cet objectif central a été atteint et que Cabral reste aujourd'hui avec nous, vivant, son héritage continuant d'éclairer le chemin glorieux de la révolution populaire en Afrique et dans le monde.

Voilà pourquoi l'hommage à Cabral, qui est le meilleur hommage que nous puissions rendre aux peuples de Guinée-Bissau et du Cap-Vert, est aussi un hommage aux peuples et aux hommes qui ont apporté leur précieuse contribution à la lutte des peuples pour la liquidation définitive de la domination coloniale de l'impérialisme en Afrique.

Que le PAICV soit remercié et félicité pour cette initiative heureuse qui est une contribution réelle au renforcement des bases idéologiques et politiques du processus révolutionnaire mondial.

L'oeuvre d'Amilcar Cabral est immortelle!

Vivent l'amitié et la solidarité internationales!

Vive la Paix dans le monde" (fin de citation)

Je vous remercie, camarades de lutte, pour l'attention que vous avez bien voulu m'accorder.

Prêt pour la révolution

Excellencies, friends, comrades,

I was very glad to be invited to come here at this symposium to commemorate the death of one of the most leading and prominent Africans of this century, Amilcar Cabral. Much has been said, many articles and books written on the contribution of Amilcar Cabral to the theory and practice of liberation in Africa.

However, I am not the right person to speak about the influence of Amilcar Cabral on the developments in Africa, nor about his contribution to the theory of liberation and revolution.

In my contribution I want to speak about the influence of the work of Amilcar Cabral, and more in general of the liberation movements in the former Portuguese colonies, on political opinion in Europe, and on the process of change in that part of the world. As far as I know, a scientific research has not been made on this subject. For that reason, I must base views on my personal experience as an activist in support of the liberation movements in Holland for more than twenty years.

The years of campaigning in support of the liberation movements in the former Portuguese colonies have also been years of considerable change in political opinion in my country. I'm convinced that this change can partly be attributed to the integration of the struggle for national liberation in the Portuguese colonies into national politics.

Amilcar Cabral, but also Eduardo Mondlane and Samora Machel, Agostinho Neto, and many others have contributed to the political interest and convictions of many young people in Western Europe. It has always been the big question, in what way young people can be mobilized and made politically active on the side of progressive mankind in order

to change this world in a more human society, where there will be a decent life for everybody.

During the sixties and the seventies it was developments in the third world that influenced the young people in the west. We must mention in the first place Cuba and its leaders Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. The war in Vietnam has opened many eyes, and brought the youth in the streets by the tens of thousands. But the political convictions of many young people have also been formed and influenced by the liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies.

Those liberation movements have profited from the solidarity work in Western Europe. But we can say that the people in Western Europe have profited just as well from those fighting for their liberation in Africa. Amilcar Cabral and the others have helped to conscientize our people, to give courage and inspiration to work for a change in our own countries and to make our own societies a more acceptable place to live in.

Young people even started to hope that the new society they longed for would come to Europe from the third world, that the poor countries would bring revolution to the rich. By campaigning for the liberation movements in the former Portuguese colonies they campaigned at the same moment for a new society in our own country.

I still remember as if it were yesterday, how Amilcar Cabral came to Holland for the first time in April 1965, to speak at a public meeting in Amsterdam. The name and the ideas of Amilcar Cabral were known in those days by a very limited number of people, most young people with an interest in third world developments. But there came far more people to the meeting hall than we ever could have expected. From other towns in Holland people came even in hired buses to Amsterdam. Amilcar Cabral came to a country that belonged to the block of nations

that blacked Portugal, to the NATO block. At that time Holland was not a friendly country to the liberation movements. The authorities interfered in the meeting we had organized for Amilcar Cabral. We were not allowed to show the film "Lala Quema" on the liberation war in Guinea-Bissau. And the police wanted to see the passport that Amilcar used to travel, before he was allowed to speak. The result of this intimidation was that the meeting had to be cancelled. But the situation was saved by one of the contradictions that exist in the so-called free world. By the activities of the authorities the television became interested in the subject. Still on that same evening the film "Lala Quema" was shown on Dutch television, as well as an interview with Amilcar. Shortly afterwards the same television group was able to visit the liberated areas of Guinea-Bissau to make one of the first tv-films on the subject. In this way far more people than could have gathered at the biggest meeting hall received the message.

I tell you this short history for two reasons. In the first place the big number of people that came to the meeting showed already in that early stage that people could be mobilized on the question of Portuguese colonialism, and that the person of Cabral played an important role in this mobilization. In the years to come it appeared possible to develop mass action on this subject.

There is still another reason why I started by telling the history of Amilcar Cabral's first visit to Holland. That history showed how the political situation was in Holland in those days. For instance, during the colonial war in Algeria the overwhelming majority in Dutch parliament supported the French policy of suppression. No public protest against this attitude was heard. Holland started a new colonial war itself with Indonesia about the possession of Irian Barat. And the

Dutch government refused to criticize apartheid in South Africa as it was considered a purely internal problem.

The attitude towards Portuguese colonialism was in the clearest way expressed by our minister of foreign affairs, Mr. Joseph Luns. It is the same Luns, that is today the secretary-general of NATO. In his function as Dutch minister of foreign affairs Luns visited Portugal in 1968. During that visit he received the Portuguese "Order of Christ" from his old personal and political friend Salazar. At that occasion Luns praised his old friend as the man who had governed over Portugal with so much wisdom during forty years. This declaration of sympathy got much publicity in the press, and to heated debate in parliament. But it clearly underlined the official western attitude at that time.

Mass mobilization in support of the liberation movement in the former Portuguese colonies lasted about a decade. Ten years after the first Dutch government refused to criticize apartheid in South Africa as it visit of Amilcar Cabral to Holland, in 1975, the political situation had changed in many respects. The most fundamental change in Dutch policy was its attitude towards NATO. In the past the Netherlands were backing NATO more straightly than most other western countries. After those years of change Holland became one of the more critical members of NATO, as it is still today. At this moment our country is nearly the only one in NATO not allowing new American missiles on its soil. One of the subjects that opened many eyes on the role of NATO in world politics was the criminal policy of NATO-support to Portuguese colonialism. In order to investigate this support, we were able to visit military libraries in many western countries and were able to discover with many other secrets, also the secret military support of NATO to the colonial wars of Portugal could be brought to light by combining

Portuguese colonies lasted about a decade. Ten years after the first Dutch government refused to criticize apartheid in South Africa as it visit of Amilcar Cabral to Holland, in 1975, the political situation had changed in many respects. The most fundamental change in Dutch policy was its attitude towards NATO. In the past the Netherlands were backing NATO more straightly than most other western countries. After those years of change Holland became one of the more critical members of NATO, as it is still today. At this moment our country is nearly the only one in NATO not allowing new American missiles on its soil. One of the subjects that opened many eyes on the role of NATO in world politics was the criminal policy of NATO-support to Portuguese colonialism. In order to investigate this support, we were able to visit military libraries in many western countries and were able to discover with many other secrets, also the secret military support of NATO to the colonial wars of Portugal could be brought to light by combining

backing NATO more straightly than most other Western countries. After the same time, that is today, the more critical members of those years of change Holland became one of the more critical members. In 1958, during that visit he received the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs. At this moment our country is nearly the only one in NATO not allowing new American missiles on its soil. One of the subjects that comes up when the role of NATO in world politics was the original policy of NATO-support to Portuguese colonialism. In order to investigate this support, we were able to

at that time, also the secret military support of NATO in

the colonial wars of Portugal could be brought to light by comparing the colonial wars of Portugal in support of the liberation movement in the lower Portuguese colonies lasted about a decade. Ten years after the first Dutch government policy to criticize the colonial situation visit of Minister General to Holland in 1952, the political situation had changed in many respects. The most fundamental change in Dutch policy was its attitude towards NATO. In the past the Netherlands were backed by our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Luns, it is backing NATO more straightly than most other Western countries. After the same time, that is today, the more critical members of those years of change Holland became one of the more critical members of NATO, as it is still today. At this moment our country is nearly the only one in NATO not allowing new American missiles on its soil. One of the subjects that comes up when the role of NATO in world politics was the original policy of NATO-support to Portuguese colonialism. In order to investigate this support, we were able to

at that time, also the secret military support of NATO in

the colonial wars of Portugal could be brought to light by comparing the colonial wars of Portugal in support of the liberation movement in the lower Portuguese colonies lasted about a decade. Ten years after the first Dutch government policy to criticize the colonial situation visit of Minister General to Holland in 1952, the political situation had changed in many respects. The most fundamental change in Dutch policy was its attitude towards NATO. In the past the Netherlands were backed by our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Luns, it is backing NATO more straightly than most other Western countries. After the same time, that is today, the more critical members of those years of change Holland became one of the more critical members of NATO, as it is still today. At this moment our country is nearly the only one in NATO not allowing new American missiles on its soil. One of the subjects that comes up when the role of NATO in world politics was the original policy of NATO-support to Portuguese colonialism. In order to investigate this support, we were able to

much non-confidential information. We were proud to hear that Amilcar Cabral had used our research for one of his great speeches for the General Assembly of the United Nations.

In the seventies there was a big majority in Dutch parliament attacking NATO-policy towards Portugal. The Labour Party, the biggest party in Holland, was forced to adopt the policy that Holland should leave NATO if Portugal would not be thrown out. Thousands of young Portuguese, that refused to fight in the colonial wars, found a safe refuge in Holland, where they received staying permits, passports, scholarships and social security.

During the last years of the colonial wars, the Dutch government started to give financial support to the liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies. In 1975, before the independence of Angola, the Dutch government supported a big project for MPLA in Luanda at a time when the Angolan puppet movements with the support of other western countries tried to sabotage the liberation of the country. Not all was positive, however, like the refusal to recognize the Republic of Guinea Bissau and the People's Republic of Angola before other Western countries did so. This change in Dutch policy between the years 1965 and 1975 can be found in many other areas of foreign and internal policy. After the years of the cold war a kind of liberation process had started, that partly changed our society. There were many factors involved in this process, but one of these factors is without a doubt the campaign in support of the liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies. And for many Amilcar Cabral was the personification of those movements. It was a time of continuous campaigning. And the successes of the campaigns brought new interest for the liberation movements, more supporters, more publicity.

It was not only young people that were influenced. Journalists visiting the liberated areas found new inspiration. When one of those journalists that visited the liberated areas of Mozambique, was some years afterwards tragically killed by a car accident, his family wanted only Frelimo music at his funeral, as this visit had been a turning point in his life. And when we have an unstable political situation in Holland today, because part of the christian democrats in parliament sometimes vote with labour against their own ministers, we must remember that the leader of those christian democrats, Jan Nico Scholten, deepened his convictions and started his friendship with the speaker on foreign affairs of the labour party, Relus ter Beek, when they both walked through the swamps of Guinea-Bissau ten years ago, as guests of the PAIGC. The same Mr. Scholten was honoured a few months ago by the General Assembly of the United Nations for his continuous campaign for a boycott of South Africa.

Not only opinion leaders were reached, however, also the public, the house wife , etc.. As I have said, as far as I know, there does not exist any profound scientific research on the influence by these liberation movements on public opinion in western countries. So it is difficult to give any figures. But we have experienced that at least in Holland the influence was real.

The big trial of strength came in 1972. It was not a struggle with the political forces, but with the big companies. In agreement with MPLA we started a boycott of Angolan coffee in Holland. One third of the Angolan coffee production was sold during those years to Holland. A successful boycott of that coffee would be a signal to the Portuguese colonialists, and a blow to the colonial economy. The only possibility we had to force the coffee industry to stop using Angola coffee was a consumers boycott. Success would depend on the number of people know-

ing of the wars of liberation in the Portuguese colonies, on their sympathy with the liberation movements, on their confidence in the leaders of that liberation movements, like Amilcar Cabral.

During the weeks of the campaign we were able to organize in hundreds of towns and villages groups of people that picketed the shops. After four weeks, the coffee industry had to give in. In advertisements in the newspapers they announced to the public their promises not to buy any more coffee from Angola. The import statistics underlined the success of the boycott. The share of Angola coffee fell from 30 to 5 percent, the share of the independent African states in the coffee import increased in the same period from 5 to about 30 percent.

The only scientific research in Holland about the influence of the wars of liberation in the Portuguese colonies on public opinion was done during that time, paid by the coffee industry. The outcome was that more than 90 percent of the people knew of the problem. A considerable part had decided to support the boycott. This research was repeated during the years to come, but public opinion hardly changed. These results were so shocking for the coffee industry that the fall of Caetano in Portugal did not bring a change in their boycott of Angolan coffee. Only after the independence of Angola was the coffee welcomed again.

The sympathy in Holland for the aims of Amilcar Cabral still exist today. It is mainly expressed in the development aid to the former Portuguese colonies. Holland is one of the most important donor countries of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, of Angola and Mozambique. Public interest in these countries is less than before, but no one could expect otherwise. A war situation attracts more attention than the difficult and slow process of developing a free and prosperous society.

At this moment the forces of change in Western Europe seem to be less inspired by developments in the third world. Campaigns against nuclear armament and nuclear energy, for ecology, movements for women's liberation,

action groups concerning the difficult housing problem, especially for the young, attract more attention.

At the same time right wing organizations increase their support amongst the young people. Negative attitudes against foreign workers grow. This new trend is partly a result of the economic crisis. This development is alarming for all third world countries, but especially for Cape Verde with its large number of people living abroad.

But there is still considerable support for third world problems. Most attention goes at this moment to Latin America and Southern Africa. It would be in the spirit of the late Amilcar Cabral if all independent African states and progressive mankind elsewhere in the world could unite in a campaign to isolate and boycott the racist regime in South Africa. In this way we can express our support to the people's in those countries and their liberation movements ANC and Swapo in their final onslaught against European colonialism of African soil.

Sietse Bosgra

Holland Committee on Southern Africa

former Angola Comite