



Damaraland Special

CHRISTMAS 1978

CHURCH LEADER IS EXPELLED AS AN 'UNDESIRABLE'

Security Forces watched my every move, says Anglican vicar-general in Namibia

BY EDWARD MORROW

Reprinted from *Canadian Churchman*/October 1978

It was the 14th of July — a day which had begun like all other week days with an early morning eucharist in the Chapel of Bernard Mizeki.

At 10 o'clock, two men whom I recognized as Security Branch officers entered the general office of the Diocese of Damaraland. One had, in fact, posed as a press photographer on our arrival in June 1975.

In under two minutes they were gone leaving behind two plain sheets of paper on which were typed the words which ended my three year ministry as vicar-general to the Anglicans in Namibia and the very close involvement of my wife, Laureen, with political prisoners and their families.

One might have expected a printed "letterhead" coming as it did from the ruler "by decree" of All Namibia other than the port of Walvis Bay.

But then that would suggest some permanence to his rule, he would not want that since he has promised the people of Namibia self-rule by the end of this year. No, all that is required is a law, (a plain piece of paper to which is affixed the expulsion formula and the signature of M. T. Steyn, two officers (always two — one to act as a witness) to do the dirty work and that, effectively, is that.

An identical document delivered some two hours later to Fr. Heinz Hunke, Provincial of the Order of Mary Immaculate ended more than 10 years of dedicated service by this quiet but determined Catholic priest.

Although we were saddened and annoyed to be summarily removed from the country we had adopted as our home by the officers of an illegal regime, we were not shocked. In the past 10 years three bishops, all legally elected leaders of the Anglican Church, had also been forced to leave the diocese. It followed that I, acting as head of the church in the diocese since June 1975, and committed to continuing the witness of my predecessors, was from the first day a most probable victim of the South African administration.

Baggage searched

On our arrival in 1975 we had been held for 90 minutes at the airport while customs officials searched our baggage, removed my ecclesiastical letters of appointment, private papers and a personal scrap book. A pattern was set, for on subsequent journeys through South African airports I was always subjected to scrutiny which included being locked in a kiosk, questioned and having a personal diary photographed page by page.

We lived under constant surveillance — the house was bugged, telephones were tapped, mail interfered with, diocesan vehicles mysteriously tampered with; we were often 'tailed' when out on pastoral visits; paid informers and 'stooges' would try to set traps; anonymous telephone callers would shout abuse and issue death threats; paint was daubed and slogans written on diocesan buildings and cars; we would be photographed openly by security men; the office, house and chapel were thoroughly searched and typewriters confiscated.

When a friend returning from her first visit overseas commented that she was struck by the presence of evil with an intensity that had not been in her experience before, we were not surprised and agreed that the situation was sinister indeed.

The Administrator-General, M. T. Steyn would argue that I, my wife and Fr. Hunke were "undesirable persons" to have in the territory and I would agree. I would agree that if it were the intention of the administration to continue its reign of terror and intimidation, its policies of divide and rule, its Godless creed of apartheid, its contempt for world opinion, its complete disregard for justice and peace, then, yes, I would agree.

Apartheid opponent

I cannot speak for myself but I can testify to the selfless love and compassion of both my wife and Fr. Hunke in their daily encounters with the powerless peoples of Namibia. There are those both black and white who have written to us and they make the pain of separation easier to bear.

The question may be asked by some that if we were truly working for peace why were we deported. The answer I see it is that we sought justice for the people of Namibia and especially for those who fell victim to the violence of South Africa's apartheid and security laws.

I believe that there cannot be peace without justice, that there cannot be reconciliation between races without equality.

The South African government in anger claims: "Look what we have done for the country – we have built roads and dams; schools and hospitals". This is true but I would ask: "Where after 50 years of South African rule are the trained doctors, engineers, lawyers, artisans, accountants?" And there is an answer to this question.

The white residents of Namibia say; "We want a peaceful solution".

The prophet Jeremiah answers; "They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying 'Peace, Peace', when there is no peace." (*Jer. 6:14*).

We were and are, open opponents of apartheid; we support the struggle for human rights and dignity; we support the demands of the people to be free of foreign domination. In a nutshell this then is the reason for our deportation as it was the reason for many others before us. Although the Anglican Church has suffered greatly with the deportation of her bishops, priests and lay people in the past 10 years, the Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches have suffered too. The common factor in all these people is an abhorrence of the evil doctrine of apartheid, the anti-Christian policy of separation which brings untold suffering and misery to the black peoples of South Africa and alienates God's children as nowhere else on earth.

Engineered racism

It could be called engineered racism or scientific polarization; its grand design has recently resulted in the creation of a jigsaw puzzle state called Bophuthatswana which comprises six separate pieces of land each completely surrounded by white South Africa.

We have ministered to the effects of South Africa's policies in Namibia, the land it has governed under an old League of Nations mandate for now almost 60 years. Inevitably we have incurred the displeasure of our rulers. We have preached liberation to a captive people – the Lord Jesus being our teacher and guide; the ancient prophets our inspiration.

Over the years the authorities in Namibia have responded to the peoples' cries with the predictable harshness of Pharaoh, but people have resisted and never given up hope and now at last there are "signs" of liberation, of an Exodus experience. These "signs" are the result of an initiative by the five Western Nations who sit permanently on the Security Council of the United Nations, to end the 12-year-old war between the Namibian National liberation movement called SWAPO and the South African Army.

It is with sadness that we view the final and dramatic stages of this human saga from 6000 miles away, but also with joy that the beloved people of Namibia may soon be free. The people we left behind are among the most lovable that it has been my privilege to share life with and also the most diverse and colourful. They live in a large and harsh land which is at once beautiful and ugly; exciting and monotonous; rich yet most of its people are poor. It has been described as the land God made in anger. It is the land where both my wife and I found the God who cares and acts in the forming of a nation.

Found God

We found Him in the poor peasants of Ovamboland; in the drab and dusty township called Katutura. He spoke very clearly through the courageous women, mothers, wives and daughters, some of whom had not seen nor heard from their

menfolk for 15 years. The men were either on Robben Island, an off-shore island where more than 40 political prisoners are held, somewhere in exile, or just simply "missing".

We saw Him also in the eyes of political prisoners who although destined to spend many years in cold cells, never gave up hope and were always cheerful. We supped with Him on simple meals eaten with fingers in humble settings. We played and laughed with Him in the barefoot children we saw under the hot relentless sun.

We found Him too in simple worship in the incensed filled parish church of St. Mary the Virgin – in the rusting corrugated iron chapel at a roadside construction camp dedicated to Christ the King.

Some of the community we have left behind are Nelago, a young attractive Owambo woman destined to become the first chartered accountant in Namibia and her close friend, Ephraim, a young Herero clerk, articled to a law firm in the city.

In our diocesan office is Chedikias, a Damara man who has shared many of our ups and downs. He dropped out of a South African University after student rioting in 1976. On returning to Windhoek where he was born and lived with his mother prior to his departure for university, he found that he had forfeited his right to live in his mother's home and had to apply for a visitors permit while his application for residence was being considered.

Ordinary people

There is Dinah a statuesque Herero woman who has shared the chores in Bishop's House for many years, has seen hundreds of people receive hospitality and is known to visitors from many parts of the world especially for her colourful Victorian dresses. Her daughter, Charlotte, is making history as the first black child to be admitted to the Anglican Diocesan School in Windhoek.

At St. Mary's High School in Ovamboland, not more than 100 metres from the no-go border fence with Angola, is a brave and dedicated young white South African who is principal of the school and part-time motor mechanic. Frank is the only white for miles around.

Then there is Rauna a nurse and daughter of Fr. Stephen who in 1976 fled with his wife and all his parishioners to Angola where he now ministers to the Anglicans who either live there or who are in exile. Rauna was detained by the security police in 1977 and severely tortured with electric shocks to force her to admit to supplying medicines to guerrillas.

There is Neville, the non-Christian doctor who tirelessly gives of his services free of charge.

There is Weez a young Jewess and mother of three children who nobly came forward to take responsibility for the multi-racial play-school – the first in Windhoek started with a donation from the church in Canada.

And Eileen, a grandmother of three young South Africans, faithful in her prayers, who lovingly tends the vines and fruit trees in the community garden.

These are just a few; there are many more, all of whom are ordinary people with ordinary hopes, desires, dreams.

The country they live in, however, is not an ordinary country and they all face many hardships and grave problems especially now in this critical period before independence.

Rev. Edward Morrow and his wife are now living in London.

Six founders of Namibian Council of Churches

Reprinted from *Windhoek Advertiser*, Oct. 19, 1978

A fellowship of churches . . . to fulfill together their common calling — are two of the phrases used in the Constitution of the newly-founded Council of Churches in Namibia.

Representatives of six of the churches in the Territory met earlier this week and founded this Council, the agreed objects of which are:

- to foster that unity which is Christ's will and gift to His church, specifically by assisting the churches in their common calling to proclaim the Gospel to all people;
- to co-ordinate and consolidate the activities of the member churches;
- to promote the common in-8, to assist persons in need and to promote self-help projects;
- to disseminate abroad and within the Territory information concerning SWA and the churches here;
- to organise conferences, meetings and theological and educational courses for Christians and other interested persons;
- to undertake theological reflection and study on the role of the Council and the churches in SWA.

The corporate members of the Council are the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA, the German Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Anglican Church in SWA. The Congregational Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Two churches were granted observer status, namely the Roman Catholic and the Evangelical Reformed Church in Africa (Dutch Reformed Church).

Bishop James Kauluma of the Anglican Church was elected the President of the Council of Churches in Namibia and Landespropst P G Kauffenstein of the German Evangelical Church Lutheran Church was elected Vice President.



'We have bled with the people'

Reprinted from *London Observer*/September 3, 1978

Bishop Colin Winter, replying to Anthony Sampson, defends the Church's role in the liberation of Namibia.

'There are three parts to the Namibian Liberation struggle — SWAPO, PLAN (People's Liberation Army) and the role played by the Church'. The speaker was a senior official of SWAPO (the South West Africa People's Organisation).

That the Church continues to play a vital role in Namibia's current struggle for liberation surprises most Western journalists and politicians, embarrasses Church leaders in Britain as well as South Africa and has resulted in unrestricted, and often violent, persecution against it on the part of the South African

authorities. Over a period of 10 years, they have used every method, including deportation, banning, flogging and torture against us and the people whose cause we have adopted.

The Anglican Church has been called the most hated Church in Namibia. Along with our Lutheran colleagues, and more recently joined by Roman Catholic priests, we have continued a campaign of conscious, non-violent, moral resistance to the apartheid policies of the Vorster Government. Photographs of bombed Anglican churches, some of them desecrated by South African soldiers, wrecked clinics and hospitals, are a grim reminder of the cost to us and our people of such resistance.

The time for manifestos or dialogue with the South African authorities, for us at least, has long since past — what effective dialogue was possible with Hitler? We have chosen our road, our position is clear: it is solidarity with the oppressed.

'Fools rush in' is the unwritten prelude to Anthony Sampson's challenge article. 'Where angels fear to tread' (*The Observer*, 27 August). Is this a fair description of the Anglican Church's position? Are we stupid to resist the South African authorities? Are we stary-eyed, uncritical supporters of SWAPO? Will they be as bad or even worse than the South African regime are when they attain power?

Anthony Sampson's article contains a warning. '... the churches should not confine themselves to the dangers of white tyranny, but should look also to dangers ahead.' He further suggests that the Churches' 'dilemma' is how to deal with the 'polarisation that is provoked by the racial tyranny of the whites.' There is deep foreboding in his next comment, 'it is the eventual nightmare . . . that the alternative power will be as intolerant and inhuman as the power that provoked it.'

Well, are Anglicans simply fools rushing madly about in Namibia — or in exile for that matter? Are we backing the wrong horse in SWAPO and, finally does the Shipanga affair bode ill for the future of Namibia?

To understand the Anglican Church's stand, I ought to explain how we came to make it. Before going to Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia, from Cape Town in 1964, I asked a member of the South African Institute of Race Relations who were the white 'liberals' in the territory. They could not give me a single name.

When crimes were committed against the African people — such as assaults, arbitrary arrest, not infrequent cases of murder, the destruction of their homes, their removal from the Old Location, all of which led to the general strike — there was no white 'liberal' voice raised in protest of State aggression. Africans were left to take the brunt of State violence alone. It was they, and not the white 'liberals,' who resisted, organising themselves mainly through SWAPO, and hit back.

It was into this vacuum, caused by the failure and silence of white 'liberalism,' that the Church stepped — I should say was impelled. We did more than protest; we took action. We obtained legal aid, we paid fines for ordinary peasants and contract labourers convicted for political crimes, we organised visits to Robben Island and kept up a non-stop resistance with and on behalf of the oppressed. Why? Because we saw daily the wounds and the sufferings of the African people. We were drawn to the oppressed through their suffering.

From a human point of view, all this was sheer folly. The State has tried to beat our Church into the ground time and time again, with never a protest coming from white 'liberals.' If white 'liberal' opinion in Namibia was silent, leaving Africans naked to face Vorster's oppression alone, what was white 'liberal' opinion doing in Britain, America and the West generally? Of course, there was the occasional article in the more enlightened newspapers. There were a few white 'liberals'

who committed themselves to the Namibian struggle but, by and large, they were exceptions.

Britain, in co-operation with the Vorster regime, has allowed Namibia to be systemically robbed of her mineral wealth with little effective protest from Parliament, the media or the Churches here. Sixty per cent of Namibia's gross national product is siphoned off annually into the pockets of Western capitalists. A few liberal voices have protested at this banditry, but that the 'liberal' West has tolerated this shocking exploitation, and has profited from it handsomely, is one of the scandals of the twentieth century.

During this time, from 1964 onwards, African resistance intensified both within and outside Namibia, almost entirely through the effort of SWAPO. Western Governments have consistently questioned SWAPO's claim to be the effective leader of the liberation struggle.

I think the West in this is deluded. There is an acid test to SWAPO's claim, a mere glance at the lists of the dead and the imprisoned in the Namibian freedom struggle shows that the overwhelming majority belong to SWAPO.

Father Ed Morrow, a former Vicar General of the Anglican Church in Namibia, put this strikingly in an address given to the Swedish Church when he said, 'Let us never forget that it is SWAPO who has been doing the dying for the freedom of Namibia.' There have been other individual Africans who have shown courage and stature in Namibia, but only SWAPO has been able to organise the peasants, the contract workers, the students, the housewives, the nurses, the teachers and the clergy into a strong, articulate and political effective force.

In my opinion, there is no other party, black or white, capable of uniting and leading Namibia after independence. Vorster knows this, too, and this is why he is using every dirty trick, delaying tactic and violence to try to prevent SWAPO's ultimate victory.

I draw two conclusions from all this. First, white 'liberals' have failed dismally to be an effective force in the freedom struggle in Namibia. Do they have moral right now to pass judgment or to issue warnings? Second, are not Africans justly tired of being preached at and lectured by Western 'liberals' who speak from the comfort of their armchairs, parsonages or offices?

Certainly, the greatest battles lie ahead, after independence is won. Julius Nyerere says about newly emerging African States that they must have the freedom to make mistakes – this is how they learn to govern, a fact that the Shipanga affair clearly demonstrates.

Nevertheless, there are checks and balances to any mistakes that a newly liberated Namibian State will make. First of all, SWAPO is not a dictatorship. It is a democratic party composed of the widest cross-section of opinion.

Further, SWAPO is not the Church. In an independent Namibia, the Church will continue to speak out clearly and will have a vital role to play in shaping the country's future. It will have earned this right to be listened to with respect and trust because it has bled with the people.

I reject categorically the statement that a future State of Namibia will be as intolerant or inhuman as the present South African Government it has fought and suffered to overthrow. I do so from a knowledge based on the integrity of the Namibian people. Like the Apostle Paul, 'I speak as a fool,' but am confident for the future of my country.

COLIN WINTER is Bishop of Damaraland-in-Exile. He was expelled from South West Africa in 1972.



S.A.C.A. rejoices in the continuing dedication and outspokenness of the Church's leaders in Namibia in defending the helpless and oppressed. Where there is Christian conviction and love, there is also courage and strength – that which is promised and given to us by our Father. Colin Winter, Ed Morrow, James and Sally Kauluma, and countless others whose names we do not know, are standing up and being heard as messengers of the Gospel – the Gospel of love for all men, of all colors. Will you let your voice also be heard? Your concern, prayers and support are needed and gratefully received.

May your Christmas be a blessed one, and may you share it to the best of your ability with others.

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