

EPISCOPAL CHURCHMEN for SOUTH AFRICA

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—For A Free Southern Africa—

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NAMIBIA - and ANGOLA

Security - for whom?

A massive removal of men, women and children from Namibia's most heavily populated region is imminent. South African occupation officials announced three months ago a scheme to create a security zone in northern Namibia alongside the border with Angola. Church spokesmen say that 50,000 to 60,000 people will be uprooted from their ancestral homes.

The South African plan is to move the entire population from a strip, now expanded to a depth of about 10 km and 400 km long, and to level entire villages, kraals, shops, even trees and shrubs in an effort to 'sanitize' the border and prevent soldiers of the South West Africa Peoples Organization's Namibia Liberation Army from entering their homeland to fight the usurper.

Lutheran, Catholic and Anglican congregations will be scattered by this act. Odibo, the central Anglican Church mission, is a scant 2 km from the Angola border. Its ancillary stations are spread out in many directions, many of them along the frontier fence. St. Mary's high school, long a seat of resistance to Pretorian occupation and minority rule, will be closed, completing a campaign of retaliation conducted by the South African regime for years. St. Mary's hospital was shut down by the South Africans in October, 1974.

Occupation authorities are ostensibly consulting with the Owambo bantustan council about 'compensation from tribal funds and allocation of new land', and some 'squatters' have already been relocated. All the fertile land in northern Namibia is thickly settled and the dispossessed would be dumped in scrubby desert land farther south. A final decision on the removals has not been proclaimed, but as pressures from both the Angolan war and SWAPO forces increase, the crisis is not far off. Resistance by the people is certain. A further tragedy is building up in occupied Namibia.

THE WAR

"Unidentified troops in large numbers were airlifted over South West Africa in jetliners today." - WINDHOEK ADVERTISER, 9 January 1976.

South Africa's invasion of Angola - so full of promise for Pretoria's overlords three months ago - has stalled and turned into a quagmire. Now that the FNLA group in the north of Angola has been put to rout by forces of the Peoples Republic of Angola, the war will shift more heavily to the southern front, where 6,000 or more South Africans are engaged. There are reports of PRA columns advancing on both the south-central city of Luso and Huambo, headquarters of the unstable UNITA-FNLA coalition. Pretoria is pouring in more men, with tactical air cover.

Admitted South African losses in the Angolan war are 33 dead (including a brigadier whose plane crashed, probably having been shot down), many more wounded (South African hospitals are taking in numbers of casualties) and at least 7 captured by PRA forces. Four South African soldiers were presented to the international press in December and 3 others were brought to the OAU summit at Addis Ababa last week. These latter had been seized less than 250 miles south of Luanda, the 13 January WASHINGTON POST states. The "extremely young-looking soldiers" had been with the 5th South African infantry battalion. One said "they were flown by the South African air force into Cella directly from Grootfontein in Namibia". Grootfontein military base in northern Namibia is being frantically expanded by Pretoria.

The American press speaks mostly of only 1,000 South Africans in Angola - adding that hundreds of Russians and 9,500 (with more on the way) Cubans helping the PRA. But a mid-December report by Sean Gervasi, consultant to the Washington Center for National Security Studies, accounts for two full regiments of mechanized cavalry, supported by armour and artillery - up to 6,000 men - plus two fighter bomber wings. There is also a band of mercenaries, an outfit assembled at Grootfontein in October. Now, in January, it is clear Pretoria is sending in more troops, seasoned regulars, to shore up the conscripts.

A note of desperation is sweeping the South African press and official announcements. THE WASHINGTON POST on 1 January said that Prime Minister Balthazar Johannes Vorster "made his first open appeal for the West to get directly involved in the Angolan civil war. Going public with what has been, up to now, a behind-the-scenes effort by his government..." THE JOHANNESBURG STAR air edition of 10 January fears South Africa's isolation: "America is preparing to sacrifice South Africa in a desperate bid to save Angola from Russian domination and to save American prestige in Africa". A photograph alongside shows some of 2,500 national servicemen leaving Durban that week bound for training camps. South African whites are very uneasy over their Angolan role. It is obvious that Pretoria has made an enormous blunder. NEW YORK TIMES columnist Anthony Lewis on 15 January writes that South Africa will have to pull out. "The withdrawal, however disguised, will be a defeat for white South Africa - and will be seen as such by her non-white majority. The psychological effects of that will be great." The effects on whites would be gigantic. Real panic looms and the Vorster regime runs a real risk of losing power to even harder-line whites. But it is difficult to envision how Pretoria can pull out. The "menace" is moving inexorably down from the north. THE WASHINGTON POST's David Ottaway wrote in the 13 January issue that the PRA's Commandant Juju "Asked whether the Popular Movement intends to stop at the border of Namibia in the south, Commandant Juju said the Namibians themselves would have to liberate Namibia from South Africa's administration but that if they appeal for international solidarity, 'we are always present'".

THE WASHINGTON POST on 6 January said: "Washington sources reported that the U.S. government is considering asking South Africa to state specifically that it plans to get out of Angola before the African summit conference. The sources said the United States had originally urged South African entry as a desperation short-term move to prevent the Popular Movement (the PRA government, ed.) from overrunning Angola". The following day THE POST wrote: "The State Department yesterday denied reports that the United States has been coordinating its strategy in Angola with South Africa. State Department spokesman Robert Funseth also denied a report that the United States had requested South Africa to send troops into Angola to resist the Soviet-backed Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola."

BARRON'S magazine of 12 January quotes from President Ford's letter to the Nigerian chief of state: "On the South African question, I wish to state that the U.S. in no way sought or encouraged the South Africans to become involved in Angola, nor were we consulted."

A South African source relates: An intermediary, not a South African, with access to highest circles in Kinshasha, Lusaka, Pretoria, Washington and elsewhere, and acting very likely on behalf of General Hendrik van den Bergh (chief of South Africa's Bureau of State Security ((BOSS)) and close comrade of Vorster since their detention together for pro-Nazi activities during World War II) had a lengthy audience with Henry Kissinger. This person was then passed on to a top-level aide of the American Secretary of State. During the course of these encounters, it is said, a US request was made for South Africa to enter Angola. It has not been possible to verify this story.

Namibia and its illegal occupation by South Africa is almost consistently ignored in the American press. So too is Pretoria's use of the international territory as a staging area and corridor for its invasion of Angola. Just before Christmas the word was that South Africa was seeking guarantees of "its" border with Angola and protection for the Cunene river hydro-electric power complex, most of the facilities of which lie just across the frontier in southern Angola guarded by a South African army contingent. The press keeps writing of South Africa's "administration" (whenever it mentions the subject) of Namibia, never identifying Pretoria's usurpation.

Secretary of State Kissinger in his 14 January press conference was said in THE NEW YORK TIMES to have "added a new element to the call for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Angola. He said the United States would be amenable to discussing a phased withdrawal, with South African troops departing first and Cuban troops later. Asked whether this meant that the United States had been coordinating policy with South Africa, he said no." He didn't talk about Namibia either.

Kissinger is scheduled to testify before Senator Dick Clark's sub-committee on African affairs of the Foreign Relations Committee on 26 January, after returning from Moscow. That same week Congress takes up the Angola issue and the House will decide on agreement with the Senate cut-off of funds for covert operations in Angola.

A 2 January feature in THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR continues excellent coverage of recruitment of American mercenaries to serve with FNLA and UNITA. Hundreds of US citizens are in Angola, hundreds more ready to go, many having been trained at the US Army's Fort Benning in Georgia. Denials were forthcoming from official sources, less definite nays on training of foreign citizens in this country.

More ominous are persistent reports of a US carrier task force, built around the USS Independence, with cruiser and destroyer escort, on full alert and armed with aircraft complement, tons of napalm, sidewinder missiles and anti-personnel fragmentation bombs - and on contingency orders for a mission off Angola. Again, official denials. Now, the carrier Saratoga and escort has put out from Norfolk 'on a routine exchange of vessels of the Mediterranean fleet'. At the same time there are US originated reports of Soviet war vessels moving south along the west coast of Africa - heightening tension and serving perhaps to further a US administration finesse of a Congress reluctant to get entangled in the Angolan war, indeed showing every sign of wanting all US involvement terminated. Consider the effect on the US public of American casualties and the display of captured mercenaries or naval flyers as the South Africans have been.

BISHOP WINTER TO VISIT USA and CANADA

The Right Rev. Colin O'Brien Winter, Bishop of Damaraland-in-exile, who was expelled from his diocese which includes all the Territory of Namibia will tour the United States and Canada in February and March, 1976.

His projected itinerary is:

- 9-13 February - New York City and environs
- 14-18 February - Denver, Fort Collins, Colorado
- 19-23 February - San Mateo, San Francisco, California
- 24-29 February - Houston, Texas
- 1-15 March - Anglican Church of Canada

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