

Clerics Hit 'Barbarism' in Portuguese Colonies

Courier News Summary

United Nations, N.Y. — A Roman Catholic priest exiled from Mozambique has come to the U.N. to charge the Portuguese government with "savage barbarism" in his native land.

Father Mateus Gwengere, who said he had been labelled a "terrorist," also charged Portuguese missionaries with complicity in the "crimes of the colonialists," and predicted that ultimately the church would be forced out with the government.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Raymond-Marie Tchidimbo of Conakry, Guinea, wrote a similar indictment of the Portuguese authorities of Angola, and declared there was "a total confusion of the Cross and the flag."

In a statement prepared for the French Catholic publication, Informations Catholiques Internationales, the archbishop referred to the death of an Angolan priest who had been exiled to Portugal and "frustrated in the Lord's most precious gift to him, that is, liberty."

United Nations bodies have denounced Portugal's actions in Angola. On Nov. 10 the UN General Assembly's Committee on Trusteeship adopted a resolution condemning Portugal's policy in Africa and appealing to all states to help the peoples of Portugal's African territories toward independence.

On Nov. 15 the UN Security Council adopted a resolution condemning Portugal's failure "to prevent the mercenaries from using Angola as a base for armed attacks against the Congo."

Archbishop Tchidimbo said that the late Msgr. Manuel Mendes das Neves, was dean of the cathedral chapter of Luanda and vicar general of that archdiocese when he was arrested.

He was accused of being the head of Angolan "terrorists" and of illegally possessing arms destined for "terrorists."

"But," Archbishop Tchidimbo said, "the basis of the problem was that Msgr. Mendes das Neves desired only the independence of his country: an aspiration of the most legitimate kind."

"In so doing," the archbishop continued, "Msgr. Mendes das Neves kept himself in the tradition of the Church which wills that 'all nations constitute independent political communities.'" The citation is from Pope John XXIII's encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*.

Archbishop Tchidimbo said he did not think that colonialism was totally bad, but he noted that "colonization has had its misdeeds which the colonized societies still feel today." He said there "are still people under colonial domination whose elites, clear-sighted and desirous of ridding themselves of the colonial yoke, are tagged 'crypto-communists' while they are fought and deported as such by the dominating powers."

"The right to liberty is a fundamental good of which no one has the right to dispossess himself," he said. "And Msgr. Mendes das Neves, during his whole life, had desired only this liberty for his country; that

Vernacular Canon in Germany

Berlin—(RNS)—Recitation of the Canon of the Mass in the vernacular will begin on the first Sunday of Advent in the Roman Catholic churches of Germany. The text approved for this purpose by the German hierarchy is expected to be adopted in other German-speaking countries.

is why he was deported and placed under surveillance in the novitiate of the Jesuits at Braga...

The churchman listed eight other native Angolan priests who are now detained in Portugal. He said:

"The most painful aspect of this sad detention is that the Angolan priests in exile are daily kept under surveillance by their colleagues in the priesthood, the Portuguese priests, some of whom make known the comings and goings of the Angolans to the state secret police."

"We witness here a total confusion of the Cross and the flag."

Father Gwengere, who said he was forced to flee from Mozambique in June, now teaches Portuguese in the Mozambique Institute in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. Operated by the Mozambique Liberation Movement, the institute aids refugees from Mozambique.

The Negro priest described for the UN committee cruel tortures which, he said, the Portuguese use to suppress the nationalist movement in Mozambique.

In charging Portuguese missionaries with being accomplices in the suppression of Black Africans, he said that the

Church will be forced out of Mozambique with the Portuguese if the Church continues to be identified with Portuguese policies.

The priest said that there are really two Catholic Churches in Mozambique: "the Salazarist Catholic Church" and the "Roman Catholic Church."

The Salazarist Church, he said, "is reactionary, it does not observe the teachings of Christ." This Church, he continued, "is run by those missionaries, Religious or secular, who are of Portuguese nationality."

The "Roman Catholic Church in Mozambique," Father Gwengere said, "is found in missions where the missionaries are foreigners or Africans. These missionaries," he explained, "endeavor to apply wholly the doctrine of the Church, but they find themselves in everything, and these foreign or African missionaries have a very limited sphere of action."

Father Gwengere also declared: "As long as the Portuguese remain in Mozambique the moral position of the Church will be progressively undermined."

He urged the UN to "take the necessary steps to accelerate the independence of the people of Mozambique."



Bethlehem Nativity Square

Bethlehem — (RNS) — A record number of some 20,000 pilgrims are expected in Bethlehem this year to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ at services in the Nativity Square. The Church of the Nativity stands on the spot where tradition says the manger stood more than 2,000 years ago.

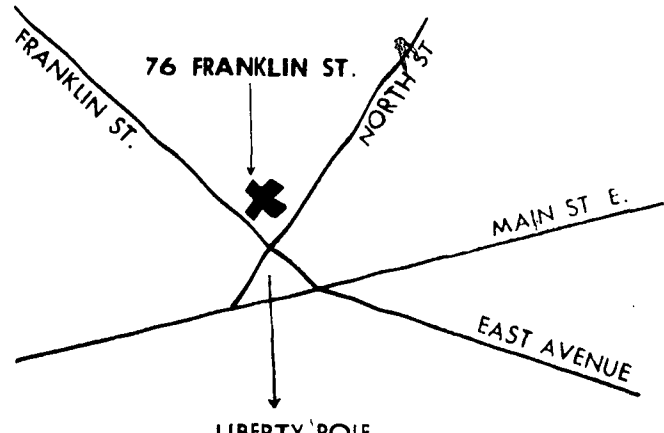
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