

Column Corruption – A social disease • Part 130

History and context in creating a more informed perspective in a corrupt world

"Justice for all", is mentioned in the Namibian Constitution, Chapter 1, Article 1 (1).

Is justice for all people possible in the global context?

History and context can play a critical role in creating a more informed perspective about those that have suffered from all kinds of human injustices such as starvation, genocide and misrepresentation, to mention a few. Over thousands of years the conquerors of empires have written history, e.g. the genocide of the Incas in South America by the Spaniards and the slaughtering of the Indians by the Americans.

The "winners" tend to portray mainly their perceptions about events in an effort to canvass a way of thinking and creating systems and propaganda that suits the government of the day for financial support and political power. "The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history" (Orwell).

Let us focus on one of the most devastating human misrepresentations in recent history.

EISENHOWER'S CAMPS

At the end of World War II between 750 000 and 1.7 million German citizens died in concentration camps (Menuhin). Eisenhower, an American, who was in



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charge of the Allied Forces declared that if he found any of his men supplying Germans in concentration camps with food, they would receive the death penalty. Eisenhower declared that Germans in concentration camps are not Prisoners of War (POW) as defined in terms of the Geneva Convention of 1929, but Disarmed Enemy Forces (DEF), (Menuhin).

The Red Cross could therefore not enter these camps in providing food and medical supplies. In comparison, Hitler allowed the Red Cross entrance to concentrations where captured Allied Forces were kept. One man has played a very critical role in creating a tremendous injustice to millions. "Eisenhower's camps were yet another breach of In-

ternational Humanitarian Law (IHL) which seeks to limit the effects of armed conflict by protecting persons who no longer participating in hostilities" (Menuhin). The camps were also a crime against humanity, as defined by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court Explanatory Memorandum, in that they qualified as acts which were a "particularly odious offense in that it constitutes a serious attack on human dignity or grave humiliation or a degradation of human beings" (Bacque). "I have been at Frankfurt for a civil government conference. If what we are doing is liberty, then give me death. I can't see how Americans can sink so low. It is Semitic, and I am sure of it." (Patton, 1945, as cited in Menuhin).

Eisenhower could have halted the rape, murder and torture of hundreds of thousands of German citizens by the Russians at the end of WWII if he had not given orders to halt the Allied Forces' invasion of Berlin and also halted the invasion of eastern parts of Germany. He deliberately waited for the Russians to invade Berlin (Menuhin).

After WWII, one quarter of Germany was annexed by the Allied Forces, and about fifteen million Germans "expelled in the largest act of ethnic cleansing the world has ever known". Over two

million of these people died either on the road or in concentration camps in Poland and elsewhere. Children were enslaved for years in these camps and the majority of them also died. (Bacque) From the discussion, it is possible to say that a gross injustice has been committed by the Allied Forces and the United States of America. It is also possible to pose a number of questions: Why has the death

of tens of millions of German citizens not been declared as a contravention of the Geneva Convention of 1929? Declared a breach of IHL? Declared as Crimes Against Humanity? What about recognition of the genocide, apology and reparations such as compensation? Is the United States of America (USA) accountable? Will a USA District Court be willing to accept a case against genocide, as is

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