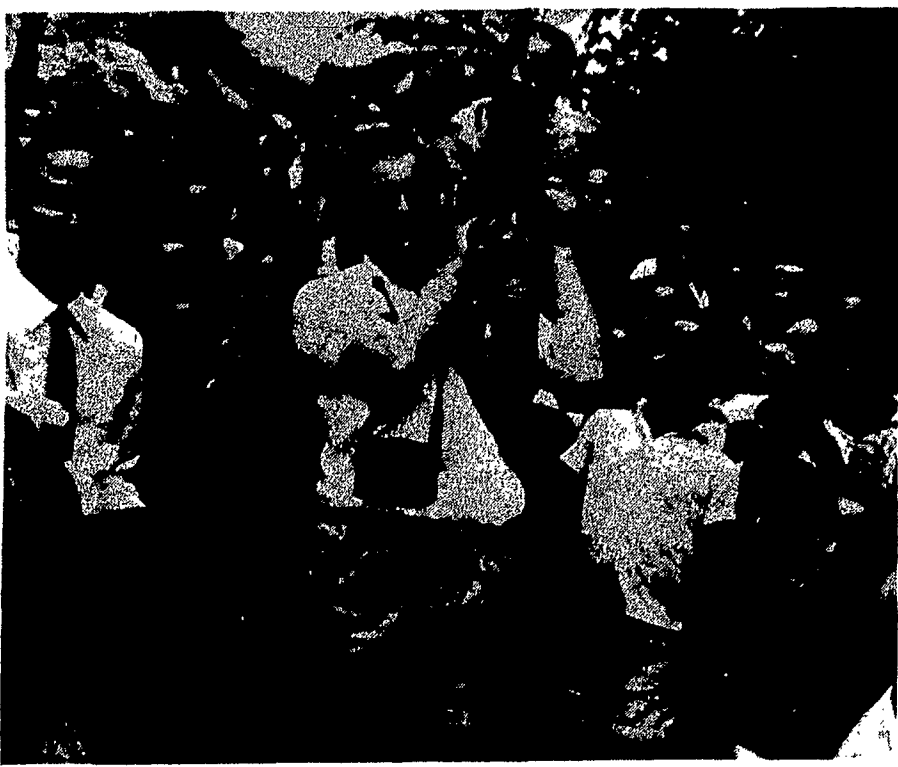


Nigeria vs. Biafra: Can Anybody Win?



Missionaries Still Missing

More than three weeks have passed since a light plane carrying three young American missionaries disappeared over the dense rain forest of central Congo. Max L. Myers, 34, of Moline, Ill., a Methodist layman, who piloted the single-engine Cessna lost since the middle of October, is shown holding a child on his shoulders at a Central Congo village. Also aboard the flight were Mrs. Harrison Goodall and Mrs. Birney C. Hoyt. Mr. Myers and Mrs. Goodall were assigned by the United Christian Missionary Society, a Disciples of Christ agency. Mrs. Hoyt was placed by the Catholic Medical Mission. (RNS)

French Bishops Stress Birth Control Conscience

(Continued from Page 1)

order is not always guilty. It occurs in fact that spouses consider themselves to be confronted by a true conflict of duty.

"On the one hand they are aware of the duty of respect for the opening to life in every conjugal act. They believe themselves in conscience bound to avoid a new birth or postpone it to a little later, and are deprived of resorting to biological rhythm.

"On the other hand, they do not see how, for their part, to renounce a physical expression of their love without the stability of their home being threatened.

"On this subject we simply recall the constant moral teaching: When one faces a choice of duties, where one cannot avoid an evil whatever be the decision taken, traditional wisdom requires that one seek before God to find which is the greater duty.

"The spouses will decide for themselves after reflecting together with the help of the sacraments of marriage and the grace of the Holy Spirit, which course which seems right to him does not in good conscience."

The bishops also had some advice for Catholics who feel the encyclical is fundamentally wrong. They appealed to them to "avoid polemics that cast trouble in souls and stoke unrest in the Church."

Observers noted that sections of the French bishops' statement bore a striking resemblance in content and choice of words to a declaration made by the Canadian hierarchy in September. The Canadian bishops in their statement declared:

"Counsellors may meet others who, accepting the teachings of the Holy Father, find that because of particular circumstances they are involved in what seems to them a clear conflict of duties, e.g., the reconciling of conjugal love and responsible parenthood with the education of children already born or with the health of the mother.

"In accord with the accepted principles of moral theology, if these persons have tried sincerely but without success to pursue a line of conduct in keeping with the given directives, they may be safely assured that whoever honestly chooses that course which seems right to him does so in good conscience."

Umuahia, Biafra — All wars are tragic, and the Biafra-Nigeria war is particularly so, not only because of the millions who have starved or who may starve, but also because the longer it continues, the less likely it becomes that either side can win.

At best, either side can expect to gain only an end to the overt hostilities which are costing them so much money and so many men, and some minimal guarantees of good faith, if not good will, on the part of their leaders.

And even that might be expecting too much, for the Biafrans — or the Ibos, whose tribe constitutes a majority in Biafra — are determined never again to submit to the kind of Nigerian government from which they seceded in 1967.

A four-day trip throughout the Biafran nation made that abundantly clear, not only by the proliferation of roadside signs such as one announcing the "Win the War Hotel," but by the attitude and character of the people.

When the Nigerian federation was formed the Ibos became a mainstay of the civil service. They contributed scores of military officers and educators, as well as clerks and post-office workers.

In addition, they became known throughout the federation as tradesmen and professionals — doctors, lawyers, judges.

"In return we received only the hatred of the other tribes," one Ibo educator said bitterly. "The Fulanis, the Fulani, the Yoruba were jealous of our leadership."

It was not only that. For years the Ibos because of a peculiar combination of circumstances — ardent missionary work, which brought education, the lack of other resources which forced them to turn to themselves as their major resource — had been famous in West Africa.

Like the Jews in Europe and the Chinese in Asia, they were the envied entrepreneurs who scattered throughout tropical Africa to make their fortunes. They were proud of their self-sufficiency, they were determined to prove that their pride was well-earned.

And as in Europe, the scorn which accompanied their success culminated in a pogrom. In Northern and Western Nigeria, hundreds of thousands of Ibos were slain by other tribesmen in 1968.

The return to the homeland began shortly thereafter.

But far from being the solution to their difficulties, the return brought only new troubles.

"We could do no right," said one Ibo chief. "We were too ambitious and too prominent before the pogroms. But when we returned to the East, our homeland, we were accused of running out on the federation — of destroying it for selfish motives."

Under these circumstances, he said, "secession and independence were inevitable. We could no longer



The innocent victims.

take part in the federal government because doing so put us in danger of our lives. And we had to defend ourselves from those who wanted to force us to take part in the federation."

The war began in May 1967. At that time the borders of Biafra were those of the old Nigerian Eastern Region. They enclosed some 12 million persons (the latest pre-war census

figure) plus perhaps 2 million refugees from other parts of Nigeria.

Its capital was Enugu, perilously close to the border with Northern Nigeria. Enugu fell a year ago. Its ports were Port Harcourt and Calabar. They fell this spring. Onitsha, a city on the Niger River on the western edge of Biafra, fell last fall, shortly before Enugu. Owerri, Aba, Ikot Ekpene — all cities between Port Harcourt and the present capital of Umuahia — fell this spring.

But Biafra has not fallen. Despite a shortage of arms and ammunition and the opposition of a well-armed federal force — supplied mainly by Britain — the Biafrans have largely held their own.

They are angry at the daily air raids by Soviet-built MIG jets, piloted by Egyptians. But they are angry not because they have hurt Biafra militarily — they have not touched most of the military targets this writer saw — but because they drop their bombs and strafed hospitals, markets and other civilian centers.

The anger has been easy to translate into increased determination. The Ibos, the memories of the 1966

pogroms still fresh in their minds, see the raids as only one more step in a Nigerian war of genocide against the Ibos.

And the Ibos, who have a reputation for stubbornness unmatched by any other African people, consider the atrocities and the deprivations not as a liability, but as fuel for their energies.

Biafrans are quite willing to contemplate the future should the federal forces overrun them.

"The people in the towns and villages will probably stay there, or perhaps move a little further into the bush until they are sure of their safety," said one. "And they will do just as they please, whatever the Nigerians think they should do, or want them to do."

"The Commandoes will begin guerrilla war, probably from the forests in the East around Bende," predicts Rolf Steiner, the French head of the Biafran elite corps.

And there it is: passive resistance, a la Ghandi and guerrilla war, a la Ho Chi Minh.

Their Luck Runs Out

By JOHN R. SULLIVAN (NC News Service)

Nguru, Biafra — It was 9:30 on a clear, warm Saturday morning when Sister Conrad of Holy Rosary Convent saw that the last of the children had been fed.

There were 4,000 of them in what had been part of a girls' high school before the war.

In another building nearby — a former classroom, with the pictures of plants and animals still chalked on the blackboards — Sister Joseph Therese, an Ibo nun, moved among the 31 children in their cribs.

These children were victims of kwashiorkor, the protein deficiency which has already killed more than a million Biafrans. These were the fortunate ones, however—they were here to receive protein injections, blood transfusions, and constant medical attention. With luck, they would not die.

At 9:30 a.m., Oct. 19, Sister Conrad stood at the door as the last of the 4,000 children and their mothers left.

At 9:30 luck ran out for three of the children. A Nigerian jet fighter, manufactured in the Soviet Union and flown by an Egyptian pilot, passed once over the convent compound, circled and dropped its bomb.

When the debris settled, three children in the clinic were dead. Most of the others were injured. One nurse could no longer help — she was dead. One woman, who gave her time preparing food for the feeding center, would no longer cook—she was dead.

The feeding center, from which 4,000 persons had exited 10 minutes before, was wrecked — one wall was missing, the roof fallen in. The far end of the clinic building, too, had largely disappeared.

Between the two buildings was a crater 17 feet deep and 30 feet in diameter. Two days later, they found a woman's body buried in the dirt in the crater.

"If that bomb had fallen the week before, we wouldn't be counting the dead," said Sister Columba the next Wednesday.

Normally, she explained, the feed-

Pope Congratulates President-Elect

Vatican City — (RNS)—Pope Paul VI has cabled his congratulations to Richard M. Nixon on his election as the 37th President of the United States.

The Pope told Mr. Nixon that he would pray "that God may grant you abundant graces of strength and guidance in carrying out his duties as President.

Full text of the papal message: "Expressing felicitations upon your election to the Presidency, we assure you of our prayers that God may grant you abundant graces of strength and guidance in the accomplishment of your future arduous duties, and may bestow upon you, your family, and the beloved American people prosperity and happiness in justice and true peace."

ing center would be filled until after 10 a.m. But because of recent morning air raids nearby, the people had decided they wanted to start — and finish earlier.

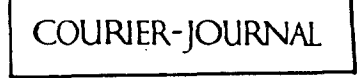
The new schedule had started only a few days before.

Johnson Announces New Biafra Aid

Washington — (NC) — President Lyndon B. Johnson coupled an announcement of new U.S. relief aid to victims of the Nigeria-Biafra war with an indirect plea that the war end soon.

The President noted that the new gift brings American contributions to the International Committee of the Red Cross for its relief work to \$12.5 million in cash, food and equipment.

American voluntary agencies, such as Catholic Relief Service, Church World Service and Jewish agencies, have given more than \$4.3 million. President Johnson, however, recently refused to loan military cargo planes to the relief effort.



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Montreal — (NC) — P. Cardinal Leger, archbishop of Montreal, said in a report to a organization here that patience and stancy are the two virtues lacking as a result of his work in Cameroon, West Africa.

Cardinal Leger, who re-archbishop of Montreal in 1967 to work among Africa, sent a special report to the charity organization which he helped found in which he said:

"My first experience with any activity has taught me two virtues (patience and stancy) are always necessary in the natives the Gospel of. They still retain their patience, and it takes time, to learn to understand a

As Result of Un

Thieu .

Saigon — President N. Thieu has come a long way one year since he was elected executive of South Vietnam.

His response to the evicting weeks has elevated his position of a national leader.

A year ago, at his inauguration, Nov. 1, 1967, there were five observers of the Vietnam who gave him much chance for survival. According to them, compromise selection by the factions of Vietnamese government and administrative coalition of powerhungry. His vice president was his opponent.

Despite this, he is now a country that is more united than at any time since years of the late President Diem, killed in 1963.

Two unlikely elements bined to boost President Thieu's prestige and popularity. The Viet Cong with their new year offensive and Lyndon B. Johnson's decision the bombing of North Vietnam.

During the past year Thieu has been slowly too many foreigners and patrolling his administration had two prime ministers in

His present one, Tran brought an air of respect the administration. He is for his honesty and integrity, of which has rubbed off

Before the Tet offensive, fighters hardly felt the impact fighting, but when the Vi

Catonsville

Baltimore — (NC) — Catonsville Nine," anti-Vietnam testers who burned draft May, were given prison ranging from 2 1/2 to 3 years District Court.

William Kunstler, defer said the convictions will b

The defendants include Berrigan, S.J., Cornell chaplain; Father Phillip S.S.J., of Baltimore; brother Jesuit, Thomas McEvilly, Marjorie, and John Hog Maryknoll missionaries expelled from Guatemala.



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