

The Difference Between Life and Death



These giant cargo planes, shown as they prepared to leave Miami's International Airport, are now ferrying food to the starving Biafrans in Africa. Eight Stratofreighters were sold to the International Red Cross and U.S. religious agencies by the American government to accelerate airlifts of food to Biafra. U.S. sold the planes — four to Red Cross, four to an agency formed by Catholic, Protestant and Jewish welfare groups — at their "scrap value" of \$4,000 each; they cost more than \$1 million

Biafra Missionary Praises Airlifts

New York — (RNS) — The emergency airlifts going into Biafra mean the difference between survival and starvation for a large part of the population, an Irish missionary told relief officials and the press at a meeting here.

Father Dermot Doran, C.S.S., who had just completed his 12th trip through the blockade into Biafra, spoke at a meeting held to prepare for the 23rd annual American Catholic Overseas Aid Fund Appeal. The 1968 appeal, which will be conducted from March 9 to 16, has doubled its usual goal to \$10 million to provide for the Biafra airlift as well as the many other programs of Catholic Relief Services.

Father Doran played tape-recorded interviews he had made on his latest trip to Biafra. In the interviews, a missionary priest, Father Owen Carton, C.S.S., described the feeding of 15,000 children per day at 27 feeding centers in his parish. All he was able to give them, he said, is a few spoonfuls of corn meal with fish sauce once a day. But, he noted hopefully, the kwashiorkor (protein deficiency malnutrition) seems to be waning.

It may be necessary to cut the feedings down from once a day to three times a week, Father Carton said, but added that he hoped not.

"I think this is the only food they get," he said.

Asked by Father Doran, "Do you think sufficient supplies are now coming in?" he replied, "Oh, my God, no! I don't think so."

Also on the tape, Bishop Joseph Whelan of Owerri said that the problem "is to provide enough food for 10 million people — and most of these people are starving."

"The terrible problem is among the poor and especially the children," Bishop Whelan said. "... Whole families are dying of starvation... A whole nation of 10 million people, an educated nation, a wonderful nation, is dying of starvation."

Father Doran told the meeting, "If the airlift were to stop for a week, or even for a few nights, they (the children) would have very little chance of survival."

While the present death rate is not so high as it was in August or September, he said, "people are still dying in large numbers."

The problem is being made worse, he said, by Nigerian bombing of the airstrip at Uli, Biafra's only link to the outside world. He described the airstrip as a cleared space in the jungle, 75 feet wide and a few thou-

sand feet long, "affectionately known to the pilots as the 'sidewalk.'"

The last time he landed on the airstrip, he said, "so did three bombs" which narrowly missed his plane.

"One of the priests greeted me with, 'You certainly came in with a bang,'" he said.

Father Doran recalled the first time he ran the blockade a year ago, answering an unusual call. A Nigerian bishop has asked for flour to make hosts with so that the people could receive Communion at Christmas. Through the aid of a friendly missionary in Brooklyn, Father Doran said, 100,000 Communion wafers were obtained.

He described the Biafra effort as "the greatest humanitarian airlift in history" and said that "no man can now say he has not heard" the cry of hungry Biafran children.

More on Biafra

New York — (RNS) — Nigerian forces are bombing hospitals and churches in Biafra with a regularity that appears systematic, though Nigerian government officials seem unaware of such practices, a Jesuit editor charged in an article published here.

Father John McLaughlin, S.J., 45, editor of America magazine, described the bombing raids he had experienced and areas where he had suspected bomb damage to churches and hospitals during a recent visit to Biafra.

Later, he said, he "discussed the air strikes with ranking Federal Military Government officials. From these conversations I have drawn the conclusion that the Nigerians, even government ministers and staff personnel, have no felt realization of the way in which their air warfare is being carried out against the Biafrans."

Washington — (NC) — A majority of U.S. senators have signed (Jan. 22) a resolution urging President Nixon to increase U.S. aid to the starving people caught in the Nigerian civil war.

Fifty-two senators of widely differing political philosophies signed the advisory resolution calling for the U.S. to provide more food, money, non-combat aircraft and ground vehicles to the people caught in the conflict. At present, thousands are starving daily in Biafra, the former Eastern Region of Nigeria which declared its independence from Nigeria 18 months ago.

THE POPE

Unity Requires New Outlook

Vatican City — Pope Paul has declared that the cause of Christian unity "requires us Catholics too, to change our outlook and therefore our practical attitude."

He told a general audience (Jan. 22) that "we must make this question our own," referring to "Christians outside the visible boundaries of Catholicism."

He said that Catholics "must now look in a new spirit" at separated Christians and at the "controversies and doctrinal errors" which marked these separations.

The Pope said this new spirit should be one of "regret and desire, of humility, of charity and hope."

"We can no longer be content with a mere attitude of defense," the Pope said.

"We must at least suffer from the persecutions in the mystical and visible body of Christ. We must humbly recognize the share of moral guilt which Catholics may have in these things."

"We must appreciate all the good of the Christian patrimony that has been preserved and cultivated among the separated brethren. We must pray steadily and wholeheartedly, that we may deserve their satisfaction."

"We must resume, with dignity, of course, and with the prudence required by grave and difficult questions, cordial friendly contacts with the brothers who are still divided from us."

ROME

Vatican Paper Stirs Storm

By FR. ROBERT A. GRAHAM
Vatican City — (RNS) — The Pope's own newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, ought to rank as the world's dullest daily, so plain is its presentation. But it can and often does kick up a stir. Witness the series of articles on the birth control encyclical written by a professor at the Gregorian University in Rome.

In the last installment, the French Jesuit theologian, Father Joseph Greco, delivered some jabs at critics that the next day earned top treatment on the front page of Rome's Tempo.

That journal's editors thought they found in Father Greco's conclusions an accusation that the majority members of the papal commission on birth control had been under financial pressure to work for a Vatican O.K. "Pressure by Financial Groups," said the headlines, "on the Papal Commission to Approve the Pill."

Naturally, the next day, the Osservatore Romano published the author's vigorous protest against what he called the "absolutely calumnious hypothesis." Father Greco said he had made no allusion in any way to the commission and had no such intention.

The three articles "laid it on the line" in a way that has seldom appeared from the Vatican's corner. Father Greco did not hesitate to criticize some unspecified episcopal conferences for not, in his judgment, having adequately explained to their faithful the doctrinal content of the encyclical of Human Life. He said that the principle of the rights of conscience was used "as an argument, even by some episcopal conferences," without the necessary distinctions. "It is not clear," he said, "how the doctrine itself — of the law of God is preserved, not to speak of preserving the happiness of the couples."

The match that set the bonfire ablaze was the accusation that a well-financed propaganda campaign was at work, at least in his experience, in the past years of controversy.

He wrote, "Those who from 1963 and even before had the possibility of following the studies on the birth control issue, either directly or indirectly, could not fail to know that real pressure groups, very influential, now identified, worked with enormous financial means, with the help of campaigns orchestrated in the mass media. In this case unfortunately these did not live up to their high mission."

"In repeated and strong doses, they allowed themselves to be used for massive brainwashing campaigns from which it is now necessary to clear the world atmosphere if one really expects humanity's road to be that of truth and of life."

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Abortion on Demand Real Anti-Life Aim

(Continued from Page 1)

abortion — even though this was among their backers' chief selling points.

California illustrates the failure of "liberalized" abortion laws to do anything about illegal abortion. California's "liberalized" statute took effect in November, 1967, and in the first half of 1968 there were 2,035 reported legal abortions in the state, about seven times the total before the new law.

Yet it is generally conceded that the California law, which permits abortions when there is judged to be a risk to the physical or mental

health of the mother and in cases of rape and incest, has produced no reduction in the number of illegal abortions in the state.

A national magazine put the total at 100,000, but candid supporters of abortion concede that such figures are wildly inflated and based on guesswork.

It noted, too, that while proponents of easier abortion claimed that as many as 250 women died annually from illegal abortions in Indiana, there were in fact only 23 maternal deaths from all types of abortion — spontaneous, legal and illegal — during the seven-year period from 1960 through 1966.

The committee also took some of the steam out of the dire warnings about defective babies whose mothers had had German measles during pregnancy. Only 43 children with defects were found among 280 infants whose mothers had had the disease in the epidemic year of 1964.

Finally, on the familiar mental health argument for abortion, the Indiana committee stated: "There was no testimony or data submitted that would indicate that pregnancies are a significant mental health problem in Indiana. Rather, the manner and environment in which some become pregnant can cause a mental problem. There also appears to be equal probability that mental problems could be caused from abortion as from pregnancy."

Outside the U.S., meanwhile, there is mounting interest in the way Britain's new law on abortion, which came into effect during 1968, is working. A "social clause" in the British legislation permits, according to some, virtual abortion on demand in that it establishes socio-economic criteria for performing abortions.

Currently it is estimated that 30,000 abortions will be performed under the new law in its first year in operation. Many will be provided free through the country's National Health Service.

Concern has been expressed that London is on its way to becoming a mecca for abortions in the Western world. "London not only has more legal abortionists at work than any other Western city," the British national newspaper, the Observer, reported recently, "but many of them who are in private practice are actively looking for business."

Thus for a variety of reasons abortion on demand emerged during the past year as the real issue in the abortion controversy. This does not mean any slackening of efforts by pro-abortionist forces to enact "reform" laws — authorizing some but not all abortions in states which do not already have them. Supporters of abortion have long viewed such laws as a valuable first step toward their ultimate goal, and they will continue to push for them in the months ahead.

Lawyer, Doctor To Direct Life Committee

(Continued from Page 1)

not only by the United States Constitution but by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Civil law has long recognized the right of inheritance as an inherent right of an unborn child, he continued. The law also guarantees the right of the unborn child to be compensated for injuries sustained to his mother and himself, he added.

"The law has always regarded persons under a disability, such as unborn infants, as being entitled to legal representation in court when their interests are at stake," he explained.

Proposed liberalization of abortion laws, he contended, "makes no provision for recognizing this right to life, nor does it allow anyone to speak for unborn children whose right to life would be threatened in connection with a proposed abortion."

Mr. Cusker, who resides at 341 Coronado Drive in Irondequoit, stated further that he feared that liberalized abortion proposals would lead to later legislation "to allow the termination of life in the case of the elderly and senile population."

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International

Pope Re

Ottawa, Ont. — (R) Prime Minister Pier turned here from a with Pope Paul VI in His Holiness was in changing "diplomatic with Canada.

Mr. Trudeau said of his 45-minute co the Pope was peace i that he had raised diplomatic represent Pope had "responded out pressing."

Before he left Ron said he was prepar argument for an exc with the Vatican to people. He told a Ro ence that in initiati Paul he was not t initiatives down Canada."

"We shall have to opinion," he said, "the arguments for a cluding the view of the hierarchy. We guidance."

Protestant leader strongly to any su Canadian diplomat tioned at the Vatica the envoy already st as Ambassador to th

Defenders of the there are "diplomati close association wi excellent diplomati ponents say such r religious, not po

As the Prime M home the Canadian)

Czech 'Suicid

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"Suicide is never; nal Beran declared.

"Let no one repe

"Instead, let ev it in order to live i they have so cruel young lives."

Speaking "as a j 200, Cardinal-Bax ed the suffering it ing his homeland.

"I weep with yo death of Jan Palach who followed him heroism even tho prove their despair

He said the idea molated themselves good.

"It was the ide of one for the sal said. "It was love it was anxiety for

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Ireland

Second Off In Civil Ri

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Deputy Premier who was also com signed Jan. 24 in Prime Minister T the premier's han lic civil rights m

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Political observ tion for a new I might become ne

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