

Nixon Studying Biafran Problem

(From Courier Journal Services)

Washington — Government officials are hurriedly assembling for President Nixon ideas on what more, if anything, the United States can do to help victims of Nigeria's civil war.

The "Biafran problem," as officials tend to call the conflict between federal Nigeria and the former Eastern region — which seceded May 30, 1967, and was invaded July 6, 1967 — obtruded in Mr. Nixon's first week in office.

Secretary of State William P. Rogers received as his first official visitor Atanasio Ndonge Myone, Foreign Minister of Equatorial Guinea, formerly Spanish Guinea until she gained independence last Oct. 12.

Mr. Ndonge later indicated that his government would reconsider its ban of last December on night relief flights into Biafra from Fernando Po, the island half of the new republic.

Later Mr. Nixon announced that he had ordered an urgent full-scale review of existing United States aid for Nigerian war victims and recommendations on what could be done to "enlarge and expedite it."

What Mr. Nixon's senior advisers in the State Department and other departments will recommend in the next few days and what Mr. Nixon will decide are uncertain. But observers here are noting that on Sept. 10, in a campaign statement, Mr. Nixon affirmed that "the time is long past for the wringing of hands."

"While America is not the world's policeman," he continued, "let us at least act as the world's conscience in this matter of life or death for millions."

Government sources note, in connection with his order for a review of the crisis, that since last November, when President Johnson ordered Under Secretary of State Nicholas deB. Katzenbach to head a Biafra task force, the problems of delivering more relief supplies to both Nigeria and Biafra have been studied exhaustively.

"Congress and the public don't realize that the facilities to handle relief inside Biafra are almost at the saturation point," one expert said. "There's one airstrip with limited parking and warehousing facilities. Biafra allows only night flights, which are risky. You can put all you want into the big end of a funnel—but its what comes out at the small end that matters."

According to its officials, the combined church groups' airlift operating from Portuguese Sao Tome off the Nigerian coast delivers 150 tons of relief supplies nightly to Biafra.

Last Dec. 27, the United States announced that it was selling at a nominal fee eight C-97G cargo airplanes for Nigerian relief, half to the American church groups and half to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The church groups — the Catholic Relief Services, the Church World Services (Protestant) and the American Jewish Committee — have taken title to their four

planes, have hired civilian crews and have already dispatched two planes to Sao Tome. When the four planes enter service, the church groups expect to double their airlift capacity.

"There's a shooting war going on between Nigeria and Biafra," one official said. "That's where the decision lies, not here. Until they stop fighting there's very little relief we can get into Biafra."

This is the view of federal officials who see little more that can be done or that has not been rejected as basically harmful to long-range United States interests in Africa.

Kennedy Scholarship Set Up

Washington — (NC) — The Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation has awarded a three-year \$180,000 grant for professional preparation of Religious and lay teachers in the field of mental retardation education.

The grant underwrites a graduate scholarship program administered in collaboration with the special education department of the National Catholic Educational Association.

The Kennedy scholarship program aims to stimulate recruitment of Religious and lay teachers to teach the mentally retarded in Catholic special schools and classes, and to promote professional excellence among teachers already in the field.

Anti-Obscenity Bill Introduced

Trenton, N.J.—(NC)—A bill aimed at barring the display of obscene material and its sale to minors has been introduced in the State Senate by Sen. Hugh A. Kelly Jr. of Camden County.

Patterned after legislation being debated in other states, it is designed to meet objections raised by the U.S. Supreme Court to other anti-obscenity statutes.

It provides two specific defenses for the display of material which could be considered obscene, both being related to bona fide artistic purposes.

Catholics Urged

To Apply for School Boards

New York — (RNS)—Recognizing that local public school boards may determine how federal programs will be applied to parochial schools, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York has urged its members to seek membership in those boards.

Msgr. George A. Kelly, secretary of education for the archdiocese, made the suggestion in a letter sent to 200 parish priests. They were asked to submit the names of four of their parishioners who might make potential school board members.

Hey, Mrs. McGee



Wednesday is Prince Spaghetti Day... that leaves oodles of time for noodles.

A PRODUCT

New Role for Women Scored as 'Restrictive'

Chicago — (RNS)—American women "will not be pleased" by the Vatican's permission for them to take new roles in the liturgy because it is restrictive, a spokesman for a women's organization said here.

She noted that the permission is effective "only when the congregation is segregated, that is, when only women are present."

Dr. Elizabeth Farians, a Catholic chairman of the Ecumenical Task Force on Women and Religions of the National Organization for Women, said that the permission, granted by the Consultation for Implementing the (Vatican II) Constitution on the Liturgy, "retards to grant them a privilege while at the same time casting doubts on their worthiness to perform these privileged liturgical functions."

The permission specifies that women may act as lectors, commentators or leaders of congregational singing when no men are available for those services.

It is applied "especially" to religious, and it says that women may take their litur-

gical role "while standing outside the presbyterium," the area immediately around the altar, reserved for priests and acolytes. This provision implicitly reaffirms the ban on women serving as "altar boys."

"Lay women" she said, "are regarded as suspect by Roman authorities. Actually, women (religious or lay) are to be used only in case of necessity. Necessity is interpreted to mean when a male is not available."

The Catholic Church is now more clearly spelled out than ever. Lay women, who numerically outnumber every other group in the Church, are last on the list. They can function only when absolutely no one else is available and the lay male precedes even the woman religious.

Dr. Farians predicted that American women will not accept the document "without question."

"They will want to know why they cannot enter the sanctuary," she said. "They will bluntly ask if it is because male Church officials still hold that women will defile the altar."

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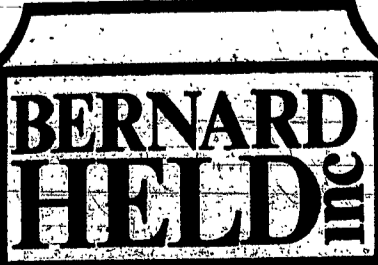
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