

GALLEY
10/14/68

KEEP NIGERIA ONE

HP✓
HH✓
RMA
MS✓
LS✓
LS✓
BT✓
JER✓
JB✓

Having just returned from Nigeria after living there for three years and having been through two coup d'etats, I feel I can speak about the Civil War with slightly better insight than others. I think it a shame indeed that people with good intentions here at Bemington are being persuaded to support a cause that calls for the balkanization of Nigeria and the whole continent of Africa.

The East Central State of Nigeria known as Biafra does not solely consist of people belonging to the Ibo tribe. There are many, many people there belonging to minority tribes such as the Efik, Ibibio and Calabari. It is on their land that oil was discovered. It is in the minority tribe land regions that a large part of Nigerian resources is found. When the plan of secession was announced these minority tribes made it known throughout Nigeria that they were not to be a part of Biafra but instead to remain loyal to Nigeria. Following this announcement hundreds of Biafran soldiers marched on the villages of the Calabari people and slaughters took place too brutal and despicable to relate in a short galley. News straight from the front shows the Biafran atrocities and their ruthless suppression of the minority tribes. Of course atrocities occur in any war but the Federal forces have taken extra precautions to keep unnecessary brutality at a minimum. Just last June two officers were publicly executed in Benin for damaging civilian property. But Biafran soldiers have practically destroyed the entire Calabar region, massacring whole villages. Are these people to be held up as the paragons of courage and justice?

The United States, France and Portugal are supporting the Biafran cause. Are you going to support nations with their bloody histories? Since when is the United States so humanitarian as to worry about 10,000 starving people (a number grossly exaggerated) when she perpetrates unspeakable horrors on the people of Vietnam? Look at Portugal's history in Angola. Look at France's history in Central Africa. These nations are out for the exploitation of the Nigerian people. Do they have your support?

I would strongly suggest that people running this campaign to keep Biafra alive stop to consider what they are doing. Write for information on the war from the Federal point of view. Speak to people of different opinions. Prolonging this war is only harmful to the people of Nigeria, Biafran and Federal. The Nigerian people are tired of this savage and bloody war. General Yakubu Gowon, the Supreme Commander of the Nigerian Military Forces has asserted that the Ibo people will be able to return to Nigeria and live in peace with their fellow Nigerians. Any wounds that are left will be healed by time.

And to all those "humanitarians" who are relieving their guilt by campaigning for the futile and harmful cause of Biafra, I would suggest that you put a little effort into the movement that is trying to prevent the wholesale slaughter of the black people in this country and leave Africa to determine her own future. The African people are ready!

Caleen J. Sinnette