



"WHY WE TRAVELLED TO NIGERIA..."Cont'd



Black Press delegates, including Terry Jones (center) listen to a leader in Ogoniland explain the destruction and vandalism that occurred in the oil fields in Ogoniland

We have called on the United States government not to cut off all relations with Nigeria, for we know that nothing constructive will occur from non-communication and certainly if the end result is really for democracy to prevail in Nigeria then the United States of

America must continue in its role to help promote democracy all over the world, Yes Mr. President even in Nigeria.

On the subject of Democracy, we agree with many Nigerians we spoke with, that the U.S. form of democracy will not work in Nigeria, we believe they deserve an opportunity to find a democracy that will



During a visit to the Ooni of Ife, Tribal Leader in Ife, Nigerian members of the Black Press delegation posed with the Ooni and his tribe

fit their unique situation very much different than that of the United States. We are talking about hundreds of tribes, language differences and many other factors that must be taken into consideration. But, most of all, we remind the United States government that U.S.A. democracy has not

worked and is not always working in the interest of a large segment of citizens...the African-American.

Lastly, we ask that the American public keep an objective eye and ear open on the Nigerian situation, for it is my belief that all the REAL concerns and objectives for these actions against Nigeria are yet to be



The Black Press delegation was hosted by the First Lady, Maryam Abacha, during their fact-finding trip shown outside her office in Abuja

revealed.

This was the first of what we expect will be several trips by the Black Press to Nigeria. We hope that other areas of concern such as education and health care expressed to us by those on the opposition side will be investigated upon subsequent trips. My greatest concern in forming an opinion on many of the issues is because those who say we were "hoodwinked," that our opinions are wrong, have yet to provide any documentation to substantiate their charges. But, we are certain that the position the Black Press delegation has taken will be vindicated. ■

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR THE OTHER SIDE: OGO NI TRIAL AND EXECUTIONS

The Nigerians are learning the hard way that the majority media and the international liberal left network is a dangerous foe. Black Americans can remember for generations how their actions were given a negative spin and their image distorted by white writers and their Black allies who subscribe to a leftist ideology. Pragmatic activists for social change always had to remember to be twice as careful and obey all of the laws scrupulously, to avoid becoming victims of police brutality, false arrest, unjust convictions, mob lynchings and hate bombings. The majority press could always be counted on to give a worst case scenario of the Blacks and a best case scenario of the whites involved. Blacks were presumed guilty while whites were presumed innocent.

Now in the Western media we see the Nigerians becoming victims of the same kind of racist double standard, depicted by misinformation and disinformation. The current outcry against the Nigerian Special Civil Disorders Tribunal's decision to execute Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others for the murder of four elders of the Ogoni Tribe is a case in point.

The fact that the murders took place in a gruesome and barbaric way in May of 1994 is not described in the news. The fact that Ken Saro-Wiwa formed a Youth Wing within the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) and unleashed a lawless reign of terror intimidating any who did not adopt the policies they advocated is not reported in the news.

The fact that they became a vigilante group loyal only to Saro-Wiwa, and in 1993 burned ballot boxes and prevented people from free assembly to discuss their views is not reported. The fact that in 1994 they invaded the palace, picked up the original founders of the Ogoni People's Movement who disagreed with Ken Saro-Wiwa and murdered them in cold blood is not reported.

It is not reported that those who escaped the mindless killings called for government protection, and other law abiding citizens started wondering why a "group of bandits" should be allowed to be a law unto themselves, print their own flags, make their own laws, kill their neighbors—the Adonis, the Okrikas and the Nadokis, sack police stations, chase magistrates out of courts, beat up oil workers, blow up oil stations, put up 150 road blocks and make Ogoniland unsafe for business activity and human habitation.

It is not reported that only 1.27% of Nigeria's oil production comes from Ogoniland, and Shell Oil Company stopped production in May

1993 without decreasing total Nigerian oil output. The Adonis produce 23% of crude oil production in the Rivers State and have never had to resort to terrorist acts against the oil companies. Is it possible that Saro-Wiwa had motives other than environmental protection in his campaign of violence?

It is not reported that a federal court of appeals judge headed a special tribunal to try the suspects including Saro-Wiwa. They had free access to counsel of their choice. They intimidated potential prosecution witnesses. They had an open trial and the international press, and human rights groups were free to come and observe.

Finally, it is not reported that the tribunal acquitted six of those on trial.

To read the wire service reports that have been uncritically accepted and copied by the American majority press, one would only imagine that an innocent intellectual had been framed and false allegations had been made, an unjust decision made, and an unjustified execution had taken place. One would assume that a Nobel Peace nominee could not possibly be a murderer or a terrorist determined to overthrow the government. The Nigerian Government is presumed guilty. The man who killed the elders of his tribe is presumed innocent by a press that had made up its mind and doesn't want to be confused by any new facts.

To watch the outrage expressed by the Commonwealth, the European Union and the United States, one would think that Nigeria was not a sovereign nation with the right to conduct business and maintain law and order within its borders just as Red China, North Vietnam, North Korea, Syria, and many other nations are without our racist neocolonial interference.

Would the Nigerians do well to learn from the Black American experience and use the white power structure to achieve its own objectives? Perhaps it would have been better not to execute, in return for airplane landing rights and lifting restrictions on the travel of Nigerian High Officials and lifting restrictions due to alleged drug transshipment, charges and decertification.

President Mandela and other Africans could defend the "engagement and dialogue" approach to bringing Nigeria back into the international community. Then the Coalition for Fairness to Nigeria could build support in America for an equitable United States policy replacing the policy of sanctions and isolation that some powerful forces among American Africanists are advocating.