The Biafran War and Postcolonial Humanitarianism

Spectacles of Suffering

The Biafran War and Postcolonial Humanitarianism

In the summer of 1968, audiences around the globe were shocked when newspapers and TV stations confronted them with photographs of starving children in the secessionist Republic of Biafra. This global concern fundamentally changed how the Nigerian Civil War was perceived: an African civil war that had been fought for one year without fostering any substantial interest from international publics became "Biafra" – the epitome of a humanitarian crisis. Based on archival research from North America, Western Europe, and sub-Saharan Africa, this book is the first comprehensive study of the global history of the conflict. A major addition to the flourishing history of human rights and humanitarianism, it argues that the global moment "Biafra" is closely linked to the ascendance of human rights, humanitarianism, and Holocaust memory in a postcolonial world. The conflict was a key episode for the restructuring of the relations between "the West" and the "Third World."

LASSE HEERTEN is currently head of the "Imperial Gateway: Hamburg, the German Empire, and the Making of a Global Port" project, funded by the DFG (German Research Council) at the Freie Universität Berlin. He has previously served as a Postdoctoral Fellow in Human Rights at the University of California at Berkeley.

Human Rights in History

Edited by
Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, University of California, Berkeley
Samuel Moyn, Harvard University, Massachusetts

This series showcases new scholarship exploring the backgrounds of human rights today. With an open-ended chronology and international perspective, the series seeks works attentive to the surprises and contingencies in the historical origins and legacies of human rights ideals and interventions. Books in the series will focus not only on the intellectual antecedents and foundations of human rights, but also on the incorporation of the concept by movements, nation-states, international governance, and transnational law.

Also in the Series:

Michal Givoni, *The Care of the Witness: A Contemporary History of Testimony in Crises*

Steven Jensen, *The Making of International Human Rights: The 1960s, Decolonization, and the Reconstruction of Global Values*

Eleanor Davey, *Idealism beyond Borders: The French Revolutionary Left and the Rise of Humanitarianism, 1954–1988*

Jörg Fisch, translated by Anita Mage, *The Right of Self-Determination of Peoples: The Domestication of an Illusion*

Fabian Klose, editor, *The Emergence of Humanitarian Intervention: Ideas and Practice from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*

Young-sun Hong, *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime*

Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno, editors, *Humanitarian Photography: A History*

Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *René Cassin and Human Rights: From the Great War to the Universal Declaration*

Sarah B. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network*

Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, editor, *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*

Linde Lindkvist, *Religious Freedom and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

The Biafran War and Postcolonial Humanitarianism

Spectacles of Suffering

Lasse Heerten

Freie Universität Berlin

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi - 110002, India

79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107111806
DOI: 10.1017/9781316282243

© Lasse Heerten 2017

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2017

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data
Names: Heerten, Lasse, author.
Title: The Biafran War and postcolonial humanitarianism : spectacles of suffering / Lasse Heerten, Freie Universitat Berlin.
Description: Cambridge, N.Y., NY : Cambridge University Press, [2018] | Series: Human rights in history | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017021913 | ISBN 9781107111806 (alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Nigeria – History – Civil War, 1967–1970 – Civilian relief. | Food relief – Nigeria, Eastern – History. | Humanitarian assistance – Nigeria, Eastern – History. | Postcolonialism – Nigeria – History. | Nigeria – History – Civil War, 1967–1970 – Influence. | Nigeria, Eastern – History – 20th century.
Classification: LCC DT515.836.H44 2018 | DDC 966.905/2 – dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017021913

ISBN 978-1-107-11180-6 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

spectacle, n.

[. . .]

I.

1.

a. A specially prepared or arranged display of a more or less public nature (esp. one on a large scale), forming an impressive or interesting show or entertainment for those viewing it. [. . .]

2.

A person or thing exhibited to, or set before, the public gaze as an object either (a) of curiosity or contempt, or (b) of marvel or admiration. [. . .]

3.

a. A thing seen or capable of being seen; something presented to the view, esp. of a striking or unusual character; a sight. Also fig. [. . .]

II.

[. . .]

6.

c. fig. *A means or medium through which anything is viewed or regarded; a point of view, prepossession, prejudice, etc. [. . .]*

(Oxford English Dictionary Online, www.oed.com/view/Entry/186057?isAdvanced=false&result=1&rskey=P2qDKs& (accessed July 24, 2013)

The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.

(Débord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 12)

. . . And the person or thing photographed is the target, the referent, a kind of little simulacrum, any eidolon emitted by the object, which I should like to call the Spectrum of the Photograph, because this word retains, through its root, a relation to "spectacle" and adds to it that rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead.

(Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 9)

[. . .] l'opinion publique alertée par une vaste campagne de presse découvrit cet été, avec effarement, des spectacles oubliés depuis les camps de concentration nazis [. . .].[1]

(Debré, *Biafra: An II*, 17–18)

[1] "[. . .] alerted by a vast press campaign this summer, public opinion discovered, with alarm, images forgotten since the Nazi concentration camps."

Contents

Acknowledgments — *page* ix
List of Abbreviations — xiii

Introduction — 1

Part I The Emergences of Biafra

1 The End of Empire and the Coming of Postcolonial Conflict — 25
2 The Biafran Campaign for Self-Determination in a Postcolonial World of States — 51
3 The Transnational Internationalization of the Biafran Campaign — 83

Part II Biafra on a Global Stage

4 Creating "Biafra": The Discovery of Civil War as a Humanitarian Crisis — 107
5 "Biafran Babies": Humanitarian Visions of Postcolonial Disaster — 140
6 Auschwitz in Africa? Biafra, Holocaust Memory, and the Language of Rights — 175
7 Distant Suffering and Close Concerns: Biafra and the Third World in the Global Sixties — 205

Part III The Ends and Afterlives of Biafra

8 Biafra, the Internationalism of States, and the Question of Genocide — 265

9 The End of Biafra, the End of the Lobby 293
10 The Afterlives of Biafra 312
Conclusion 333

Bibliography 343
Index 393

Acknowledgments

Based on the research for my doctoral thesis, this book has been in the making for quite some time. Along the way, I have incurred more debts than I can list here. My sincere thanks are first and foremost due to my supervisor Paul Nolte, who has supported the project from its inception. His friendliness, professional reliability, and intellectual curiosity, as well as his critical assessment of some of my more lofty claims were crucial for this project. I thank Andreas Eckert, whose supervision and collegiality have proven as vital as his perspective as an Africanist. During the final stages of the project, Sebastian Conrad has become an additional supervisor, and warmly welcomed me to his team. Special thanks are due to Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, who has acted as my intellectual mentor for more than a decade now. The initial ideas for this project were a result of this exchange. Without our discussions, I would never have embarked on this project. Samuel Moyn, who edits the series in which this book is published together with Stefan, also deserves special thanks for his tireless support and ever-perceptive advice. I am particularly grateful that he took the time to meet me – on a Sunday! – to discuss a conference paper of mine when I was traveling through New York years ago.

Over the years, a number of academic institutions provided me with the intellectual homes needed to conclude such a project. In Oxford, I have profited enormously from the place's intellectually stimulating and socially enjoyable environment. I am grateful for the company of fellow Jesubites and fellow students, in particular those, like Andrew Tompkins, who have become friends. My advisor, Tom Buchanan, has supported this project with patience and intellectual curiosity. Patricia Clavin has taken the time to discuss my project at length, even though she was on a sabbatical. Her guidance was providential. After my return to Berlin, Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann's research unit "Wandel des Politischen" at the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam, and the research areas for contemporary history and for global history at the FU

Berlin, have provided me with equally stimulating and pleasant intellectual homes. My thanks go to all members of these groups, as well as those of the Human Rights Program and the History Department at Berkeley, where I spent an enormously rewarding year.

This project could not have been pursued without the generous financial support of a number of institutions, in particular a doctoral scholarship of the Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes and fellowships financed by the German Research Council in the SFB 640 at the Humboldt Universität and SFB 980 at FU Berlin, as well as a postdoctoral fellowship in the Human Rights Program at Berkeley. The various research trips were also financed with the support of the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung, Potsdam and Jesus College, Oxford. Many thanks are also due to the staff of libraries and archives in various countries and places. Without their help, there would have been no project to pursue.

I have presented different parts of my research at various stages of the project to a number of audiences. I am thankful for the opportunity to present my thoughts and findings at the German Studies Association annual meeting in Arlington, VA, workshops in the Human Rights Program at Berkeley, at the University of Cambridge, the Fritz-Thyssen Stiftung in Cologne, Columbia University, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, the Historikertag in Hamburg, the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies, Balliol College and St. Antony's College in Oxford, and in research seminars and colloquiums at Freie Universität Berlin (twice), Ruhr-Universität Bochum and Universität Freiburg.

Thanks are also due to all the colleagues who discussed my and their projects with me at workshops, talks, and seminars. They are too many to be named here, but my gratefulness is sincere. I especially thank all colleagues who have shared their unpublished manuscripts with me. I thank all the friends and colleagues who read the dissertation and enriched it with their criticism, comments, and advice. Individual chapters have been read and commented on by Catherine Davies, Ephraim Desisa, Timothy Goering, Sebastian Gottschalk, Eva-Maria Holzgreve, Christoph Kalter, Tom Laqueur, Sebastian Tripp, Daniel Tödt, and Andrew Tompkins. Larger parts have been read and enriched by Jonas Brendebach. Andrew Tarrant has proofread the entire first dissertation draft. Tom Koltermann helped me create the index. Peggy O'Donnell has worked through the monstrously overlong first draft of the book manuscript to help me revise it and cut it to an acceptable length.

Special thanks are due to my parents Dagmar and Ernst Heerten and the rest of my family, who have supported my academic endeavors unwaveringly. I am grateful. I thank all of my friends who spent time with me

in the last years when I was not working on – and at times even not thinking about – this project. I am particularly grateful for the support and understanding of my flatmates in the Bendastr. WG when the "Doktorarbeit" turned into a new and not always pleasant cohabitant, who consumed more time and space than the other three together.

Finally, I owe Eva-Maria Holzgreve my sincere gratitude for her love, support and fruitful criticism, but in particular for bearing with me over these years. As this project comes to a conclusion, we are embarking on an entirely new journey together. I dedicate this book to her and our son Jonathan Aimé.

Abbreviations

ACDP	Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik, Sankt Augustin
ACKBA	American Committee to Keep Biafra Alive
AEK	Archiv des Erzbistums Köln
AG	Action Group
AHR	American Historical Review
ADRK	Archiv Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, Berlin
AdsD	Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Bonn
ARC	American Red Cross
CAD	Centre des Archives Diplomatiques, La Courneuve
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschland
CPN	Committee for Peace in Nigeria
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern
EEC	European Economic Community
EKD	Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland
EZA	Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin
FAZ	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FO	Foreign Office of the British Government
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
GFBVA	Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker Archives, Göttingen
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IO	International Organization
JCA	Joint Church Aid
MASSOB	Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra
MCF	Movement for Colonial Freedom
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

NARA	National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, USA
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	Northern People's Congress
NSC	National Security Council
OXA	Oxfam Archives, Bicester, UK
OAU	Organization of African Unity
RHL	Oxford Rhodes House Library
RPCV	Returned Peace Corps Volunteer
PA AA	Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin
SCPC	Swarthmore College Peace Collection
SCRBC	Schomburg Center for Research on Black Culture, New York
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
UK NA	United Kingdom National Archives, Kew
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UN ARMS	United Nations Archives and Records Management Section, New York
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
UNOG	United Nations Organisation Archives Geneva, Switzerland
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCCA	World Council of Churches Archives, Geneva, Switzerland
WEU	Western European Union

Introduction

It all began with an epiphany. In late summer 1968, when the winds of New Left protest that had swept through the French capital were beginning to calm down, a group of young doctors left Paris to embark on a humanitarian mission. The medics had enlisted with the French Red Cross's relief operation to aid the civilian population of the West African secessionist state Biafra. The former Eastern Region of Nigeria, which had proclaimed its independence a year before, was facing a humanitarian catastrophe of potentially calamitous proportions. In the civil war that followed Biafra's secession, the Nigerian government put a blockade into effect that dried up the food supply of the landlocked breakaway state. When the French doctors arrived in Biafra, large parts of the population were already afflicted by starvation. Appalled by the sight of the sick and malnourished children and mothers, the aid workers decided that they had to alert the world to what they were seeing: genocide. In the hospitals and refugee camps of Biafra, these French doctors discovered the suffering of the "Third World."[1]

Journalists sent into the enclave reacted similarly. As famed British photojournalist Don McCullin later recalled, what he had to witness in Biafra differed widely from what he had experienced in Vietnam, the Congo or any other conflict he had covered before. In the mission stations of Biafra, he saw the "horrors that were to leave the most enduring impression on my mind [. . .] – the orphaned and abandoned children of Biafra."[2] The humanitarian crisis area was no place for adventure, no "stage for heroism." This experience completely changed his "attitude to warfare." McCullin, as he wrote, "lost all interest in photographing soldiers in action and wanted only to show the world the results of man's inhumanity to man."[3] Years later, the photographer still wished to "demolish the memory of it" but could not leave these

[1] See e.g. Berman, *Power*, ch. 4; Bortolotti, *Hope*, introduction and ch. 2. Kouchner, "Préface"; Kouchner, *Charité Business*, 207–23; Kouchner, *Le malheur*, 107–18; Hamon and Rotman, *Génération, Volume II*, 11–20.

[2] McCullin, *Unreasonable Behaviour*, 122. [3] McCullin, *Sleeping*, 78.

gruesome sights behind.[4] Neither could his colleague Stuart Heydinger. No less seasoned than McCullin, after his assignment for the *Daily Telegraph Magazine* in Biafra, he decided that he would never again report from such crisis areas.[5] McCullin drew different conclusions. Making this pain visible was the photographer's task: "like [the] memories of those haunting pictures of the Nazi death camps, we cannot, must not be allowed to forget the appalling things we are all capable of doing to our fellow human beings."[6] Troubling as these assignments were, by mid-1968, when famine hit the enclave, reporters thus began to stream into Biafra. With British newspapers blazing the trail, newsstands across Western Europe and North America were soon plastered with pictures of Biafra's children, of emaciated figures with bloated bellies and vacant eyes. The British broadcaster ITN was the first to televise images from the area, with other stations following soon. Within a few weeks, the Nigerian Civil War was turned into a humanitarian crisis on the newspaper pages and TV screens of contemporaries almost around the globe.

The war became the first postcolonial conflict to engender a global surge of humanitarian sentiment and activism. Contemporaries across the West feared that the Igbos, the dominant ethnic group in Biafra, would become the victims of genocide.[7] The willingness to donate money was remarkable. A host of intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations organized airlifts to bring food into Biafra. The crisis prompted the establishment of numerous new activist groups: Biafra committees mushroomed in the West, began to raise funds for the relief operation, and lobbied Western governments to change their foreign policy agendas. Some of these ad hoc committees evolved into NGOs that continue to play a critical role in today's transnational human rights regime, like the Irish NGO Africa Concern or the German organization Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker.[8] The most prominent organization that came out of the Biafra campaign was Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF),[9] founded by the young French doctors who served for the French Red Cross in Biafra. Defying ICRC rules that prohibit public actions that may alienate host governments, they formed an activist group, the "Comité de lutte contre le génocide au Biafra"[10] to advocate for the cause of the starving Biafrans. The Comité evolved into MSF, a human rights NGO, which, according to its proponents,

[4] McCullin, *Unreasonable Behaviour*, 124.
[5] *Just a Moment*, 92–9. [6] McCullin, *Unreasonable Behaviour*, 124.
[7] I will use the spelling "Igbo," but will leave alternative spellings such as "Ibo" unaltered in sources.
[8] Society for Threatened Peoples. [9] Doctors Without Borders.
[10] Committee to Combat the Genocide in Biafra.

revolutionized humanitarian work in the closing decades of the twentieth century by calling into question the sovereignty of governments that violate the human rights of their populations, breaking ranks with the ICRC and its cautious diplomacy.

This is at least how founding figures of MSF and many other proponents of this "new humanitarianism" narrate their origin myth: the story of the humanitarian aid operation to Biafra. In these narratives, the Biafran War serves as a watershed event, marking the end of the first century of humanitarianism that began with the founding of the ICRC in 1863 and the passing of the first Geneva Conventions one year later. The founding of MSF in the aftermath of the Biafran famine occurred roughly a century later, at the end of this classical era of humanitarianism. The Nigerian Civil War thus ushered in a new form of human rights politics, one that first emerged in the mission stations and hospitals of Biafra and took full shape in the post–Cold War era, the apogee of humanitarian interventionism. Since Biafra, this new generation of humanitarian activists has discarded the "bystander mentality" of their predecessors, waging media campaigns that focus on the victims. Military intervention, too, is on the table: since NATO's intervention in Kosovo against Milošević's Yugoslavia in 1999, military campaigns have been waged in the name of humanity. The Biafran famine initiated a new age of humanitarian catastrophe broadcast by modern media: the "age of televised disaster" had begun.[11]

Two central tropes can be drawn from these narratives: the "revelation" of the suffering of the "other" in the Third World, and the "revolution" of international politics that the humanitarians initiated afterwards.[12] The trope of "revelation" emphasizes the "discovery" of a whole new world of suffering. As a synecdoche, the sight of the other in pain encapsulates the misery of the Third World in toto. For the protagonists of this humanitarian narrative, this "revelation" is an awakening to the cause of human rights. In the self-styled accounts, as well as in the texts of the movement's hagiographers, these individuals then begin to devote their lives to helping others, unable to bear the misery. A sensory impression – the sight of suffering – is all that their empathy needs to be translated into action. A "revelation" is also a common trope in accounts of the Biafran War: the images of famine globally transmitted from the enclave. The power of images to move people to action is widely held to

[11] Ignatieff, *Warrior's Honor*, 124. See also Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*; Fassin and Pandolfi, eds., *Contemporary States*; Finucane, "Changing roles," 247; Forsyth, "Foreword," 7; Harrison and Palmer, *News*; Moorehead, *Dunant's Dream*, 622; de Waal, *Famine Crimes*, 72–7.

[12] On representations of the "other" see Hall, "Spectacle of the 'Other.'"

be the main reason for the emergence of the transnational campaign on behalf of Biafra. Historians of the conflict also follow this simple model of stimulus and response: when the world was suddenly "confronted with the horrors" of Biafra, they explain, "mass efforts to help [. . .]" followed quickly.[13] The "revelation" of the suffering of the Biafran children leads to almost automatic empathic reactions.

This model of natural empathy is embedded within a "revolution": globalization. The trope of "revolution" should thus not be misunderstood as socialist *Klassenkampf*. The proponents of what came to be called *sans-frontiérisme* ventured to revolutionize international politics *tout court*: the sovereignty of governments, the central tenet of post-Westphalian international order, could not be left unchallenged any longer. Concerned citizens would act on behalf of other citizens, often of other states, to subvert the excesses of state power, which had been evinced so brutally during the World War II and now in a world of despotic postcolonial governments. The visual impetus of "revelation" is not absent from the trope of "revolution." The humanitarian activists forged an alliance with the media, in particular television and photojournalism. To transform international relations and to elevate the power of non-state actors, the citizens of the world needed to be turned into witnesses of the suffering of others.

Similar tropes can be seen at work in the historiography of human rights. In classic accounts of the ascendance to their late-twentieth-century apogee of political currency, human rights are described as "visions seen," tirelessly advocated by strong-willed compassionate individuals working toward a "revolution" of human relations and politics. These individuals are presented as possessing a greater gift of empathy than most of their contemporaries: the "revelation" of human rights coming down on them, they will not flinch until their moral utopia is turned into reality.[14] These tropes can be seen as well, even in accounts that focus less on individual actors. Historians like Lynn Hunt ascribe the rise of human rights to a moral revolution initiated by the European Enlightenment, explaining the emergence of human rights as a result of a new emotional order established then, evolving around what she calls "imagined empathy." At the core of this "revolution" is also a "revelation." After their discovery, human rights expand further and further, simply because of their sheer moral force: once their innate truth is revealed, nothing can stop the "cascading logic" of human rights.[15]

[13] Gould, *Struggle*, 78. See also Smith, *Genocide*, 67 and Wirz, *Krieg in Afrika*, 162.
[14] Lauren, *Visions Seen*. See also Glendon, *World Made New*; Winter, *Dreams*, ch. 4; Winter and Prost, *Cassin*.
[15] Hunt, *Inventing*, 32.

The model of "revelation" and "revolution," however, is a weak one: a person's empathic reaction comes naturally as a result of seeing suffering. Yet, this cannot be true as a blanket statement in view of the many crises and wars that do not become the object of humanitarian campaigns. It takes more than a "revelation" to create such a movement. If we recognize that they are more complicated, however, the tropes of "revelation" and "revolution" can be helpful. The sentiment that something is morally wrong – such as the starvation of children – is a prerequisite for a campaign aiming to undo such an injustice. Yet, in order to animate a network of activists, a cause needs to occupy a prominent place within the "complex of aspirations and concerns" of its key actors, as Christopher Leslie Brown has shown in his seminal study of British abolitionism. Humanitarian causes need to relate "to broader needs and aims of particular actors, to their cultural, political and even personal agendas."[16] In other words: the "distant suffering" has to be turned into a close concern.[17]

Recently, younger historians in particular have turned the study of human rights, long neglected by historians, into a burgeoning field of historical inquiry. In a trenchant critique of Hunt's account of humanitarian sentiment and revolutionary rights as a product of the enlightenment, Moyn set the tone for an emergent new human rights history: human rights, Moyn argues, were a product of the late twentieth century.[18] Contrary to their predecessors – "natural rights" and the "rights of man" – human rights were not tied to national sovereignty. For the rights of man in the French revolutionary tradition, the nation-state was the guarantor of rights. The *declaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* made this connection explicit: the rights-bearer is man as citizen. In the human rights regime of today, this has substantially changed: now, the nation-state is the supreme violator of human rights from which individuals need protection, and a supranational legal regime is being envisioned as a safeguard against the excesses of sovereign power. In an age when most political ideologies had lost their allure – most prominently revolutionary socialism – the ideal of human rights thus emerged as Western societies' "last utopia."[19] This new explanation for the rise of human rights is connected to a new meta-narrative about the second half of the twentieth century. Skeptical of narratives that focus on especially empathic individuals or on the power of the unveiled truth of rights, the protagonists of this new history of human rights have sought more structural

[16] Brown, *Moral Capital* 2, 25. See also Eckel, "'Magnifying Glass'"; Stevens, "South Africa."

[17] The term is from Boltanski, *Distant Suffering*.

[18] Moyn, "Genealogy."

[19] Moyn, *Last Utopia*.

explanations for their ascendancy. Because it emphasizes an unfolding process, the trope of "revolution" has fared much better under the critical scrutiny of historical inquiry than the trope of "revelation."[20] Critical of the periodization of older accounts, most protagonists of the new history of human rights have increasingly built on recent portrayals of the "long 1970s" as a period of global transformation, and argue that this was the breakthrough period of human rights.[21] Only then, as a rather recent invention, human rights have become one of the "lingua francas" of international politics in the age of audiovisual mass media.[22]

As a story of humanitarian disaster globally transmitted through the accelerating flows of electronic and physical communication, the international history of the Biafran war seems to be a perfect fit for this new body of scholarship. Accordingly, one would assume that the conflict features prominently in the currently burgeoning field of human rights history. However, so far, it has played only a minor role in the field.[23] Moyn, for example, mentions Biafra only once. Then, however, his judgment is unambiguous: humanitarian crises like in Biafra did "not spark the creation of the international human rights movement." Characteristic of this literature, he further contends that the breakthrough for human rights in the late twentieth century "occurred in striking autonomy from humanitarian concern, particularly for global suffering": according to Moyn and others, humanitarianism was an entirely different project that only attained momentum after the end of the Cold War.[24] Viewing human rights as an invention of the 1970s, as these historians do, creates a sharp break between them and the longer history of humanitarian activism, such as abolitionism or the humanitarian interventions of the colonial era, which largely did not use the language of rights. Although, at first glance, human rights and humanitarianism seem connected, historians of human rights widely agree that humanitarianism constitutes an entirely distinct phenomenon.[25] And scholars of humanitarianism conversely distinguish their field from human rights: humanitarianism is a "discourse of needs", human rights a "discourse of rights."[26]

[20] See e.g. Iriye et al., eds., *Human Rights*; Keys, *Reclaiming*.

[21] Moyn, *Last Utopia*. See further Eckel, *Ambivalenz*; Eckel and Moyn, eds., *Breakthrough*; Keys, *Reclaiming*, and, for the wider narrative about the 1970s Schulman, *Seventies*; Ferguson et al., eds., *Shock*; Geyer and Bright, "World History," Maier, "Consigning"; Osterhammel and Petersson, *Geschichte*, chs. 6–7; Rodgers, *Age*.

[22] Cmiel, "Emergence," 1248.

[23] There are no articles dealing with Biafra in "Human Rights," ed. by Grossmann and Sachse; Hoffmann, ed., *Human Rights* or Akira Iriye et al. (eds.), *Human Rights*. Eckel, "Utopie der Moral," 461–2 mentions Biafra briefly. For an exception see Heerten, "Dystopia."

[24] Moyn, *Last Utopia*, 219, 220.

[25] See also Eckel, *Ambivalenz*, 244–8.

[26] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 16.

But, if we create a sharp distinction between human rights and humanitarianism, how can we understand their collective transformational effect on international politics? This does not only run counter to the common-sense association of human rights politics, genocide prevention, and humanitarian interventionism. More importantly, the history of humanitarianism can also be seen to follow a trajectory very similar to the one outlined by the new historians of human rights. Scholars of humanitarianism like, for instance, Philippe Ryfman argue that the late 1960s and the 1970s – when Biafra's global moment occurred – represent a caesura in the history of humanitarianism.[27] The history of humanitarianism can thus be seen to share a periodization with the history of human rights as it is currently narrated. However, because of the compartmentalization of historiographical debates, the proponents of the new history of human rights have not felt the need to delve deeper into the history of conflicts that are mostly associated with the emergence of humanitarian crises, such as the Nigerian Civil War, for example. However, during the crisis in Biafra, contemporaries around the globe suffused the languages of human rights and humanitarianism, of self-determination, of genocide and references to Nazi crimes. These different semantic threads were deeply intertwined. In the following, I will hence argue for a form of conceptual history which focuses on the interplay of a number of terms and concepts. A perspective incorporating a number of related terms and concepts such as human rights, genocide, self-determination, sovereignty as well as the larger field of humanitarian practice can help to make the new forms of politics and activism visible that were characteristic for the Biafran campaign – and for global politics since.[28]

The dominant focus on human rights in the literature sometimes eclipses an assessment of deeper structural changes. What is striking about the rise of human rights is not that it happened in the 1970s, but that it happened at the moment when decolonization was principally over.[29] Even if decolonization itself was not a human rights movement – anticolonial nationalists were primarily interested in the right to self-determination rather than the longer catalogue of human rights, which leads some historians to disentangle the two[30] – it, in effect, cleared the

[27] Ryfman, *histoire*.

[28] My thoughts are based on forms of conceptual history that analyze specific terms and wider semantic fields. See Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten*; Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*; Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*.

[29] As introductions to the history of decolonization see Betts, *Decolonization*; Rothermund, *Dehli, 15. August 1947*; Shipway, *Decolonization*.

[30] Moyn, *Last Utopia*, ch. 3. For the vivid debate about the connection between decolonization and human rights see also Burke, *Decolonization*; Eckel, "Human Rights";

way for the rise of human rights to global prominence. In colonial times, for anyone susceptible to the power of Western European governments, the embrace of human rights was impeded by imperial interests. Colonial powers had often used this rhetoric as a part of their "civilizing mission."[31] However, to circumvent the universal applicability of human rights, European powers tried to exclude their colonial possessions from the UDHR.[32] As John D. Kelly and Martha Kaplan emphasize, decolonization was not only the end-point of a historical process. It also, and this is perhaps more important here, marked the emergence of something new: a postcolonial world of states.[33] Only in this UN world, where sovereignty is – at least symbolically – allocated horizontally and universally to governments around the globe, did human rights become the powerful political idea we know it as today. They became a source of empowerment for citizens as well as for the curtailment of governments' sovereign rights. In a postcolonial world, Western governments could adopt the language of human rights without having to worry about the "boomerang effect" of this rhetoric in their colonies.[34] Activists employing this language could now muster the support of Western states that had previously feared human rights' potential effects. Human rights – and associated concepts – became a global political leitmotif exactly at that historical moment when colonial rule was deleted "from the repertoire of polities that were legitimate and viable in international politics."[35] Colonial forms of interventionism were taboo. But through the language of human rights and humanitarianism, projections of Western power could still be powerfully pursued. In that moment, human rights and humanitarianism began to garner more political legitimacy, legal power, and moral force: they became the only remaining languages left to legitimize interventions in the internal affairs of other states.[36]

In many ways, Biafra stands at the beginning of the genesis of a new postcolonial world order. In the following, I develop a structural argument about the relationship between the rise of political forms associated with human rights and humanitarianism and the demise of imperial rule. The Biafra campaign needs to be situated within larger transformations of global order in the second half of the twentieth century, fostered by the end of empire. As I will argue, the postcolonial condition was decisive for the emergence of new forms of political exchange between

Eckert, "African Nationalists"; Jensen, *Making*; Imlay, "International Socialism"; Klose, *Menschenrechte*; Maul, *Menschenrechte*.

[31] Conklin, *Mission*; Conklin, "Colonialism."

[32] Burke, *Decolonization*, 114–21.

[33] Kelly and Kaplan, *Represented Communities*.

[34] The term is from Keck and Sikkink, *Activists*, 24.

[35] Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 19.

[36] Hoffmann, "Human Rights."

actors from the global North and the South – and indeed for a reformulation of power relations between "the West and the rest" (Stuart Hall). These transformations were connected to a new political imagination that evolved around notions of human suffering. Perceived as the first major postcolonial humanitarian crisis, Biafra was a decisive step in the re-imagination of the Third World within a postcolonial world order. This new politics could be expressed in the de-politicizing language of human rights – but did not necessarily need to be.

When the Nigerian Civil War was internationalized in a transnational sphere of humanitarian politics, the Nigerian Civil War – a political conflict – was transformed into "Biafra": a humanitarian crisis. Through the languages of humanitarianism and human rights the conflict was depoliticized, and a regional civil war was turned into a human tragedy on the world stage. That the conflict became internationally visible in this manner is, in the first place, a metaphor. Yet this trope also points to the central role that images played in the conflict. The publication of pictures of the starving "Biafran babies" – and their creation as an icon of Third World misery – was the watershed moment that turned the conflict into a global media event. The analysis of the concepts, ideas and semantics that contemporaries employed to account for the conflict needs to be combined with an analysis of the images that moved the conflict from the unseen edges of international politics into the limelight of contemporary concern. In the age of audiovisual mass media, the internationalization of remote Third World conflicts has become increasingly dependent on images of suffering.[37] In the recent literature on the histories of human rights and humanitarianism, however, surprisingly little attention has been paid to the visual histories of human rights.[38]

In 1967, the year that Biafra and Nigeria entered their calamitous civil war, the French Marxist theorist Guy Débord published his analysis of how, in modern societies, social life is increasingly replaced by its representation. Capitalism fosters what he calls the "society of the spectacle." The spectacle is more than a collection of images: "it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images."[39] In that sense, the images of human suffering that represented the Nigerian Civil War as a humanitarian crisis also signify a social relationship: they denote the relationship between the global North and the global South in a postcolonial world. Biafra became a *pars pro toto* visually encapsulating the

[37] See Boltanski, *Distant Suffering*; Linfield, *Cruel*, esp. ch. 2; Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue*; Sliwinski, *Human Rights*; Sontag, *Regarding the Pain*; Zelizer, *About to Die*. None of these studies analyzes the Biafran images in any detail.

[38] See now, however, Fehrenbach and Rodogno, eds., *Humanitarian Photography*.

[39] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 12.

misery of the Third World. Moreover, these evocations of global society's children of sorrow also give a role to Western societies: that of the savior. In the Western gaze, postcolonial conflicts turn into spectacles of a suffering that the observers wish to alleviate. Biafra's global moment was thus connected with a shift in dominant forms of politics aiming to alleviate suffering in the Third World, which, with Hannah Arendt, can be understood as a new form of internationalism, characterized by the shift from solidarity to a politics of pity.[40]

Almost as quickly as the Nigerian Civil War burst into the limelight of international attention, it receded into the shadows again after mere months. The war still dragged on for more than a year of fighting and military stalemate, but the interest of most contemporaries began to decrease quickly in late 1968, and media coverage tapered off. A number of activists continued to lobby governments, to publish pamphlets and other accounts of the crisis, and to organize protest rallies. But, as an issue of international interest, the humanitarian crisis in Biafra was only a short-lived episode, a page one story in the summer of 1968, but relegated to minor status thereafter. In hindsight, the same is true: Biafra has become, at best, a footnote in the international history of the twentieth century.[41] The conflict does not play an important role in narratives about the history of the 1960s and 1970s, neither in popular, nor in academic accounts.[42] Today, the Nigerian Civil War is widely forgotten outside of Nigeria. In this book, I will show why the Biafran War was nevertheless a crucial episode to understand the emergence of our contemporary postcolonial world order – and also why the quick making *and* unmaking of Biafra's global moment are important in this regard.

These observations open up a set of questions about intervention and non-intervention, the act of witnessing and the reformulation of international relations in a postcolonial world: how and why was the Nigerian

[40] Arendt delineates the origins of a modern politics of pity in Rousseau and, in particular, the French Revolution. Arendt, *On Revolution*, ch. 2.

[41] This may also be due to the fact that a sound global history of the twentieth century still needs to be written in monograph-form. Nolte, *Weltgeschichte* – not a satisfactory effort in this direction – mentions Biafra in passing, but confuses the dates. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, does not mention the conflict, and Goedde, "Global Cultures," 567 does so only in passing. Textbooks on twentieth-century history neither deal with the conflict in any depth. Biafra is mentioned in passing in Bulliet (ed.), *Columbia History*, in the chapter Mayall, "Nationalism," 196. Antony Best et al., *International History* do not mention the war. Introductions to international relations since 1945 mention the conflict more regularly, especially those penned by British scholars. See Robbins, *World Since 1945*, 124 and, with some more detail, Young and Kent, *International Relations*, 380–5.

[42] See for instance Gitlin, *Sixties*. One exception is DeGroot, *The 60s Unplugged*, which tries to break with conventional narratives and also mentions Biafra.

Civil War turned into the global media event "Biafra"? Why did different Western groups and individuals decide to act on behalf of the faraway Biafrans? How did the resulting perceptions of Biafra impact on contemporary imaginations of the Third World? What were the macrostructures, the global historical processes that were at play in the internationalization of Biafra, a conflict that was marginal at first, but then became a huge, but short-lived media event? Were there national or local differences in the way the conflict or the humanitarian effort were perceived? And why did the conflict again recede to the background of international attention? Finally, what were the effects of the Biafran moment on the history of human rights, humanitarianism, and postcolonial international relations? And if it was mostly a failed campaign, were there any effects at all?

The Historiography of the Nigerian Civil War

Much has been written on the Nigerian Civil War – much more than on most other conflicts in postcolonial Africa.[43] Yet sound scholarship on the war remains scarce. There is still a vivid debate on the war within Nigeria. This debate, kept alive by the continuing contemporary relevance of the issues at stake – not least the resurgent Biafran secessionism – also spawns a steady output of historical accounts of the conflict.[44] Much of this scholarship, often penned by scholars with an Eastern Nigerian background, is staunchly pro-Biafran. A major impetus of the pro-Biafran literature on the conflict is to resuscitate the genocide allegations, and provide Biafra's bid for self-determination with historical and scholarly substance.[45] Monographs and other book length accounts have also been written by non-Nigerians – or non-Biafrans, for that matter. Western journalists published book-length accounts during and shortly after the conflict, which, in spite of their often flimsy empirical basis, remain useful as narrative accounts, in particular John de St. Jorre's political and diplomatic history of the war.[46] Within roughly the first decade after its end, a handful of political scientists and historians – some of whom, for different reasons, had witnessed the conflict first-hand – ventured to put scholarship on the conflict on more solid footing. These

[43] For a useful, if far from complete, review of the literature see McNeil, "Nigerian Civil War."

[44] Okonta, "'Biafra'"; Onuoha, *Challenging the State*.

[45] See e.g. Ekwe-Ekwe, *Biafra War*; Ekwe-Ekwe, *Biafra Revisited*; Korieh, ed., *Nigeria-Biafra*; Uzoigwe, *Visions*.

[46] St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*. See also Cronje, *World and Nigeria*, and, for a more partisan account, Forsyth, *Biafra Story*; Forsyth, *Making*.

works have, to a large degree, set the standard that still remains today.[47] But since they were writing so soon after the conflict, the authors were not able to consult archival sources, and also did not have the advantages of an ex post perspective. Most of the studies following thereafter did not substantially enlarge our understanding of the civil war. Widely based on already published sources and accounts, they did not provide for a better empirical base.[48] Two of the most recent additions to the literature, Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country* and Michael Gould's *Struggle for Modern Nigeria*, are both limited by the unresolved relationship between history and memory. The noted Nigerian novelist Achebe, dedicated to Biafran independence during the conflict, mixes the genres of memoir and scholarly history in his insightful but rather partisan personal perspective on the war. Gould's monograph primarily rests on interviews with a number of the conflict's protagonists. This provides for some interesting insights, but, unfortunately, Gould does not use these sources to develop a fully fledged oral history of the conflict in his otherwise useful study.[49]

In this book, I want to bring the history of the Nigerian Civil War into closer dialogue with current historiographical discussions. Recently, scholars from different disciplines have started covering various specific aspects of the conflict within its international contexts in accounts of the foreign policy positions of a number of foreign governments: in particular France,[50] Ireland,[51] Israel,[52] the Soviet Union,[53] the United Kingdom,[54] and the United States.[55] As a historical meta-narrative, the Cold War broadly defines our understanding of the international history of the second half of the twentieth century. The Biafran War does not play a role in this literature – and perhaps rightfully so. The war was characterized by diplomatic alliances that blurred the boundaries of global bloc building: the Federal Nigerian Military Regime was supported not

[47] Davis, *Interpreters for Nigeria*; Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis, Volume I*; Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis, Volume II*; Stremlau, *International Politics*; Wirz, *Krieg in Afrika*, part 1 and Wiseberg, "International Politics."

[48] See e.g. Badom, *Foreign Intervention*; Boutet, *L'effroyable guerre*; Obiaga, *Politics*; Ugochukwu, *Biafra*.

[49] Achebe, *Country*. Gould, *Struggle*. On Achebe see Msiska, "Imagined Nations." The only forthright oral history of the war concentrates on domestic perspectives: Harneit-Sievers et al., eds., *Social History*.

[50] Bach, "Général"; Griffin "France."

[51] O'Sullivan, *Ireland*, ch. 4; Staunton, "Case of Biafra."

[52] Levey, "Israel."

[53] Matusevich, *No Easy Row*, ch. 3; Matusevich, "Strange Bedfellows."

[54] Smith, "UK"; Young, *Labour Governments 1964–1970, Volume 2*, ch. 8.

[55] Sargent, *Superpower*, ch. 3; Thompson, *American Policy*.

only by the Soviet Union, but also by the United Kingdom.[56] Bound to their transatlantic special relationship, the United States never clearly sided with either of the warring parties, and generally followed London's lead on the matter.[57] The secessionist Republic of Biafra was recognized only by the Third World states Gabon, Haiti, Ivory Coast, Tanzania, and Zambia. It was backed not only by France, but also by the *Estado Novo* dictatorship in Portugal and the South African and Rhodesian apartheid regimes.[58] Given these odd alliances, it is much more apt to approach the international history of the Nigerian Civil War by "taking of the Cold War lens" (Matthew Connelly), which historians recently attempted to allow more space to the activities of actors from the global South, and to develop more complex histories of changing global orders.[59]

Despite the widespread genocide allegations and invocations of Holocaust memory during the conflict, the Nigerian Civil War also does not feature prominently in the historiography of genocide. So far, historians of genocide have focused on the crime's emergence as a means of modern state politics in the "age of extremes."[60] The problem with this perspective is that it tends to turn "genocide" into an analytical category that can be used anachronistically: this perspective leads scholars to devoting more energy into the identification of genocides in the past than in analyzing what historical effects the idea of genocide has had in the decades since its inception.[61] The Biafran case, which, according to a relatively widespread consensus, did not constitute genocide, thus does not feature prominently in this scholarship. Biafra is absent from the bulk of the voluminous literature on genocide in the twentieth century, even though Leo Kuper dealt with the Biafran case alongside a number of instances of mass violence in postcolonial societies in his groundbreaking work on the sociology of genocide.[62] Yet later students of genocide

[56] On the Soviet position: Matusevich, *No Easy Row*, ch. 3 and Matusevich, "Strange Bedfellows"; Young, *Labour Governments*, ch. 8 on the British position.

[57] Sargent, *Superpower*, ch. 3.

[58] Stremlau, *International Politics* 127–41 and 224–35. See also Müller and Roschach, "Fernschreiben aus Lissabon Nr. 243," 02.08.1968 (PA AA B 34/741).

[59] See esp. Connelly, "Taking off the Cold War Lens."

[60] Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*. On the modernity of genocides see Bauman, *Modernity*; the contributions by Kiernan, Weitz, Bartov and Fleming in Gellately and Kiernan, eds., *Specter of Genocide*; and Weitz, "Vienna to the Paris System."

[61] See esp. Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, and further Barth, *Genozid*; Benz, *Ausgrenzung*; Midlarsky, Killing *Trap*; Weitz, *Century of Genocide*; a notable exception is Smith, *Genocide*. For a perceptive commentary on the pitfalls connected with historians' use of "genocide," see Tanner, "Historiker."

[62] Kuper, *Genocide*, 73–6 and *Prevention*, 70–82.

have seldom taken this cue.[63] Genocide allegations during the Biafran War – if mentioned at all – tend to be discarded as irrelevant, since they merely underline the weakness of genocide as a political and legal idea in the period.[64] The conflict is also seldom commented upon in the historiography on the cultural memory of the Holocaust.[65] Until very recently, few scholars had used the ideas of genocide and the Holocaust to understand other conflicts.[66] Only recently have scholars started to integrate the Biafran War into these historiographies, as the secessionists as well as their acolytes around the globe frequently reverted to comparisons to the Holocaust to draw attention to their cause.[67]

A field in which accounts of the Biafran War do figure more prominently is the history of humanitarianism and the rise of NGOs in the twentieth century.[68] The growing interest in the history of human rights, humanitarianism, and NGOs is connected with the larger goal of developing more complex perspectives on international history. The blossoming of global and transnational perspectives has resulted in the inclusion of different forms of exchange and contacts beyond borders. The diplomacy of governments, the sphere into which international historians have traditionally delved, is now increasingly coupled with the interest in a plethora of international institutions and non-state actors, enriching our understanding of the history of inter- and transnational relations.[69] In a similar vein, the role of missionaries and the churches in the Nigerian Civil War have also been studied.[70] Some scholars have dealt with

[63] If at all, Biafra is briefly mentioned in passing, such as in Valentino, *Final Solutions*, 85–6. But usually Biafra is not even enumerated among the cases excluded from the definition of genocide. See e.g. Midlarsky, *Killing Trap*, 25–34. For an exception, see Smith, “UK.”

[64] Exemplary is the assessment that the “[i]nvocation of the genocide convention in the third quarter of the twentieth century over cases like Nigeria (Biafra) and East Pakistan (Bangladesh) only served to underline the irrelevance of the document as a concrete ground for political action, much like the rights declarations of the same period.” Bloxham and Pendas, “Punishment as Prevention,” 625.

[65] The most notable exception is Novick, *Holocaust*, 247–8. See also Miles, “Third World Views.”

[66] However, see Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*; Sanyal, *Memory*.

[67] See esp. Heerten and Moses, “Nigeria–Biafra”; Heerten, “Auschwitz” and the contributions by Anthony, Doron, and Smith in Heerten and Moses, eds., “Special issue.”

[68] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 133–47; Benthall, *Disasters*, 92–108; Desgrandchamps, “coopération et concurrence”; Hentsch, *Face au Blocus*; O’Sullivan, “Humanitarian Encounters”; Ryfman, *histoire*, 48–52; Schmidhalter, “ Hilfsaktion”; Wiseberg, “International Politics”; Wiseberg, “Humanitarian Intervention.”

[69] See esp. Iriye, “Internationalizing” and, for a nuanced model of trans- and international history Clavin, “Time.”

[70] Wiseberg, “Christian Churches” and further Omenka, “Blaming the Gods”; Waters, “Influencing the Message.”

Biafran and Nigerian propaganda[71] or representations of the conflict in Western media.[72] Other scholars have examined the lobby and activist groups that emerged in Western countries – but these perspectives are still few in number, and usually focus on specific groups of actors that are in effect often studied in isolation from wider interactions.[73]

As a result, there is a dearth of studies that analyze the complex interplay of the Nigerian and Biafran governments, of Western state and non-state actors. There is no international history of the war based on multi-archival, multi-lingual research, in particular no satisfying account in monograph form and length.[74] In this book, I aim to provide such an account. However, this book will not merely fill a void or synthesize the existing literature. Its main goal is to use the international history of the Nigerian Civil War to develop a structural argument about the rise of new political forms connected with human rights and humanitarianism and the reformulation of sovereignty in a postcolonial world.

A Note on Sources

This book provides the first account of the international history of the war built on multi-lingual, multi-archival research. I aim to tie together perspectives on Nigeria and Biafra, the international sphere of state and intergovernmental diplomacy, and the transnational sphere of non-state actors, in particular activists and representatives of Western media and the churches. The Western countries that I focus on are France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The French case is critically relevant because of the assumed emergence of a new humanitarianism defined by *sans-frontiérisme* during the crisis. The German case is of particular interest because of the specific legacy of Holocaust memory in the Third Reich's successor state, where allegations of genocide carried substantial historical weight. As the former colonial power in Nigeria, the UK government as well as ordinary Britons were more closely bound to the conflict than people anywhere else in the West; the discussions were thus particularly intense. The United States is also interesting for a number of reasons, among them the great role that

[71] Anthony, "Resourceful"; Davis, *Interpreters*; Zieser, "Propagandastrategie Biafras."

[72] Cookman, "Gilles Caron's Coverage"; Ugochukwu, "Nigerian Civil War."

[73] On British lobby groups, dated but still useful: Ajibola, *Foreign Policy*; Fafowora, *Pressure Groups*. On French activists scene with too much space devoted to the "French Doctors" and thus neglecting other activists, see Desgrandchamps, "Revenir" and Lavoinne,"Médecins en guerre." On the Irish case see O'Sullivan, *Ireland*, ch. 5 and on the US McNeil, "Starvation."

[74] However, see on different aspects, Heerten and Moses, eds., "Special Issue" and Moses and Heerten, eds., *Postcolonial Conflict*.

American state and non-state actors have played in the late twentieth-century rise of human rights and Holocaust memory.

For this project, I drew on the enormous but little-studied range of publications the war provoked: Biafran and Nigerian propaganda, countless reports in the mass media, book accounts by activists, western missionaries, aid-workers, and journalists, as well as parliamentary debates. Files with NGO, intergovernmental and governmental agencies' correspondence, minutes of meetings, internal memos, reports, and petitions to different state and intergovernmental bodies were consulted in archives including those of the United Nations in New York and Geneva and the OAU in Addis Ababa. Additionally, I conducted research in national and foreign policy and party archives in Berlin, Bonn, London, Paris, and Washington, D.C., as well as in archives holding materials on relevant NGOs, church and humanitarian organizations, and individual Biafra activists or intellectuals and other public figures who played important roles in the conflict.

Outline of the Book

In the chapters that follow, I develop a history of the Nigerian Civil War which allows for the analysis of the different semantic as well as visual patterns that played crucial roles in the internationalization of the conflict. I combine the instruments of conceptual history and historical semantics, of visual history and iconography with a trans- and international perspective. In order to understand Biafra's efforts to penetrate the international system, or the efforts of those who acted on the Biafrans' behalf, the differentiation between inter- and transnational spheres and forms of exchange is vital.[75] The Biafran regime, as we will see, primarily aimed at the traditional sphere of the diplomacy of states. However, once this sphere turned out to be closed to their endeavor, they switched channels and, partly because of historical contingency, non-state actors got interested in their campaign. Internationalized through transnational channels in the world of non-state actors, the Biafran campaign thus began to impact on publics around the globe. I will follow, in a loosely chronologically structured narrative, the different steps in the emergence, the containment, the internationalization, and the de-internationalization of the conflict.

[75] See esp. Iriye, "Internationalizing," and, on civil society and publics, Kießling, "(Welt-) Öffentlichkei," Dülffer and Loth (eds.), *Dimensionen*, 85–105 and the somewhat Whiggish Keane, *Global Civil Society*.

In the first part, "The Emergences of Biafra," I account for the history of the war prior to its internationalization in mid-1968, when it held limited, regional interest. The focus here lies on the West African theater of war and the international and intergovernmental sphere of states. In Chapter 1, "The End of Empire and the Coming of Postcolonial Conflict," I lay out the causes and the course of the war in its early stages and situate it within its colonial and postcolonial contexts. Although British colonialism officially ended in 1960, it left a lasting imprint on social and political relations in independent Nigeria. Among its most severe legacies was the combined effect of the territorial and ethnic boundaries it drew: British imperialists had carved out a national territory, yet it differentiated the population along "tribal" lines. After independence, political rivalries went hand in hand with ethnic conflict: the civil war that eventually broke out was largely a conflict between different parts of the Nigerian elite, within the military in particular, and was also fueled by economic interests, for instance battles for control of oil reserves in South-East Nigeria. A very recent creation, the postcolonial state was of rather fragile stature – this polity did not stand the test of the conflicts ensuing a few years into independence.

In Chapter 2, "The Biafran Campaign for Self-Determination in a Postcolonial World of States," I delineate the rhetorical strategies of the Biafran secessionist campaign and situate it within Third World international politics. After massacres of Igbos in Northern Nigeria in 1966, the provincial government around Military Governor Ojukwu sought political autonomy and seceded in May 1967. The leadership substantiated their moves with claims for their right to self-determination, a notion deeply ingrained in the conceptual history of anticolonialism. At the core of this claim, however, was the concept of genocide as a new nation's *raison d'être*: the secessionist states' propagandists compared Biafra to Israel, a nation also united by a shared threat and the experience of genocide. This rhetoric aimed at the Biafrans-to-be just as much as at international audiences and diplomatic circles. During the decolonization era, the achievement of independence was not so much due to military successes on the battlefields of colonial wars, but rather to what Matthew Connelly has called "diplomatic revolutions" in international politics and media.[76] Realizing their rather dim chances on the battlefield, the Biafrans tried to translate these strategies into postcolonial times by opening a new front on the world stage of international politics. The Biafrans enlisted the services of public relations agencies to win the potentially decisive support of Western publics and politicians.

[76] Connelly, *Diplomatic Revolution*.

However, at least in the OAU and the postcolonial "Third World UN," these strategies did not work in the Biafran case: governments of the global South, many of them also facing separatist movements at home, were united in their refusal of secession. To prevent what was called the "balkanization" of Africa, the right to self-determination was restricted to anticolonial movements. Without the vital support of the anticolonial bloc, the diplomatic revolution of Biafra independence was doomed to fail.

As I argue in Chapter 3, "The Transnational Internationalization of the Biafran Campaign," the Biafran efforts to internationalize the conflict were eventually successful once the channels were switched. International non-state advocacy on behalf of the secessionists was initiated by individuals and groups with direct bonds to the Biafrans: Igbo expatriates, mostly young academics studying in the United States or Europe, Biafran quasi-ambassadorial representatives and roving emissaries, and, perhaps most importantly, Christian, in particular Catholic missionaries. Many among the latter were convinced that their Christian Ibo brethren needed support in a religious war ignited by the Muslim Nigerian North. The secessionists thus gained the support of a group that proved to be crucial: Catholic missionaries began to "influence the message" (Ken Waters) dispatched from Nigeria and Biafra. Representing the conflict in the form of a "religious war," these efforts did not directly lead to a breakthrough in international media and politics. However, it enabled its later internationalization by building the channels through which the humanitarian crisis was to be broadcast, and by increasingly highlighting the humanitarian dimension of the conflict.

In mid-1968, Biafra entered on the global stage. In Part II, I analyze how the Nigerian Civil War was transformed into a humanitarian crisis. This part will focus on the transnational sphere of non-state actors, principally in the global North. Chapter 4, "Creating 'Biafra': The Discovery of a Civil War as Humanitarian Crisis" shows how, in the summer months of 1968, the conflict took center stage in international media and politics. Newspapers and magazines published front-page reports, humanitarian organizations published appeals, and TV news shows reported from the enclave. Yet rather than the rhetoric of the right to self-determination, which was at the core of the Biafran program, it was a dystopian vision of postcolonial catastrophe and the death of innocents that turned the conflict into a global media event. These representations entailed a change of what "Biafra" meant: it became a cipher for human suffering, typified by the icon of starving children. In the moment of its internationalization, the civil war was not perceived as a political conflict, but as a humanitarian problem.

In Chapter 5, "'Biafran Babies': Humanitarian Visions of Postcolonial Disaster," I analyze the iconographic patterns at play in visual representations of Biafra. I argue that emotional bonds did play a role in the mise-en-scène of Biafra as visual experience, but in the gaze of Western observers this entailed a crucial change: Western audiences were invited to "witness" the crisis through the humanitarian lens – the eye of the camera that focused in on the suffering, and the eyes of the journalists and other Western "witnesses" in the enclaves. Bonds of empathy primarily bound Western audiences and witnesses; the Biafran victims were part of a faceless "sea of humanity" (Liisa Malkki). Through these representational techniques, the Nigerian Civil War became the site of spectacles of suffering laid bare for the Western gaze.

In Chapter 6, "Auschwitz in Africa? Biafra, Holocaust Memory, and the Language of Rights," I analyze the rhetoric of rights and genocide through which the conflict was often presented. Many contemporaries associated the images broadcast from Biafra with those of the Holocaust. Biafran lobbyists did not draw a line between human rights ideas and the concept of genocide. This language built on the rhetoric of the Biafran secessionists, who freely employed a plethora of concepts in their claims. But the genocide allegations were key in the campaign, and so were allusions to the Holocaust. The comparisons between images from the Nigerian Civil War and the Nazi mass crimes made both phenomena visible in a distinct manner: as genocide. In 1968, the Holocaust was not yet fully formed as a concept. But it helped to make Biafra perceivable as genocide. Biafra, perceived as genocide, in turn helped to make the mass murder of the European Jews distinct from a wider complex of Nazi evil. The conflict is an important but neglected episode in the history of the emergence of Holocaust memory. Moreover, the chapter also shows that the compartmentalization of human rights, humanitarianism, and genocide in much of the literature is often more complicated when we study specific campaigns.

Chapter 7, "Distant Suffering and Close Concerns: Biafra and the Third World in the Global Sixties," situates the emergence of a Biafra protest front in Western societies within its different contexts. The activities of pro-Biafran lobbyists were also reactions to political events at home: the protests of "1968." Whereas the New Left aimed at revolutionizing the political system both at home and globally, most Biafra activists did not share the aim of revolution. These activists, who hailed from the whole of the political spectrum, agreed that revolution was not the answer. They empathized with Biafrans as hard-working Christians, not as anticolonial revolutionaries. The variety of different actors and groups present in the Biafran campaign each had reasons for supporting

the secessionist state that hit close to home. In the United Kingdom, personal ties to the former colony were vital for the creation of the protest front. In Germany, the Biafran campaign resonated strongly with expellees from the "Lost German East" (Andrew Demshuk), a part of German society in which human rights claims – for instance that of the "Right to Heimat" – were powerfully voiced. In France, the campaign resonated strongly among Gaullists, who proclaimed the campaign as part of the French mission in a postcolonial world. A similar project also emerged among US liberals and conservatives who advocated what they considered America's humanitarian values.

Part III, "The Ends and Afterlives of Biafra," turns its attention to the end of the Biafran moment – and its effects. Chapter 8, "Biafra, the Internationalism of States, and the Question of Genocide," shows how the policy lines of Western governments helped to de-politicize the conflict further: states played a vital role in the funding of the relief operation, but they tried to avoid political overtones. Any action that might have provided the Biafran secessionists with political legitimacy – let alone sovereignty – was prevented. The respect for the governing regime in Lagos and the stances of the OAU, the United Nations and the British government thus widely defined the political outcome of the crisis. As I aim to show, this was also the result of a culture of clientelism in the diplomatic apparatus of the states of this world: the internationalism of states provides the governments in power with the political support to stay in power. The dominant understanding that the Federal Military Government deliberately starved the Biafran population to death in a genocidal war initially posed serious problems to Lagos and their main ally in London. But when the British government initiated a counter-strike against Biafran propaganda, the Biafrans' exaggerated representations of the conflict did not work to their benefit. On London's initiative, Lagos invited an international observer team that negated the genocide allegations. Their reports, often cited in international media, largely discredited the Biafran genocide claims internationally. The Biafran campaign's focus on the genocide argument had disseminated a highly simplified account of the Nigerian Civil War. The Holocaust, as archetypal genocide, demands such a clear-cut division of good and bad from its metaphoric counterparts that these comparisons are usually doomed to fail. The gap between representations of the Holocaust and the complicated reality of most political conflicts is hard to bridge.

Chapter 9, "The End of Biafra, the End of the Lobby," chronicles how the support for Biafra and their followers crumbled, beginning in late 1968. With the genocide claims discredited and the secessionist regime in considerable doubt, Biafra lost the moral capital it had

previously engendered. This had a serious impact on the Biafra lobby as well: its cause had become dubious. Accordingly, after Biafra had been consigned to history with the surrender of its leadership in January 1970, the protest network supporting the secessionists dissolved as well.

Chapter 10 turns to "The Afterlives of Biafra," showing that the conflict did have lasting effects on the histories of human rights and humanitarianism. The chapter focuses on two particular cases: the resurrection of "humanitarian intervention" in the wake of Biafra, primarily promoted by international lawyers from the United States, and the rise of *sans-frontiérisme* since Biafra. France is the only clear exception to the international crumbling of the protest front and the humanitarian narrative about Biafra. The two projects were part of American and French endeavors to formulate a universal mission of moral interventionism in postcolonial times. In France in particular, this was also connected to the emergence of a post-revolutionary idealism that discarded long-held leftist beliefs in the revolution. The rise of humanitarian interventionism in the United States is closely associated with the promotion of American power abroad – a notion that is neither absent from the case of postcolonial France.

The conclusion returns to the main themes and arguments of the book, in particular the postcolonial "politics of pity," which emerged during the Biafran crisis. Situating the conflict in the global history of the late twentieth century, it demonstrates the significance of Biafra's global moment for the histories of human rights, humanitarianism, and North–South relations more generally. Reflecting further on Biafra's position in these histories, the conclusion will argue for an entangled history of different concepts and for a connected history of different historical moments and times. While Biafra sits at the beginning of a new postcolonial era of interventionism, it is also characterized by audible echoes of the colonial past. To understand our contemporary global condition as it emerged after the end of colonial rule, we also need to go back in time into a period when Empire still reigned. Biafra stands at the nexus of these different times.

Part I

The Emergences of Biafra

1 The End of Empire and the Coming of Postcolonial Conflict

The streets of Lagos were crowded in the late evening hours that day. It was September 30, 1960. Thousands swarmed to the racecourse to celebrate the dawn of Nigeria's Independence Day. At midnight, the Union Jack was hauled down and Nigeria's green and white national flag hoisted for the first time on a flagpole specially built for the occasion. Princess Alexandra of Kent read a message from her cousin, Queen Elizabeth II, who sent the new-born nation her "good wishes for a great and noble future" as it "assume[d] the heavy responsibilities of independence."[1] After reading the royal message, the princess handed the Constitutional Instruments symbolizing the state's sovereignty to the Federal Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who had been knighted by the Queen in January that year. "This is a wonderful day," Balewa exclaimed. In their moment of glory, the Nigerian people are "proud to have achieved our independence." However, this pride should not be mistaken for arrogance: "We are grateful to the British officers whom we have known, first as masters, and then as leaders, and finally as partners, but always as friends."[2] After the Prime Minister's speech, fireworks cascaded into the night, richly illuminating the sky above the capital. This political rite of passage marked the end of 99 years of British imperial rule. On October 1, 1960, Nigeria was an independent nation.[3]

Nigerian independence was welcomed with a good amount of optimism. Some particularly enthusiastic voices hailed Nigeria as a beacon of hope for postcolonial Africa. 1960 became "Africa's year," the *annus mirabilis* of decolonization south of the Sahara, in which seventeen

[1] For the whole message see Gray, "Quarterly Chronicle."
[2] Balewa, "Independence Day."
[3] For contemporary accounts of the ceremony see Paul Hofmann, "Nigerians Achieve Their Independence," *New York Times*, October 1, 1960, 1; "Nigeria's Sovereign Day," *The Observer*, October 2, 1960, 1; "Nigeria Hails Independence, To Join U.N.," *Boston Globe*, October 2, 1960, 8; "Nigeria's First Day of Freedom: Premier's Message," *The Guardian*, October 1, 1960, 1.

nations achieved independence. The creed of "development" promised the newly born nations a way toward modernity – and Nigeria was widely considered one of the states that would lead the way.[4] A *Boston Globe* writer likened the atmosphere in Lagos on the eve of independence to that of the final day at school before graduation: "The pupils, with their jet-black, laughing faces, so full of anticipated happiness, so eager to be off on their own, are sure that they have done well in their exams. They are also sure that they can from now on make out splendidly without the masters."[5] Echoing a common trope of colonial discourse, which imagined Africa, in Hegel's words, as a "land of childhood," the *Globe* article turned Nigerians into pupils of the imperial civilizing mission. Under colonial rule, their "masters" viewed Africans as destined for perpetual childhood; they were, as Christopher Fyfe summarizes this notion, considered as "Peter Pan children who can never grow up, a child race."[6] Despite the continuing paternalistic overtones of such portrayals, now, with independence, the "children of Africa" apparently were coming of age. The future seemed to lie open before these young men – like for the independent nation-states like Nigeria, which they metonymically represented.

The optimism behind this was not unfounded. The Nigerian elites had considerable experience in autonomous governance; doctors, jurists, merchants, and other professionals were comparatively numerous. On the eve of independence, oil was discovered in Africa's most populous country – with these resources, the potential for development seemed boundless.[7] In the Western press, Nigeria was cast as a counterpart to the unstable Congo. The turmoil that followed the former Belgian colony's independence had dominated headlines about African affairs in the months preceding Nigerian independence.[8] Nigeria, in contrast, had been prepared for independence by a fortunate "combination of African nationalist fervor and a more enlightened colonial policy than Britain has shown in some other of its African territories."[9] Economic prospects seemed splendid,[10] and the educational system, which included the

[4] Grubbs, "Gospel." See also Büschel and Speich, eds., *Entwicklungswelten*; Engerman and Unger, "Introduction"; Gilman, *Mandarins*.
[5] "No Frenzied White Exodus: Congo Turbulence Missing in Nigeria," *Boston Globe*, September 4, 1960, A 10.
[6] Hegel, *Lectures*, 174; Fyfe, "Race," 22; Mamdani, *Citizen*, 3–4.
[7] Crowder, *Story of Nigeria*, 237–59; Steyn, "Oil Exploration."
[8] On the Congo Crisis see Reybrouck, *Congo*, ch. 8; Westad, *Global Cold War*, 136–43.
[9] Arch Parsons, "Nigeria: Contrast to the Congo," *The New York Times*, October 2, 1960, SM 10.
[10] "Das unabhängige Nigeria ist ein zukunftsreicher Markt," *FAZ*, September 26, 1960, 18.

University of Ibadan, one of Africa's leading academic institutions, was also highly regarded.[11] With political parties in place for more than two decades, the democratic process had become robust, commentators averred.[12] American journalists emphasized Nigeria's attachment to the Western camp in the global Cold War: "After the debacle in the Congo, the free world is anxiously looking about for a vigorous, independent state in Africa which will offer a stronghold against the incursion of Soviet communism. The most likely candidate is Nigeria," improbably "to be infected by communism."[13] With highly trained officers, mostly graduates of the British Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, the army also promised to be a bulwark of stability: "Mutiny here is unthinkable." Accordingly, even if Nigerian politics "always involved a certain amount of violence and bloodshed [. . .] there will be no Congo here."[14]

But in less than seven years, Nigeria would descend into civil war. Even so, the tone of international coverage remained widely sympathetic into the early postcolonial period.[15] Even dramatic examples of unrest, such as the riots that erupted in Eastern Nigerian Tivland at the very time independence was celebrated in Lagos, were ignored by most commentators.[16] However, international reports on independence did betray some sense of coming conflict. Most journalists emphasized the country's division into three regions, agreeing that the predominantly Muslim north was the "least developed." The mostly Christian south was subdivided into the eastern and western regions. The west, "the land of the Yoruba, the most 'westernized' of Nigeria's tribes," was considered the "best developed" region. The Ibo dominated the eastern region, a group that had been "called both the 'Jews of Africa' and 'Nigeria's Irish.' They are individualistic, quick to learn and industrious."[17] The challenge for Nigeria was one of national unity: would the state emerge as a "Black Monolith or [as a] Triptych?" asked a troubled voice in the *Washington Post*.[18] "As one household, Nigeria will be a major African power." Yet, "should anyone decide to leave the three member ménage,

[11] Parsons, "Contrast," SM 10.

[12] "Ohne Sorgen in die Freiheit," *Die Zeit*, September 30, 1960, 27.

[13] Waldo Drake, "Nigeria Offers Hope in Chaotic Africa," *Los Angeles Times*, August 28, 1960, E1.

[14] Russell Howe, "Nigeria Set to Shed 60-Year British Rule," *The Washington Post*, September 26, 1960, A4.

[15] *Time*, December 5, 1960, cover page; Herwig Weber, "Das Land der Strebsamen," *FAZ*, December 16, 1961, 2.

[16] Crowder, "Dream," 7.

[17] Parsons, "Contrast," SM 90.

[18] Eric Sevareid, "Nigeria: Black Monolith . . . or Triptych?" *The Washington Post*, September 18, 1960, E3.

Nigeria would become merely another victim of 'Black Balkanization,' lying around in bits and pieces [. . .]"[19]

It was exactly this federal structure that would prove fatal. When Nigeria became independent in 1960, civil war was not inevitable. But, to a large extent, the political and socio-economic structures that helped ignite the Nigerian Civil War had been put into place during colonial rule. As many scholars argue, contemporary African history needs to be situated in the *longue durée*.[20] West Africa had long been the venue of the recurrent evolution and dissolution of states. Colonial rule introduced a new territorial regime that was consolidated during decolonization.[21] In this chapter, I will situate the emergence of the civil war within the longer history of state formation in what was to become Nigeria. I will first delineate the history of statehood and territoriality before colonization. Then I will show how colonial rule introduced the new regime of the territorial nation-state, while it also strengthened the ethnic and religious divides separating different parts of the colonial population. Third, I will show how, on the one hand, the crisis of colonial empire after World War II made a number of political alternatives imaginable, but how, on the other, the colonial regime paved the way toward the nation-state, despite the antagonisms separating the nation about-to-be. In Nigeria, the regionalization of the political process spawned by the federal system helped ignite the later conflict. Finally, I will provide an account of the intensifying political tensions in the early postcolonial period and their escalation into a series of coups and countercoups in 1966.

States without Borders: Non-Territorial Polities in Pre-Colonial West Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa had witnessed the formation, transformation and disintegration of states and societies for centuries. West African polities in particular were highly diverse, ranging from small village societies to large empires, the latter often comprising a plethora of peoples, cultures and religions.[22] This was also due to the geographical conditions. Land was abundant. As there was no need to compete for territories, states did not establish clearly demarcated borders. The control of rulers radiated outwards from centers of power via important trade routes. But the hinterland was hard to reach and thus too costly to control. In contrast

[19] Parsons, "Contrast," SM 90. See also Herbert Kaufmann, "Nigeria: Der neue große Staat Westafrikas," *FAZ*, September 24, 1960, BuZ 1–2.

[20] Bayart, *State in Africa*; Ellis, "Writing Histories"; Herbst, *States*; Mamdani, *Citizen*.

[21] On territoriality and colonialism see Herbst, *States*; Conrad, *Globalisation*, ch. 7; Maier, "Consigning."

[22] Colson, "African Society," 27.

to land, people were sparse. Accordingly, population was a much more fiercely contested resource. Rights over people – with slavery as the most extreme example – were thus much better developed than rights over land, because political allegiances were fluid: since there were always other places to go, people often preferred to desert their homes when political conditions became unfavorable. Accordingly, "ethnic and other attachments were constantly in flux as polities continually expanded and contracted."[23]

The largest African states were found in the savannah belt of West Africa, where camels and horses enabled military campaigns and trade across long distances. Forests and swamps impeded fast travel in the more humid zone to the south. Since creating larger polities demanded undue effort, political organization of the peoples living there was highly decentralized.[24] These geographic, social and political differences cut across the territory that later became Nigeria. Competing external forces of expansion also entangled the region in different economic, political, and cultural networks. The steppes of Northern Nigeria were deeply connected to the dynamic trade networks of trans-Saharan Africa. Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, the golden age of the camel caravans of the Sahara, a cultural contact zone had been created around the desert, with the the strip of land south of the desert at its southern frontier. Its name, the Sudan, can be traced back to *bilâd as-sûdân*– Arabic for the "land of the blacks." The Sahara was often metaphorically cast as a sea whose shores were connected by the beastly "ships of the desert." Hence "Sahel," the geographical designation for this strip of steppeland, is derived from the Arabic word for "shore."[25] The caravans linking the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and sub-Saharan Africa carried not only different commodities and people, but also ideas. Islam thus arrived in today's northern Nigeria around the eighth or ninth century.[26] When the first Europeans arrived on the Atlantic shores of West Africa, Islam had already taken firm roots in the inland. These coastal regions, however, were more directly connected to the "Atlantic World." In the early modern period, European tradesmen established footholds in the coastal regions of their southern continental neighbors, helping to turn West Africa into the prime hunting ground for slaves. The region was at the heart of the triangular trade connecting European port towns, West African shores, and the slave plantations of the Americas. West African societies thus became increasingly tightly integrated into global networks of trade, migration, and exploitation.[27]

[23] Herbst, *States*, 45. [24] Ibid., 35–52; Northrup, *Trade*, 13–5, 85–93.
[25] Austen, *Trans-Saharan Africa*, 36. [26] Hiskett, Development of Islam, 19–21.
[27] Law and Mann, "West Africa"; Law, *Slave Coast*.

Paradoxically, the slave trade also gave birth to the "Black Atlantic's" rich mélanges of pan-African cultures, which also impacted on West African societies as some of the slaves made their way back.[28] The American Revolution turned out to be a major turning point for the history of the Atlantic World. This crisis pressed Britain toward a reorientation of their imperial mission, increasingly envisioned as an anti-slave empire driven by "legitimate commerce."[29] The emergence of abolitionism had major repercussions for West Africa. In the late 1780s, British tradesmen and abolitionists started to help freed slaves from the Americas establish new settlements in West Africa. After the British Empire outlawed the slave trade in 1807, the Empire's anti-slaving squadron started intercepting slave ships, freeing the inmates and settling them in Sierra Leone, which became a British colony the following year.[30] Re-captives like the missionary Samuel Ajayi Crowther turned into a vanguard of westernization. Despite heavy limitations put on their influence by competing white clergy, the Christian mission in the region was widely promoted by these returnees from the slave ships and plantations.[31]

The turn of the century was also a period of accelerated change for Hausaland in the Western Sudan. The various Hausa rulers competed for supremacy and slaves. Against this background, the itinerant Islamic preacher Usman Dan Fodio began to attract a wide following among the young and the poor. Fodio called for strict adherence to the sharia, criticizing the mingling of native and Islamic rituals as practiced by local rulers. Modeling his persona after that of the prophet, he turned himself into a religious and political leader, calling for a *jihad* against local rulers who ignored Islamic laws. In the early nineteenth century, the movement expanded rapidly, melding a patchwork of smaller communities into one of Africa's largest empires of the time: the Sokoto Caliphate. Further expansion into the hard-to-conquer woodlands to the south could not be achieved. But Fodio founded a theocracy that was to remain in power throughout the rest of the century: Hausaland had entered the Dar al-Islam ("house of Islam") permanently.[32] However, the boundaries of this empire remained fluid. When a European explorer asked Fodio's son Muhammad Bello to draw a map of his domains, the Second Sultan of Sokoto sketched a number of strategic bases and vital trade routes, but no clear territorial borders. The Sultan did not consider himself the

28 Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*. See also *Akyeampong*, "*Africans* in the *Diaspora*"; Eckert, "Black Atlantic."
29 Brown, *Moral Capital*.
30 *Austen* and Smith, "*Images*"; Curtin, *Image of Africa*, 105–39.
31 On Crowther see Kopytoff, *Preface* and Sanneh, *Abolitionists*, 139–75.
32 Adeleye and Stewart, "Sokoto"; Last, *Sokoto*, ch. I; Robinson, *Muslim Societies*, 139–51.

ruler of a territory but the central authority in a network of personal allegiances. Such a flexible territoriality was a typical feature of the larger polities in the region.[33]

While the sultanate expanded, Yorubaland to the south of the Sokoto Empire was afflicted by a prolonged series of wars, conflicts and the demise and rise of city-states and other polities.[34] Amidst this political instability, the British Empire emerged as a new major player in West African power politics, drawn to the region by two factors: the parallel growth of trade and missionary interests. Before the discovery of gold and diamonds in South Africa in the 1880s, no part of the continent promised to be more economically lucrative than West Africa. Economic relations with states and societies along the West African coast had flourished due to the slave trade. Moreover, industrialization in Europe had created a great demand for a commodity which was abundant in the coastal forest region of the delta: the oil drawn from the oil palm tree, found in greater concentration there than anywhere else on earth.[35] Once tapped, the rich resources of peanuts and cocoa promised to be extremely lucrative as well, and the yet unexplored hinterlands of the Niger River fired the imagination of European merchants.[36]

In the mid-nineteenth century, British Protestant missionaries became increasingly successful in their conversion campaigns in the region and in mobilizing Christianized Africans to convert others. Many European missionaries were willing to learn native languages, and started translating the Bible into the vernacular. Their activities were, in turn, profitable for indigenous communities, as the missionary schools taught English, which was becoming the region's main trade language.[37] The unstable political and economic situation at the time increased the willingness of local rulers to welcome the missionaries, as the clerics promised to enhance relations with the increasingly influential British and their God, potentially providing decisive political or spiritual advantages over rivals. Missionaries were successful in promoting the three Cs: "Commerce, Christianity and Civilization." Despite critics of Empire among the missionaries, these principles often united them with imperialists.[38]

Colonial expansion and anti-slavery were also connected on another level. The trade in palm oil produced a large demand for labor in precolonial West African societies, which in many cases had not abolished slavery. Although the British themselves had helped create the demand

[33] Austen, *Trans-Saharan Africa*, 67–9. [34] Ajayi, "Aftermath."
[35] Lynn, *Commerce*. [36] Dike, *Trade and Politics*.
[37] Ayandele, *Missionary Impact*; Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise*; and Peel, *Religious Encounter*.
[38] See Porter, *Religion Versus Empire*.

for slaves, they in turn intervened to abolish this "most abominable institution."[39] Missionaries played a prominent role in the establishment of the first British protectorate in what was to become Nigeria, and in this way served as the Empire's vanguard. When missionaries stationed in the town of Abeokuta north of Lagos called for British military intervention against the dreaded slave trade profiteer and local ruler Kosoko, this lead first to the bombardment of Lagos in 1851, and then, when the British-installed successor could not provide the political stability the British desired, to the city's annexation as a British colony ten years later. In 1861, the British colonization of the region had begun.[40]

The Birth of Nigeria: Colonization and the New Regime of Territoriality

The two decades after the British annexation of Lagos did not see any further expansion of official colonial rule. Trade was flourishing, and so there was no need to assume direct administrative control of the region – informal imperialism was a much less cost-intensive way to secure British interests. Britain defined spheres of influence rather than territories with clearly demarcated borders, and so the Empire was basically merely a new faction in a complex web of polities with a loosely defined territoriality. But in the 1880s, with imperial competition intensifying, the situation changed. London was alarmed by the French push to enlarge its West African possessions, moving east from Senegal toward the upper Niger region, and the advances of Wilhelmine Germany, which had gained a foothold in the neighboring Cameroons in 1884. The British reacted by convincing local rulers along the coast from Calabar, where their rule had already been established, to the Niger Delta region to sign contracts with the imperial power. In 1885, the British Empire proclaimed sovereignty over the region. The Empire began to tighten the grip on its spheres of influence.[41]

Making inroads into the continent was possible along the navigable parts of larger rivers like the Niger, which turned into "one of the highways of imperialism in Africa," as Kenneth Onwuka Dike has written.[42] At least initially, up the river the Empire followed a different strategy than in its coastal possessions. Inland trade along the river had intensified in the previous decades, stiffening inter-imperial commercial competition. In 1879 the National African Company was formed to incorporate

[39] Huzzey, *Freedom*; Miers, *Britain*; Law, ed., *Slave Trade*.
[40] Huzzey, *Freedom*, 144–7; Mann, *Slavery*, 91–102.
[41] Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 203–18. [42] Ibid., v.

British trading interests in the region. The company bought out rivaling French merchants to control trade on the Niger, and, in 1886, was granted a royal charter and renamed the Royal Niger Company. Toward the turn of the century, company rule came under increasing attack. The inflated tariffs that the company charged for trade activities were primarily intended to keep out French and German merchants, but, in practice, also cut off the bloodline of some of the territory's native subjects. The company was also unable to keep the expanding French at bay, and the colonial office created the West African Frontier Force under seasoned colonial soldier and administrator Frederick Lugard to regain control over the territory. In 1899, London revoked the royal charter, and, in the following years, assumed direct control over the territory.[43]

Expanding further, the Empire moved to subdue native resistance. The resistance that the loosely organized Igbo societies of the south maintained lasted much longer than that of the more powerful states of Ibadan, Sokoto or Kano, which were conquered relatively quickly by the British, or the Fulani Empire, which collapsed in 1903. Its territory and people were divided between the British, the French and the Germans. The northern areas under British control were renamed the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, and the land near the Niger delta was added to the Niger Coast Protectorate to form the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The British colonization of Nigeria was brought to a close.[44]

British colonial expansion was part of a global intensification of imperial rule. The last decades of the nineteenth century witnessed an acceleration of globalization. The British Empire in particular developed into a "world-system," connected through what George Parkin called the "new nervous system" of the cable and the telegraph.[45] New technological developments also enabled new imaginations of space. Governments increasingly aimed to use both the population and the space within relatively clearly demarcated borders more efficiently. This thrust toward territorialization of colonial spaces was fueled by a spirit of imperial competition. Convinced that their rivals would take hold of the land if they failed to secure and expand their power bases, European powers preemptively claimed large territories, producing the "scramble for Africa."[46] At the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, Europe's political caste met to

[43] Falola and Heaton, *History*, 98–104.
[44] Adeleye, *Power*, chs. 7–9; Falola, *Colonialism and Violence*, 13–16, 34–9, Isichei, *History*, ch. 9.
[45] Qtd. in Darwin, *Empire Project*, 66. See also Magee and Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation* and Osterhammel, *Verwandlung*, 1023–9.
[46] Hyam, "Empire."

redraw the map of their southern continental neighbors. Borders demarcating the different spheres of influence of the European colonial powers were fixed on the map first. Over the following decades, the geographical partition of the continent was turned into a political reality.[47] The emerging new regime of territoriality had a large impact on the colonies. New technologies, in particular steam power, the railroad and the telegraph, fostered the belief that ever larger territories could be "opened up." Construction of the first railroad in British West Africa began in 1898, progressing from Lagos into the hinterland. A growing number of strategically important routes were connected via railroad in the course of the next three decades.[48] The political and socio-economic penetration of complete colonial territories would never be much more than a bureaucratic fiction. But, for the first time in West Africa, the territorial borders between states were clear-cut – at least on paper.

This principle of territorial rule often outweighed other concerns. Usually, London aimed at containing Islam, which the British widely perceived as a threat. But when it benefitted them, the British Empire cooperated with Muslim rulers. In Northern Nigeria, British colonial administrators developed the system of "indirect rule," which was to become the foundation of colonial governance in Africa in the early twentieth century. In practice this meant the cooperation between the Islamic establishment and the colonial government. Lord Lugard, now High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria and knighted for these services in 1901, assured the local Muslim rulers of British non-interference in religious matters and restricted the access of Christian missionaries to the region. In return, the Islamic authorities did not make intensive efforts toward proselytization in the south-eastern part of the colony. In effect, the colonial government allowed competing, proselytizing religious forces to cut across their territories – as long as official British rule remained intact.[49]

Lugard protected what he considered the pristine Muslim identity of the north from southern intrusion, but was also a key figure in the creation of Nigeria as a unified territory. An article in the London *Times* in early 1897 – penned by *Times* colonial editor Flora Shaw, who would marry Lugard five years later – proposed for the first time the unification of British possessions in the region under the name "Nigeria."[50] To a significant degree, the unification of the various colonies and protectorates in the region was the brainchild of this imperial power couple, Lord and Lady Lugard. In 1914, the protectorates of Northern and

[47] Eckert and Wirz, "Scramble"; Hyam, "Partition"; Förster et al., eds., *Bismarck*.
[48] Ekundare, *Economic History*, 73–5, 134–42.
[49] Barnes, "Evangelization"; Ayandele, "Missionary Factor."
[50] "Nigeria," *The Times*, January 8, 1897, 6; Kirk-Greene, "Who Coined the Name."

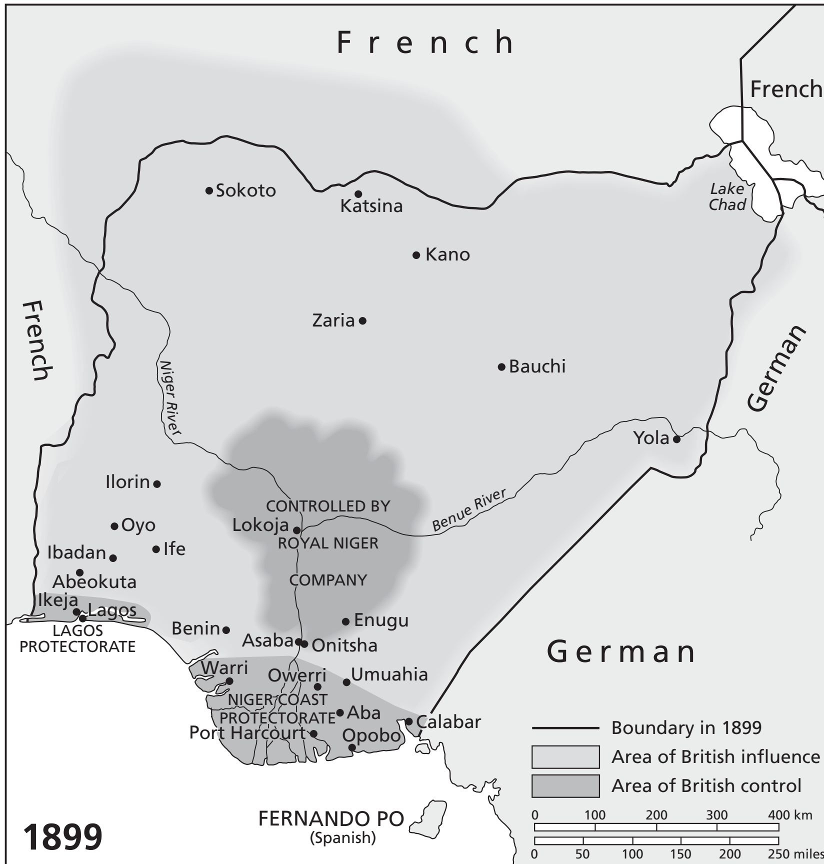


Figure 1.1 British Colonial Nigeria, 1899.

Southern Nigeria were amalgamated to form the single Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2). This was done mostly for financial reasons: the colonial conquest of the North had turned out to be a money-losing business for the Empire. Yet politically, the administration of the protectorate was considered a success. After the amalgamation, Lord Lugard almost single-handedly extended the principles of indirect rule to the southern parts of the newly created colony, despite local administrators' repeated warnings about the difficulties such an undertaking would face.[51]

[51] Perham, "Introduction," *Lugard, Volume 1* and *Lugard, Volume 2*. For more critical views see Afigbo, *Warrant Chiefs*, chs. 4–6; Cell, "Colonial Rule," 240–2 and Taiwo, "Colonizer's Mind."

Figure 1.2 British Colonial Nigeria, 1914.

The unified political administration was imposed on two regions that both culturally and socially "were already on very different paths,"[52] partly due to the heterogeneous effects of British rule in different parts of the amalgamated territory. The system of the "warrant chiefs," which was introduced to enable effective "indirect rule" in the southeast is a case in point. In the 1890s, a system of native courts had been installed in the Niger Coast Protectorate to integrate local authorities into the colonial administration. Afterwards, the colonial power extended this system to the interior. However, village societies in the hinterland were

[52] Falola and Heaton, *History*, 116.

politically much more decentralized. There was seldom a chief bearing the same responsibility as the heads of the more hierarchically organized coastal communities. Seeing themselves in need of identifiable leadership figures, the British colonizers often singlehandedly created chiefdoms whose only authority lay in the warrants distributed by the imperial administration. In some cases, when the British approached villagers to name their chiefs, the communities pointed out slaves or other social outcasts, as they expected their true leaders (if they at all existed) to be killed once handed over. Accordingly, the status of these "chiefs" was often precarious.[53] Taking a cue from the way the British understood their own society along class lines, colonial administrators organized imperial rule along the lines of social hierarchies.[54] Sometimes these corresponded relatively well with local politics, such as in northern Nigeria, and sometimes less, like in large parts of southern Nigeria.

Even if the colonial system's power to "invent" ethnicity should not be overemphasized, colonial institutions did differentiate local populations along lines defined as ethnic. When the colonizers arrived in Africa, most of them expected to find "tribes," rather than "nations."[55] Colonial ethnologists searched for group designations among the people they encountered, and often assumed they had identified the names of different "tribes." These markers of identity were used in ethnographic studies of the population and, as a result, in colonial administrative matters. However, these supposed ethnonyms had often been much more fluid in the pre-colonial period. Many of them were descriptions of social groups; individuals could often identify with a number of them. Now, they had been singled out and fixed as markers of ethnic identity.[56] When Europeans arrived in southeastern Nigeria, the Igbo, who "lived in small autonomous village communities that warred on one another," did not identify themselves as a group. They

> became a self-conscious unity only after they had been identified as such by foreigners who perceived common features of language and custom despite the many manifest differences. Foreigners gave the Ibo their name, and, by treating them as though they were a single people, encouraged them to become one.

The effects of this process still reverberated when Elizabeth Colson wrote this text in the late 1960s. At the time, an Igbo-dominated Biafra was fighting Nigeria to create a new nation-state.[57]

[53] Afigbo, *Warrant Chiefs*, ch. 3; Vaughan, "Chieftaincy Politics."
[54] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*. [55] Colson, "African Society," 28.
[56] Amselle, "Ethnies et espaces"; Berman, "Ethnicity."
[57] Colson, "African Society," 28–9.

The End of Empire and the Coming of the Nation-State

In Nigeria as elsewhere, the British Empire continually faced local resistance. But a more or less unified anticolonial movement developed only in the interwar period. Starting around the early 1930s, a new generation of educated indigenous elites came to the fore. This anticolonial avant-garde continued its activities after World War II and helped turn the two postwar decades into a period of accelerated change, when a number of African colonies headed toward independence.[58] However, the later outcome of this process – independence as a nation-state – was not always what the protagonists of anticolonial struggle were working toward. Accordingly, these currents of thought and action cannot be subsumed under the shibboleth of a "rise of nationalism." Local ethnic and translocal racial ties flourished alongside nationalism in the climate of anticolonial critique. The cultural work of the African diaspora also helped strengthen Pan-African as well as local ethnic ties.[59] This can be seen in the historiography of Africa, which began to prosper in the interwar period, which – because no space congruent with the one now called Nigeria existed in pre-colonial West Africa – projected backwards along either Pan-African or ethnic lines.[60] As Obafemi Awolowo famously stated in the early postwar period, "Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression."[61] The role of the Yoruba anticolonial activist exemplifies a process which was characteristic of late colonial Nigeria: the expansion and politicization of Nigeria's three "mega-tribes": the Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa-Fulani.[62] Late colonial rule not only helped create native nationalism, it also contributed to the establishment and growth of these three "imagined communities" which worked below the level of the nation, but above that of the local.[63]

World War II marked a moment of change for the colonies. The battle between their European masters had placed heavy burdens upon colonial populations. War-related shortages in food supply raised awareness of global entanglements among many Africans. Allied wartime propaganda relied heavily on the imagery of a fight between the forces of freedom and those of racist suppression, which raised hopes for more autonomy among many in the colonies. However, the end of the war was followed by Africa's "second colonization," when the imperial powers retightened

[58] Falola and Heaton, *History*, 137–41; Iliffe, *Africans*, 239–44; Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, ch. 4.
[59] Bersselaar, "Imagining Home"; Matory, "English Professors."
[60] Coleman, *Nigeria*, 327–8; Zachernuk, "Origins."
[61] Awolowo, *Path*, 47.
[62] Peel, "Cultural Work," 200.
[63] The term is from Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

their grip.[64] The resulting disillusionment incited many among the colonized to turn to more radical politics, initiating a period of mounting anticolonial protest. In the summer of 1945, mere weeks after the fighting on Europe's battlefields ended, a general strike shut down railway, post, and telegraph services in Nigeria for more than a month. The colonial government was forced to assure labor leaders that their demands would be dealt with. The strike marked the beginning of the growing radicalization of anticolonialism. It made plain that the population's interests could be enforced by a unified and well-organized movement.[65] Against this background, Nnamdi "Zik" Azikiwe, a Penn and Lincoln University-educated Igbo journalist, began his rise to prominence. Zik became the face of Nigerian nationalism – not only for Nigerians, but also for the colonial government, which tried to blame the strike on him rather than on the individuals more directly involved in its organization. His call for a "Renascent Africa" inspired the inception of Zikism as an intellectual and political movement. Azikiwe's aspirations transcended ethnic bonds, though most of his followers were Igbo.[66]

Colonial politicians answered with a carrot and stick policy: they suppressed radicals, but gave in to demands for new steps toward political participation and self-government. In 1946, the British Parliament approved a new constitution for Nigeria. Named after Governor-General Sir Arthur Richards, the constitution expanded the powers and numbers of native members of the Legislative Council, which had been created by the 1922 constitution. Yet anticolonial politicians and the Nigerian intelligentsia, Azikiwe's followers in particular, were incensed by the unilateral way in which the British passed the constitution. In response to this criticism, Richards' successor, Sir John Macpherson, organized a Constitutional Conference to consult larger numbers of Nigerian leaders on the planned constitutional revisions, which resulted in the Macpherson Constitution of 1951. This was the first in a series of constitutional assemblies held throughout the 1950s, in which the colonial power and representatives of the colonized population discussed steps toward self-government.[67]

The Macpherson Constitution was the product of an imperial policy re-orientation. It forestalled the continued radicalization of Nigerian

[64] Crowder, "Second World War," 28. See also Cooper, "Reconstructing," and Olusanya, *Second World War*.

[65] Cohen, *Labour and Politics*, 159–64; Coleman, *Nigeria*, 255–9; Cooper, *Decolonization*, 134–7.

[66] Coleman, *Nigeria*, 260–7; Tijani, *Leftist Nationalists*, ch. 3 and Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, ch. 5. See also Azikiwe, *Odyssey*.

[67] Falola and Heaton, *History*, 146–54; Hyam, *Empire*, 186–7.

politics, and the appeal of Zikism lessened palpably in the early 1950s. Zik himself had distanced himself from the movement in the late 1940s.[68] However, the new constitution also continued some of the policies initiated with the Richards Constitution, which, for the first time, included the northern region in the central legislature. It thus strengthened the administrative unity of the territory. Yet at the same time, it included measures that gave more power to each of the three regions, for example the creation of regional Houses of Assembly. The Central Legislature was turned into a House of Representatives. Half of the members of the House came from the northern region; the other half was split between the east and the west. These reforms effectively ended the system of imperial governance through indirect rule. Yet, skillfully adapting to the new situation, many of the chiefs retained their influence, acting as symbols of "traditional" power. The survival of the chieftaincy symbolized continuity in times of radical political change, making the latter more easily palatable for the population.[69]

Most decisively, however, the Macpherson Constitution provided for the first general elections in Nigerian history, held in 1952.[70] Since the 1930s, Nigerian politicians and activists had created social and cultural organizations with a focus on specific ethnic groups. Many of these were ethnic unions organized to cater to the needs of the groups of newly arrived immigrants in the rapidly urbanizing areas of Nigeria, in particular Kano and Lagos, the hotbed of Nigerian anticolonial politics. From the late 1940s, given the prospect of elections, these organizations were transformed into political parties or created parties under their auspices. The Action Group (AG) was formed in 1951 by leaders of the Yoruba cultural organization Egbe Omo Oduduwa, the name of which – The Society of the Descendants of Oduduwa – links it to the mythical progenitor of the Yoruba.[71] After the Richards Constitution, political leaders in the north also realized that their interests would need to be promoted in a nation-wide context. In 1949, they translated growing political ferment into the creation of the Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa, emphasizing its ethnic base with its Hausa name. Two years later, it was turned into a political party using the English translation of its name, Northern People's Congress (NPC).[72] Conversely, the Zikist NCNC, the principle Nigerian nationalist organization, was increasingly seen as a "tribalistic"

[68] Coleman, *Nigeria*, ch. 13; Olusanya, *Second World War*, ch. 6.
[69] Vaughan, *Nigerian Chiefs*, ch. 4.
[70] General elections also took place in 1954, 1956, and 1959. Falola and Heaton, *History*, 146–54.
[71] Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 67–8, 101–12.
[72] Dudley, *Parties and Politics*, 77–90.

force furthering Igbo interests. Historians are divided over the question of whether the Ibo State Union was a major factor determining NCNC politics. However, it can be noted that the NCNC, despite links to partners in the north and offshoots in the west, increasingly turned toward its base among the Igbo and in the eastern region.[73] In effect, the political reforms of late colonialism, in particular the recurrent elections throughout the 1950s, lead to an increasing regionalization of political identities.

The economic reforms that the colonial power implemented also strengthened these processes. The funding of major development projects made large sums of money available to the public sector. Governmental positions thus became the principal way to gain access to capital. The produce marketing boards introduced by Britain in the late 1940s played a key role in this regard. The boards set the price for the major export crops such as groundnuts, palm kernels, and palm oil and bought them from local peasants. According to the imperial power, the boards were created as cushions to protect local producers against price fluctuations on the world market. However, the crops were purchased below market value and sold abroad for a large profit; the boards accordingly amassed vast surpluses, which were originally intended for investments in infrastructure and other projects for the benefit of cocoa producers. Yet colonial economists argued that the introduction of large sums into the Nigerian economy would lead to inflation and political turmoil. In the first years after their creation, the colonial government thus had the boards hold back most of the money and allocated large shares to British banks.[74]

These policies became the object of mounting criticism. Many Nigerians condemned the British for using the surpluses to repair the damage the war had done to Britain's economy. The political leaders of the regions claimed control over the revenues for the crops grown in their states; groundnuts were mostly produced in the north, cocoa in the west, and palm oil and kernel in the east. Under the 1954 Lyttleton Constitution, the regional governments were turned into the final authorities deciding over Marketing Board funds. The regionalization of the boards, which had previously been organized on a commodity basis, made enormous amounts of money available to the regional governments. Since the parties that controlled the regional assemblies also decided about development projects, the public sector's role in the Nigerian economy expanded vastly. Regional governments determined where the projects

[73] Harneit-Sievers, *Constructions*, 117–23; Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 143–51, 460–3; Smock, "N.C.N.C."
[74] Tignor, *Capitalism*, 212–17.

would be undertaken and which companies were contracted. The political and the economic elites were closely entangled, and this blurring of boundaries between the public and the private sectors encouraged a culture of corruption. Making matters worse, the promotion of private business remained weak. Nigerians who wanted to advance their careers, especially in financial terms, needed to take over governmental positions or at least ensure their influence in official circles. That the money in late colonial Nigeria was largely controlled by the public sector further intensified the political competition for control over the regional and national governments.[75]

A widening rift between the north and south further complicated the growing political competition between the regions and their dominant ethnic groups. Britain's efforts to "Nigerianize" the colonial administration also contributed to this process. Northerners widely perceived this process as a "Southernization" of the civil service. In comparison to the south with its relatively numerous missionary schools, the north, as a consequence of Lugard's system of "indirect rule," lacked institutions of western education. In consequence, very few northerners were qualified for official governmental posts. Of the 700 Nigerians holding senior posts in the civil service, only about 30 were from the most populous of the three regions, the north.[76] Afraid of southern domination in a democratically self-governed Nigeria, some northern leaders flexed their muscles, repeatedly threatening to secede if self-government was granted. Speaking in the Legislative Council, Abubakar Balewa ominously predicted that British withdrawal would be the moment to continue the Fulani *jihad*'s "interrupted conquest to the sea."[77] Even before its creation as a sovereign state, the Nigerian federation thus seemed at the brink of falling apart.[78] Yet officials in London, with the experience of the partition of India and Pakistan fresh in their minds, were bent on securing a unified Nigeria. In a 1957 memo for the Cabinet Colonial Policy Committee, the Colonial Secretary explained the dilemma facing Whitehall in Nigeria: if the British granted independence too soon, they would risk instability; too late, and they would risk riots and a sense of "bitterness."[79]

In the hopes of both speeding their exit and creating stability, the imperial power – convinced that a united Nigeria was necessary as a means of securing British interests in a postcolonial Africa – worked

[75] Ibid., part 2. [76] Lynn, "North," 147.
[77] Qtd. in Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 98, fn. 25.
[78] Lynn, "North"; Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, 164–74.
[79] "'Nigeria': Memorandum for Cabinet Colonial Policy Committee by Mr. Lennox Boyd," 341.

toward ensuring a large influence for the northern region over national politics. In 1958, per capita representation in the Federal parliament was introduced, which increased the political dominance of the more populous north of the country over the economically more dynamic south.[80] With the northern leaders assuaged, all Nigerian parties opted for independence at the Constitutional Conference in 1958. At that point, the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 had already finalized the process that would turn Nigeria into a federation. Under its auspices, the regions could opt for internal self-government, which the west and east did in 1957, followed by the north in 1959.[81] Yet even on the eve of independence, it was not entirely clear what shape the future polity would take. Most anticolonial politicians agreed that an intermediary level between the national – or the federal – and the local was needed to govern the territory effectively. Awolowo envisioned political structures that mirrored the differences between the diverse ethnic groups cohabiting within the territory. As a sum of its constituent parts, this would also enable Nigeria as a whole to develop more rapidly.[82] Other anticolonial leaders argued along similar lines. Even Azikiwe, assuming the double role of Igbo and nationalist leader, outlined the creation of a Commonwealth of Nigeria consisting of eight protectorates.[83]

However, anticolonial leaders' visions of independent Nigeria were also determined by their own prospects for political control. In times when his party, the NCNC, seemed to dominate national politics, Azikiwe also argued for a strong central government.[84] Awolowo's and Azikiwe's interventions testify to both the opening of the "horizon of expectations"[85] during decolonization *and* to its simultaneous narrowing. As Wolfgang Reinhard has argued, colonialism to a large degree created the structures that were used to overcome it.[86] The nation-state fast became the focus of contemporary political imagination. Decolonization transformed administrative territorial units into sovereign states, and the political structures of the late colonial state provided anticolonial politicians with concrete machineries of claim making. Pan-African ideals still held a wide appeal, but had also diminished in influence.[87] As a political utopia, they provided a vision, but did not offer a concrete framework for efficient claim making – in contrast to the arena of the colonial state.[88] Thus the Federalist Awolowo also accepted the structures of the late colonial state as a framework in which to work toward independence.

[80] Lynn, "North." [81] Falola and Heaton, *History*, 153–4.
[82] Awolowo, *Path*. See also Nolte, *Awolowo*. [83] Coleman, *Nigeria*, ch. 15.
[84] Ibid., 324–5. [85] Koselleck, "Erfahrungsraum." [86] Reinhard, "Dialektik."
[87] Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, chs. 3–4; Geiss, *Pan-African Movement*, part III.
[88] Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint," 174; Kelly and Kaplan, *Represented Communities*.

The duality of the three regional and the superordinate national government did not match his preferences, but that was the system in which postcolonial sovereignty became achievable.[89] "Whether the territorial nation-state was what African activists wanted or not, that was what they could get," Frederick Cooper contends.[90]

The postcolonial nation-state was in some ways the unintended end point of processes initiated under colonial rule: the creation of a nationally governed unified territory.[91] However, as soon as the colonial power ceased to be the principal political opponent, internal differences increasingly came to the fore. With the end of imperial rule approaching, the common enemy that unified the interests of diverse anticolonial groupings disappeared, and the divides within the Nigerian population were thrown into sharp relief. The British colonial masters had left the postcolonial state a number of legacies. National borders mismatched ethnic bonds of loyalty, and left a lasting impact on both territoriality and ethnicity. The colonial system partly produced and partly strengthened ethnic forms of identification, even as it introduced a regime of national territoriality that transcended *and* transgressed ethnic lines of demarcation. The implementation of the colonial regime of territoriality and the administration of the colonial population used different scales: the territory was the size of a nation-state, but a number of different "ethnic" groups cohabited within these borders. These were the borders – borders between states and among populations – within which colonies like Nigeria were granted independence.

The Coming of Postcolonial Conflict

The year 1966 began promisingly for Nigeria. On January 12, Lagos was the venue of the first Commonwealth Conference ever held outside London. The summit was to debate the unilateral declaration of independence from the United Kingdom that the white apartheid regime in Rhodesia had issued two months before. Britain's reticence to act decisively against this move created a stir in the Afro-Asian bloc. Nine African countries broke off diplomatic relations with London. The Nigerian Prime Minister Balewa suggested a summit of the Commonwealth heads of state to calm the waters. At the conference, a number of Balewa's African peers harshly lambasted the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson. However, the Balewa administration tried its best to

[89] Coleman, *Nigeria*, 323–4. [90] Cooper, "Reconstructing," 168.
[91] On different imaginations of the future in the late colonial era see Cooper, *Citizenship*.

exert a balancing influence, successfully reinforcing its newly won reputation as a moderating force in African politics.[92]

Yet to better informed contemporaries, Nigeria's domestic political situation presented serious cause for alarm. At the time of the conference, the Western state, where regional assembly elections had been held three months earlier, was in turmoil. The acting regional government under Chief S. L. Akintola's Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) had become highly unpopular among the population. The NNDP cooperated with Balewa's NPC. Many southerners considered the Akintola administration a puppet government: a symbol of northern domination. However, the NNDP held a vital strategic advantage over the oppositional United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA), a coalition of Awolowo's AG and Azikiwe's NCNC. It had governmental power, which gave them substantial control over the electoral process. The NNDP made use of all means to stay in power. State officials were advised to thwart the efforts of oppositional candidates to register for the election. Politicians and supporters of the opposition were intimidated, causing many to fear running for office or showing up at the election booth. Akintola decided that the election results would be publicized from the Ibadan headquarters rather than, as was the usual practice, from local polling stations – a change that gave the government increased control over the process. Despite reports of serious irregularities at many polling locations, Akintola declared victory after the announcement of preliminary results. Yet Alhaji Adegbenro, leader of the AG, also announced his victory, stating that he was about to form an interim government. Adegbenro and other UPGA leaders were arrested for disregarding the official results. In the following weeks, riots erupted throughout the west.[93]

The events in the Western state during and after the October 1965 election were, in many ways, a reiteration of the 1964 federal elections. The federal system was the forum in which competition between political parties turned into political violence. Control over the produce Marketing Boards, which, in 1962, handled more than 63 percent of Nigerian exports, was still vital in postcolonial times.[94] Regional governments generated vast surpluses through the collection of import and export taxes.[95] The growth of the oil industry after independence also contributed to the conflict situation. In 1958, oil had been discovered in the eastern region. In the mid-1960s, Nigeria experienced a first "oil boom,"

92 Patrick Keatley, "Wise men take heat out of Lagos talks," *The Guardian*, January 13, 1966, 1. Kirk-Greene, "1966," 32; Coggins, "Wilson."
93 Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*; Falola and Heaton, *History*, 171–2.
94 Helleiner, "Fiscal Role," 582.
95 Falola and Heaton, *History*, 171; Falola, *Economic Reforms*, 96–101, 150–5.

with nearly all of it produced in the eastern region. Half of the revenues were allocated to the region of origin, 20 percent to the Federal government and another 30 percent were shared between all regions in proportion to their population. In view of the rapid growth of oil revenues, the north feared falling behind. Large oil reserves were also discovered in the Mid-West, a new state carved out in 1963. This provoked increasing competition between the mid-western and eastern regions. The growth of the oil industry – and, in light of the rash of discoveries within less than a decade, its potential for further expansion – thus resulted in the stiffening of the competition between the regions.[96]

Accordingly, the processes of the ethnicization and regionalization of Nigerian politics were further strengthened after independence. The appeal of "ethnicity" did not lessen. To the contrary, it became a resource of allegiance called upon in the battle for political power. Ethnicity – membership by birth and/or ascription to a group defined by common language, culture or belief in a shared origin – is not merely a colonial invention. Nor is it a vestige of "savage" Africa. As some historians have shown, it is a commonly used resource for social cohesion: "It can be a source of order, of community, and of security in times of uncertainty."[97] As such, ethnicity was an attractive resource for African communities during the ascent of colonial rule as well as after its downfall – they were not only ascribed to the African subjects, but also willingly appropriated by groups and individuals.[98]

However, in postcolonial Nigeria, ethnicity's negative effects were direly felt in the competition for political control over the territory. Whereas the power of the state was, at least for a considerable time, relatively unchallenged under colonial rule, participation in the execution of power had become a possibility for larger parts of the population after independence. Thus, part of the weakness of the postcolonial state lay in the growth of participatory options: the groups that got into power subsequently defended their positions vehemently. In effect, bonds of loyalty were strengthened, particularly along ethnic lines. On the regional level, a system of patronage was thus created; on the national level, a situation of competition was enhanced in which ethnic attributes, perceived as "natural," exacerbated political conflicts.[99]

The rift was particularly deep between the north and the south. Both sides feared the "domination" of one over the other, but for different reasons. The south, considered more economically advanced, was more

[96] Klieman, "Oil Companies"; Phia Steyn, "Shell-BP"; Uche, "British Interests."
[97] Anthony, *Poison and Medicine*, 2. [98] Graf, *Nigerian State*, ch. 2.
[99] Berman, "Ethnicity"; Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, 5–6, 171–4.

directly connected to western trade and education. The latter was especially significant, as it had a direct effect on the political administration of the north. At independence, there were over 6,500 primary schools and 700 secondary schools in the southwest alone. In the north as a whole, there were only about 2,600 primary and less than 50 secondary schools. The greater number of educated southerners meant that, under colonial rule, many of them filled posts in the administration of the north.[100] Fueled by fears of southern domination, this trend was reversed after independence. Northern governments habitually gave jobs to northerners even when applicants from the south were better qualified. This policy produced frustration among well-educated southerners, who felt increasingly marginalized in the political administration of the country now mostly ruled by the dominant party of the north. This also applies to the national level, because the per-capita representation in the Nigerian electoral system gave an advantage to the populous north. The debate was heated further by the censuses of 1962 and 1963, the first of which indicated that the north had grown at a much slower pace than the southern regions, a result the NPC government refused to ratify. The second census – which had most likely been manipulated – yielded results much more favorable for the north and, in turn, provoking outcry from the south. Southern opposition parties were not as successful in refuting the results as northern politicians had been the year before, so the electoral system continued to favor the north. The region dominated national politics through its sheer size and numbers.[101]

Against such a background, it is not surprising that the national elections of 1964–1965 were severely flawed. In the north, the ruling NPC, which had formed a coalition with the NNDP and the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA), did their best to prevent opposition candidates from campaigning, often involving physical force or the use of police troops, who arrested UPGA candidates and supporters. In the western region, opposition factionists were intimidated or beaten up by thugs hired by the government. The UPGA decided to boycott the elections. However, due to internal discord, the party arrived at this decision only at the last minute. The elections took place anyway. The boycott was a failure, and the NNA could declare its victory. Prime Minister Balewa called on President Nnamdi Azikiwe to invite the formation of an NNA government. Azikiwe refused to do so. Further negotiations between the Prime Minister and the President resulted in the "Zik-Balewa-Pact," which foresaw the creation of an NNA-led government under some conditions: first, the

[100] Falola and Heaton, *History*, 146–7; Lynn, "North."
[101] Diamond, *Class*, ch. 5.

incorporation of UPGA members into the government; second, the recontestation of the successfully boycotted seats, and, third, the rerun of the elections in the particularly fiercely embattled western region. These were held in October 1965 and lead to the chaos described above, in which between one and two thousand people were killed.[102]

In the morning hours of January 15, 1966, the First Nigerian Republic came to an end. Two days after the Commonwealth heads of states left Lagos, a group of Nigerian officers under the leadership of Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu swiftly executed their secret "Operation Leopard," a concerted action aimed at initiating a coup d'état. In Lagos, a band of plotters led by the Sandhurst-trained Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna, a former track and field athlete who held the Commonwealth high jump record, captured and killed Prime Minister Sir Balewa and his finance minister. In the Lagos suburb Apaba, three high-ranking officers were killed by another group of plotters. In Ibadan, the rebelling soldiers shot the unpopular Western Premier Akintola. In Kaduna, Major Nzeogwu and his soldiers forced entry into the residence of Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto. His senior wife and one of his bodyguards tried to protect him; both were killed alongside the premier of northern Nigeria.

Yet the coup was not a complete success. Some of the targets were tipped off in time, and the plotters failed to win over a majority of the military. In Kano, Lt. Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu "Emeka" Ojukwu, commander of the 5th battalion, refused to get involved. The plotters also failed to win over the garrison in Ibadan, and the infantry battalion based in Ikeja could not be persuaded to participate. Other factions of the military initiated a countercoup. Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, General Commanding Officer of the Nigerian Army, arrived at the Ikeja base and started to rally loyal troops. Ironsi and his followers regained control of most of the strategic positions in the country and successfully stalled the putsch. The only remaining position held by the rebels was Kaduna. After holding out for two days, Nzeogwu, the leader of the coup in the north, realized the futility of his position. He gave up and delivered himself into detention on Monday, January 17. The coup was over.[103]

However, the government had received too hard a blow to recover quickly. Reportedly in tears over the loss of his comrades, Major General Ironsi asked the remaining rump cabinet to transfer power into his hands, which they did obligingly. Ironsi subsequently outlawed political

[102] Ibid., chs. 7–8.
[103] Iliffe, *Obasanjo*, 20–1; Luckham, *Nigerian Military*, ch. I; St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*, 29–41.

parties, installed a military government, and nominated military governors for the regions. Among them was the new military governor of the east: Lt. Col. Ojukwu. Initially, Ironsi's regime enjoyed considerable popularity among the population, particularly in the south. Although Ironsi had led the countercoup, his program was at least partly in tune with the goals of the coup leaders. In a political atmosphere poisoned by bribery and violence, these soldiers agreed upon the need to restore law and order to end corruption, tribalism, and regionalism.[104] But from the perspective of many northerners, Ironsi's regime was essentially Igbo in character. The new head of state kept the rebellious soldiers in detention instead of bringing them to trial. Furthermore, perhaps out of mere political naiveté, Ironsi surrounded himself with Igbo advisors. The final blow to Ironsi's reputation in the north was Decree no. 34 of May 24, 1966. His regime had – not entirely incorrectly – identified the federal system as one of the main sources of the escalating conflict. With the decree, Ironsi abolished the regions, replacing them with "groups of provinces" without autonomous civil or military administration.[105] In the north, this move was widely perceived as an unconcealed effort to secure southern dominance over national affairs. On July 29, 1966, a group of Northern soldiers and officers answered with another countercoup. For three days Nigeria was without political leadership. Then, the remaining officers selected Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon as the new head of state.[106]

Gowon announced the repeal of Decree no. 34 and re-established the federal system. This move met strong resistance in the Igbo-dominated eastern region, where military governor Ojukwu declined to accept Gowon's legitimacy as head of state, as there were still a number of End of Empire, Coming of the Nation-State more experienced and higher-ranking than the 31-year old Lieutenant Colonel. The increasingly heated debate was further fueled by outbursts of violence against Igbos across northern Nigeria, which had started in reaction to Decree no. 34 in May. However, they continued for months without being stopped by the new regime, peaking in September. The estimates vary widely, but up to 100,000 easterners may have been killed in these months, with perhaps 20,000 or 30,000 in September alone. These eruptions of violence provoked a flow of about two million Igbo refugees to the eastern region.[107]

104 Dent, "Military and the Politicians," 78–93; Luckham, *Nigerian Military*, ch. XI.
105 "'The Regions Are Abolished."
106 Iliffe, *Obasanjo*, 21–3; Luckham, *Nigerian Military*, ch. II; St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*, 67–75.
107 Falola and Heaton, *History*, 175; Anthony, *Poison and Medicine*, ch. 3.

The eastern leadership began to question whether the security of Nigerians of Igbo origin could still be guaranteed within the federation. The disintegration of Nigeria became an increasingly realistic scenario. On January 4 and 5, 1967, a meeting of the Supreme Military Council – primarily intended as a "peace summit" between Gowon and Ojukwu – was held in Aburi, Ghana, at the invitation of Gen. Joseph Ankrah's military government. The negotiations produced a fairly flimsy resolution, which the opposing parties interpreted fundamentally differently. Gowon believed that the federal system would be preserved, while Ojukwu was convinced that the agreement outlined a confederation that strengthened regional – in particular eastern – autonomy.[108] On March 10, the Supreme Military Council met in Benin City – with Ojukwu absent – to ratify a decree drafted by Gowon and his advisors that outlined his interpretation of the Aburi accords along federal lines.[109] Ojukwu replied by announcing that the eastern region would, as of April 1, become an independently administered region. The Nigerian Federal Military Government (FMG) announced economic sanctions.

Further negotiations led nowhere. On May 26, the Eastern Region's Consultative Assembly mandated Ojukwu to declare independence. The next day, Gowon responded with a radio broadcast announcing that Nigeria would be partitioned into twelve federal states.[110] This strengthening of federalism assuaged fears of northern domination among Yorubas in the west in particular, and it also met the accord of the minorities throughout the country whose influence promised to increase because of these measures. Yet for the eastern leadership, the prospects were disastrous. The region would be cut into three, leaving only a rump state encompassing the Ibo heartland, heavily populated but economically far less prosperous than the strip of land near the coast, where most of the oil was located. On May 30, Ojukwu declared the region's independence as the "Republic of Biafra." In early July, the Nigerian Civil War began with the advance of Federal troops into Biafran territory.

[108] Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 64.
[109] "Decree No. 8 of 1967." [110] "Gowon's Broadcast."

2 The Biafran Campaign for Self-Determination in a Postcolonial World of States

The night was chilly in Enugu. It was after midnight when the telephone rang in the homes of civil servants and foreign diplomats in eastern Nigeria's regional capital. They were called to the residence of the Military Governor. "Emeka" Ojukwu awaited them encircled by microphones and cameras, a flag with horizontal stripes in red, black and green, and a rising yellow sun in the middle on the wall behind him. At 3 am, May 31, 1967, Ojukwu declared that "the territory and region known as and called Eastern Nigeria [. . .] shall henceforth be an independent sovereign state of the name and title of 'The Republic of Biafra'" (see Figure 2.1).[1] After the proclamation, a police band played "Land of the Rising Sun." The anthem of Africa's 41st independent state used parts of Jean Sibelius' *Finlandia* and lyrics from a poem by Nnamdi Azikiwe.[2] The end of the ceremony was met with prolonged applause, but little jubilation. "'The atmosphere,'" a *New York Times* journalist quoted a diplomat present at the event, "'was somber, touched with sadness that this had to happen.'"[3] Ojukwu's address was broadcast to the population on the regional governmental radio – now renamed "Radio Biafra" – at 6 am. At 1 pm, the Military Governor was formally sworn in as head of state by Chief Justice Sir Louis Mbanefo. Sporting a military uniform with a leopard skin pattern, Ojukwu was greeted by a crowd and hailed with a salute fired from 41 guns – matching the number of independent African states after Biafran independence. Some of Biafra's more enthusiastic supporters danced in the streets, chanting the new national anthem. However, in contrast to the joyful celebration of Nigerian independence less than seven years before, the atmosphere was marked by unease.[4]

[1] "Ojukwu Secedes," 452. [2] Nwankwo and Ifejika, *Making of a Nation*, 351.

[3] Lloyd Garrison, "Eastern Region Quits Nigeria," *New York Times*, May 31, 1967, 14. David Hunt, "Nigeria: The Secession of Eastern Nigeria," July 7, 1967 (UK NA, FCO 25/232).

[4] For contemporary accounts see Hunt, "Nigeria" (UK NA, FCO 25/232); Garrison, "Eastern Region"; Donald Louchheim, "East Secedes from Nigeria," *The Washington*

Figure 2.1 Nigeria and Biafra in their borders of May 31, 1967.

And, indeed, there were reasons for concern. Only minutes after the radio broadcast of the Biafran Declaration of Independence, the Nigerian head of state Gowon replied with an order for general mobilization. The chance of acquiring international recognition was dim, as commentators agreed.[5] Echoing the international reports covering Nigerian

Post, May 31, 1967, A1, A13 and Donald Louchheim, "East Nigeria Became Biafra in Air of Impending Tragedy," *The Washington Post*, June 4, 1967, A10; "Oxford gegen Sandhurst," *Spiegel*, June 5, 1967, 102–3; "Nigeria Zerbricht," *Die Zeit*, June 2, 1967.

5 See, e.g., "Secession in Nigeria," *Chicago Tribune*, June 1, 1967, 22; "Nigeria zerbricht," *Die Zeit*; Stanley Meisler, "E. Nigeria Secedes," *Los Angeles Times*, May 31, 1967, 1 and Louchheim, "East Nigeria."

independence, there were repeated references to the Congo. But now the prospects had changed. The prolonged conflict in the Congo had "attached the word 'crisis' to Africa in much of the world's press."[6] In view of the Biafran secession, a disintegrating Nigeria seemed to resemble the crisis-ridden former Belgian colony. Immediately after Congolese independence in 1960, Katanga, the resource-rich south-eastern region, seceded. The secessionist state never gained international recognition and was reintegrated into the Congo after two years.[7] References to this prime cautionary tale of postcolonial African demise became a common motif in international media reports about Biafra's secession. The rich oilfields in Biafra caused many to speculate about the economic backdrop to the secession: what copper had been for Katanga, oil might be for Biafra.[8] The Biafran war was regularly interpreted as "tribal warfare" between Hausa-Fulani and Igbos, evidence for "the key problem haunting all the new African nations – the conflict between tribalism and nation-building [. . .]."[9] If secession would be accepted, journalists surmised, this would mean giving way to a "Balkanization" of Africa, the disintegration of the continent into mini-states waging tribal wars against each other.[10] In order to avert this scenario, the territorial integrity of postcolonial states needed fierce protection, as contemporary commentators – African and foreign alike – agreed. In a postcolonial world, the principle of self-determination would have to be restricted to prevent endless chain-reactions of secessionism.

The project of Biafran nation building had been carried by the wind of the ideas of decolonization, but arrived in an air of mourning. As Frederick Cooper emphasizes, decolonization was a historical period of "possibility and constraint": new political options opened up, others closed down.[11] Initially, the nation-state was only one possible result of the crisis of the European colonial empires after World War II,[12] but it was a popular one: the wave of decolonization after World War II flooded the ranks of the UN General Assembly with the representatives of newly independent "Third World" states. This brought about a sea change in international order, but one that ossified quickly. According to the international law principle of *uti possedis iuris* (Latin for "as you possess

[6] Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, 163.

[7] Gibbs, *Political Economy*; Reybrouck, *Congo*; Westad, *Global Cold War*; Wirz, *Krieg in Afrika*, ch. 4.

[8] Patrick Keatley, "East Nigerian 'Revolt Will Be Crushed,'" *The Guardian*, May 31, 1967, 1; Meisler, "E. Nigeria Secedes."

[9] "Tribal Conflicts Are Haunting Africa," *Washington Post*, May 31, 1967, A13; "Oxford gegen Sandhurst,"; "Secession in Nigeria."

[10] "Secession in Nigeria," 22.

[11] Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint."

[12] Cooper, "Reconstructing Empire."

under law"), newly formed sovereign states have the right to the colony's complete territory. Another wave of independence movements was forestalled by the principle of the sanctity of territorial borders, which effectively limited the right to self-determination to claims for independence from colonial rule: it "could be exercised only once per colonial unit."[13]

The history of the Biafran secession needs to be contextualized within the history of decolonization *and* the international order of the early postcolonial period.[14] Recently, historians have devoted a lot of energy to studying regimes of international order.[15] Influenced by "transnational history," this literature depicts IOs as forums of exchange across national boundaries, platforms enabling the interplay of a myriad of actors.[16] IOs are thus said to have fostered networks across political divides, for instance during the Cold War, and could be used as a platform to further the anticolonial movement.[17] Although I partly build on this work, what I want to stress here is something else. IOs are, as Sunil Amrith argues, "a site and a resource." As a "source of symbolic tools – languages, images, norms, standards" – intergovernmental organizations provide a forum "to stake claims on the world stage."[18] But access to these sites and resources is kept under close guard. In the modern world of states, sovereignty is accrued through the mutual recognition of states; states need other states to be considered as such. Membership in the United Nations and regional IOs such as the OAU is a crucial marker of statehood. IOs are thus not only sites of exchange, but also sites of power relations, namely in two respects. First, in view of what happens inside them: IOs are in principle based on the sovereign equality of their members, yet the big powers are still far more influential than most other members, for example the USA within the UN system.[19] Second, and more importantly here, in view of what is kept outside: without the approval of the international community of states, access to sovereignty is denied to groups that inauspiciously lay claim to it.[20] Thus, IOs can also block specific forms of transnational exchange; they provide resources and forums that are denied to hapless state-seekers. Accordingly, international organizations can enable change, but they can also work to cement the existing order.

[13] Fabry, *Recognizing States*, ch. 5, quote on 168; Fisch, *Selbstbestimmungsrecht.*, ch. 12.
[14] On this period see Cooper's, *Colonialism in Question*, *Africa since 1940*, "Possibility and Constraint" and "Reconstructing Empire."
[15] As an introduction see Schröder, "Wiederkehr."
[16] See e.g. Iriye, *Global Community*; Amrith and Sluga, "New Histories"; Sluga, "Editorial."
[17] Kott, "guerre froide"; Connelly, *Diplomatic Revolution*.
[18] Quoted in Sluga, "Editorial," 222.
[19] Mazower *Governing* and *No Enchanted Palace*.
[20] See esp. Kelly and Kaplan, *Represented Communities*.

In this chapter, I will contextualize the evolution of Biafra's campaign for independence within the history of decolonization and early postcolonial global order. Three dimensions are important here. First, the Biafran community was made imaginable by the globalization of nationalism as the primary mode of political organization during decolonization. Second, the prospects for the Biafran campaign were also defined by the secessionists' military success. This calls for a depiction of the early stages of the war, of military advances and setbacks. Third, the Biafran campaign was a threat to postcolonial African order with its ideals of non-intervention and territorial integrity. In effect, the Biafran campaign soon reached an impasse not only on the battlefield, but also on the floors of international organizations. This stalemate is vital for an understanding of the later internationalization of the conflict, as it compelled the secessionists to search for new vistas.

"Introducing Biafra": Postcolonial Secession and the Idea of Self-Determination

Contrary to Nigeria, which was *granted* independence by the British Independence Act of July 29, 1960, Biafra *declared* its independence. By unilaterally claiming sovereignty, the Biafran leadership tied this action to a genre of political speech acts that had been invented during the American Revolution: the declaration of independence. In their moments of birth, countless newborn states directly or indirectly referenced the American model, the Declaration of Independence of the thirteen colonies of British America. In the last half millennium, this "contagion of sovereignty" has transformed the globe into a world of independent states.[21] The American Declaration has become a powerful model because of the Founding Fathers' "generic promiscuity," as David Armitage has argued. The text was at the same time a declaration of rights, a political manifesto and a declaration of independence. The beginning of the second paragraph of the document features a declaration of rights which has probably become its most well-known part, proclaiming the "self-evident" truth "that all men are created equal." However, by far the bigger part of the text is a political manifesto that enumerates the wrongs committed by King George III against his North American subjects, and explains the reasons for their revolutionary actions. Yet, as the name by which it has quickly become known suggests, the main function of the document was, quite simply, to declare independence.[22]

[21] Armitage, "Contagion" and *Declaration*.

[22] Idem, *Declaration*, 14–15.

Following the American model, the Biafran declaration was also primarily a declaration of independence. The Biafran declaration consisted of two parts: the Resolution of the Consultative Assembly of Chiefs, Elders, and Representatives of Eastern Nigeria of May 27, which commissioned Ojukwu to declare the Eastern Region a sovereign state, and Ojukwu's declaration of May 31, 1967.[23] The driving force behind the Resolution was Ojukwu himself, who had convinced the Assembly of the necessity of this action himself.[24] Even so, the Biafran compound declaration follows the basic tripartite structure of the American model. Like the American Declaration, the Biafran document features a declaration of rights. First, echoing the beginning of the second paragraph of the American Declaration, the Biafran resolution states that the signatories

> cherish certain inalienable human rights and state obligations such as the right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness; the right to acquire, possess, and defend property; the provision of security; and the establishment of good and just government based on the consent of the governed [. . .].[25]

In his declaration, Ojukwu voiced his belief that the subjects of the newborn state of Biafra "are born free and have certain inalienable rights [. . .]."[26] Second, similar to American original, the Biafran declaration included a political manifesto: a lengthy recital of the wrongs committed by the FMG in Lagos, in particular "the premeditated murder of over 30,000 of our innocent men, women, and children by Northern Nigerians." Because of these and other acts of injustice, the easterners, who had been "in the vanguard of the national movement for the building of a strong, united, and prosperous Nigeria [. . .] have painfully realized that the Federation of Nigeria has failed [. . .]." Hence, with "the will of the people [as government's] ultimate sanction," the Consultative Assembly mandated Ojukwu to declare independence.[27] Third, and most importantly, the Biafran declaration of independence was a declaration of independence: the Consultative Assembly, it read, mandates Ojukwu "to declare at the earliest practicable date Eastern Nigeria a free, sovereign, and independent state [. . .]." Closely resembling the last paragraph of the American model the assembly resolves

> that the new Republic of Biafra shall have the full and absolute powers of a sovereign state, and shall establish commerce, levy war, conclude peace,

[23] "Republic of Biafra." [24] "Ojukwu's Address."
[25] "Republic of Biafra," 449. [26] "Ojukwu Secedes," 451.
[27] "Republic of Biafra," 449, 450. See also, "Ojukwu Secedes," 451.

enter into diplomatic relations, and carry out, as of right, other sovereign responsibilities.[28]

Ojukwu hence declared "that the territory and region known as and called Eastern Nigeria together with her continental shelf and territorial waters shall henceforth be an independent sovereign state of the name and title of 'The Republic of Biafra'."[29]

The mandate was an element that the Biafran declaration added to the American model. Its function was to lend political legitimacy to Ojukwu's action of declaring independence, as it invested him with the power to do so by what was considered a group of representatives of the population. The idea of the "consent of the governed," to which the Consultative Assembly's resolution directly referred, is usually credited to various Enlightenment philosophers, and has become one of the main tenets of democratic government.[30] The Consultative Assembly, which the eastern region's military government called into being on August 31, 1966, initially comprised four, later ten, representatives of each of the 29 administrative divisions of the region, and representatives of special interest groups, such as trade unions, the professions and the universities. The members were selected – not elected.[31] This approach resembled the use to which "the consent of the governed" was put during decolonization. Plebiscites were almost never carried out: consent was essentially presupposed, formulated through spokesmen, representatives of the population and its different "communities."[32]

Accordingly, a pamphlet that the Eastern Region published prior to secession asserted that Ojukwu's speeches "are the true and unmistakable expressions of the feelings of the people of Eastern Nigeria."[33] However, even if the "mandate" supposedly signaled the inclusion of "the population," two elements of claims to a right to self-determination are generally difficult to determine: the *right* and the *self*. I will return to the history of collective self-determination as a *right* later, but for now, the *self* will be of interest. Only in the moment that the Biafrans declared their independence did this collective come into being: the "Biafrans" as a group did not exist prior to the declaration. This raised the question: who are they?

[28] "Republic of Biafra," 450; "In Congress, July 4, 1776: A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress Assembled," in Armitage, *Declaration*, 170–1.

[29] "Ojukwu Secedes," 452.

[30] See Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, esp. 160–75.

[31] Ministry of Information Eastern Nigeria, *Crisis '66*, 33, 45; "Ojukwu's Mandate" and "Resolution of Eastern Consultative Assembly."

[32] Fisch, *Selbstbestimmungsrecht*, 236–41; Kelly and Kaplan, *Represented Communities*, ch. 6.

[33] Eastern Nigeria, *Crisis '66*, 9.

International diplomats closely identified the Biafran nation building project with the secessionist leadership. Already before Biafran independence, British High Commission reports depicted the Eastern Region's government as an "authoritarian regime." Not only would the press be controlled, but also telephones tapped and journalists tailed. The result was an atmosphere of "hysterical sentiment." With posters warning the population against enemies, the installation of roadblocks, and other security measures, the regional government successfully created a "siege mentality." Ojukwu used the media for the "typical venomous outpourings of the press in totalitarian countries," to stylize himself as "a powerful and messianic leader."[34] British High Commissioner Hunt believed that Ojukwu's "press and radio can only be compared to those of Nazi Germany for their deliberate pursuit of the policy of the big lie, [and] their poisonous incitement to racial hatred [...]." Ojukwu, Hunt asserted, was "probably paranoid," an "Ibo characteristic" as he and other diplomats believed.[35] British diplomats described Ojukwu as "a demagogue," but were nevertheless unsure as to how Ojukwu and his quickly growing appeal in the population should be understood. Some likened the Biafran leader to the early Nasser, others, like the American ambassador, surmised that he might even be a "new Nkrumah," a much dreaded scenario, as the Ghanaian leader was usually linked with international communism. Despite these fears, most diplomats expected Ojukwu to be "completely opportunistic in foreign relations."[36] All in all, however, even experienced diplomats in Nigeria did not know what kind of challenge the son of Louis Ojukwu, rich businessman and close associate of Nnamdi Azikiwe, posed to Nigeria.[37]

Continuing the media campaign that the eastern region's Ministry of Information had started after the 1966 massacres, the secessionist state immediately presented itself to the world in a pamphlet titled *Introducing Biafra*. "A new nation has been born," its first sentence read. "Fourteen million people have taken their destiny into their own hands" to create a "united nation that is capable of sustaining itself in the comity of nations."[38] However, the unity of the new nation was in much doubt. The ethnic minorities within the territory – roughly 5 million of the

[34] Hawley to Miles, "Eastern Nationalism" (UK NA, FCO 25/232), 2, 1. See also Bert Mathews, "Secret Report," April 1967 (UK NA, FCO 25/232).
[35] David Hunt, British High Commission Lagos, to E.G. Morris, Commonwealth Office, April 15, 1967 (UK NA FCO 25/232), 2, 1.
[36] Hawley to Miles, "Eastern Nationalism" (UK NA, FCO 25/232), 2, 3; Mathews, "Secret Report" (UK NA, FCO 25/232), quote on 1.
[37] On Ojukwu's father see Tignor, *Capitalism*, 256–9.
[38] Government of the Republic of Biafra, *Introducing Biafra*, 5, 8.

14 million Biafrans – threatened to be a major obstacle to the Igbo-dominated nation-building project.[39] In response to this danger, the Biafrans relied on a common nationalist trope: projecting a history of their nation back in time,[40] they portrayed the newborn state of Biafra as a pre-colonial territorial entity translated into the postcolonial era. Territorial – and by implication, national – unity was lost under colonial rule, when British administrative measures compartmentalized the territorial unit into ethnic divisions. This process could now be reversed and new life breathed into the vanished nation.[41] But, despite their shared history, "Biafrans" only reluctantly declared independence. The pamphlet describes how "Biafrans" have worked incessantly but, in the end, futilely toward the realization of Nigerian national unity. Especially in the predominantly Muslim north, they were met with rejection. Biafran civilizedness, their "progress and dynamism" contrasted sharply with the "tardiness and conservatism of their neighbors."[42] Biafran propaganda alleged that the North had always considered the amalgamation of 1914 as a "'mistake'."[43] "Biafrans" had been the "linch-pin of Nigerian unity"; without them, the federation would hence come apart.[44]

According to such a narrative, the strongest force unifying the population was the common enemy in the north. "Right now we are faced with a common danger, a danger which does not discriminate between us," as Ojukwu asserted. "I can hardly emphasize that at no time has there been a greater need for us in the east to remain united, as now."[45] "This is not an occasion to stir up emotions," as he said in a talk in front of the Consultative Assembly, emphasizing the need for calm rationality in this grave situation. However, leaving this cautious warning aside, he directly continued to proclaim that

> it is impossible to forget that men, women, and children of our kith and kin were taken out of their beds and slaughtered, they were murdered in hospitals, including women in labor rooms – yes, women in pains trying to deliver children! – they were massacred in places of worship, in the streets, in market places, and in vehicles trying to carry them to safety.[46]

Ojukwu did not personally experience these events. But in his speeches he sought to construct a collective cultural memory of the 1966

[39] Donald F. Hawley, British High Commission Lagos to F. S. Miles, Commonwealth Office, "Eastern Nationalism," Apirl 15, 1967 (UK NA FCO 25/232).

[40] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, here esp. 204–6.

[41] Republic of Biafra, *Introducing Biafra*, 12.

[42] Ibid., 5. On Biafra's anti-Northern propaganda see also Omenka, "Blaming the Gods."

[43] Republic of Biafra, *Nigeria and Biafra*, 1. Ministry of Information Eastern Nigeria, *The North*, 1.

[44] Republic of Biafra, *Nigeria and Biafra*, 1, 3.

[45] Eastern Nigeria, *Crisis '66*, 36.

[46] Ibid., 46 original in italics.

massacres as the negative founding myth of Biafra. In this work of constructing a Biafran "community," Ojukwu does not relate to his personal experience but narrates the collective reactions of "the people":

> Emotions in this Region rose to the highest pitch as news of these atrocities flowed in, as we saw our relations coming back stripped naked, and having abandoned all they had, in flight for their dear lives; as we saw wives wailing for their husbands brutally massacred before their very eyes; as we witnessed the arrival of bewildered and non-comfortable businessmen now penniless and in rags and often covered with severe and deadly wounds.

As Ojukwu declares, the "perpetrators of these atrocities did not discriminate between the different communities in Eastern Nigeria in these wanton acts hardly surpassed in the world's dark history of man's inhumanity to man [...]."[47] The Biafran community, allegedly transcending ethnic allegiances, is constructed through the evocation of an external enemy. According to Biafran propaganda, the victims of the 1966 pogroms were singled out on one basis only: "they were killed because they were Biafrans."[48] A rather bold assertion: the category did not exist at the time of the killings.

The massacres emerged as the symbolic core of the Eastern Nigerian campaign, serving two purposes. First, memories of the blood that innocents and martyrs shed for the nation are central narrative forms for the construction of national identities.[49] Second, images and texts evoked the Muslim north as Biafra's external enemy. Evoking Balewa's sinister words before independence, Biafran propagandists explained that the massacres demonstrated that the northern leaders now wanted to continue the Fulani *jihad*'s "conquest to the sea," which had only been "interrupted" by British rule.[50] There was "no doubt that there is a wholesale complicity on the part of Northerners without exception in these acts of hideous crimes [...]."[51] In particular in "Pogrom," volume three of the *Crisis* series published in late 1966, the massacres were presented in lurid detail. Articles from the international press appear alongside eyewitness and victim reports, juxtaposing the factual and the emotional. Photographs of the victims, most of them with horrible wounds, were accompanied by captions using a mixture of staccato speech presenting the facts and extensive descriptions of individual fates (Figure 2.2):

> Head chopped off with an axe. Stomach ripped open and intestines flowing out. Six-foot Onwuanaibe Anyaegbu was traveling by train from Pankshin, near

[47] Eastern Nigeria, *Crisis '66*, 46.
[48] Republic of Biafra, *Introducing Biafra*, 6.
[49] Kelly and Kaplan, *Represented Communities*, 75–9; See also Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, ch. 11.
[50] Ministry of Information, *The North*, 1.
[51] Eastern Nigeria, *Crisis '66*, 8.

HORROR OF SAVAGERY

Head chopped off with an axe. Stomach ripped open and intestines flowing out. Six-foot Onwuanaibe Anyaegbu was travelling by train from Pankshin, near Jos and met his tragic end at the Oturkpo Railway Station in Northern Nigeria where he was beheaded by Northern savages and his body put back in the train travelling to Enugu in the East. Many more men, women and children were beheaded in other Northern towns. The picture summarizes the grief of Eastern Nigeria.

Figure 2.2 Ministry of Information Eastern Nigeria, *Nigerian Pogrom: The Organized Massacre of Eastern Nigerians*, Nigerian Crisis, vol. 3 (Enugu, 1966), between pp. 20 and 21.

Jos and met his tragic end at the Oturkpo Railway Station in Northern Nigeria where he was beheaded by Northern savages and his body put back in the train traveling to Enugu in the East. Many more men, women and children were beheaded in other Northern towns. The picture summarizes the grief of Eastern Nigeria.

Individual stories of suffering were used as a *pars pro toto*, metonymically encapsulating the people's pain. Sometimes their names were mentioned and individual fates narrated; the victims were thus personalized, but they were also supposed to personify the cruel fate of the Eastern Nigerian people.

The pamphlets use a language of "savagery" vs. "civilization," heavily imbued with connotations of religious conflict. As the caption to another photograph describes, the spirit of one eastern Nigerian man persists even though his eye had been "gouged with sticks [. . .] by Northern soldiers drunk with hemp," who also broke his bones with rifle butts and cut him with machetes: "A body and soul sustained only by Christian faith, will power and a determination to live" (Figure 2.3). The visual narrative was centered on how their "civilizedness" helped Easterners to deal with the catastrophe of massacre; the east's high level of development enabled them, it insists, to efficiently cope with the extreme

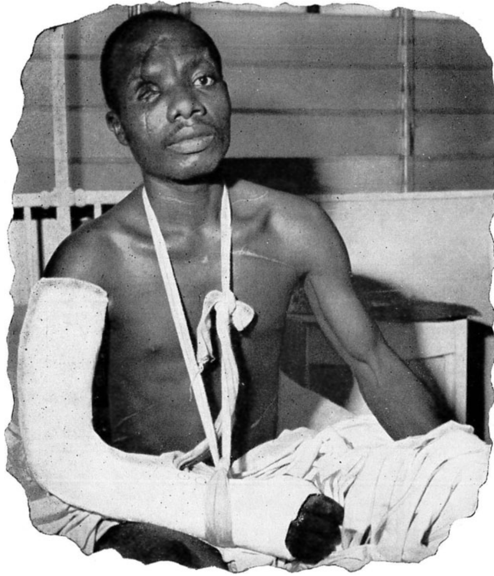


Figure 2.3 Eastern Nigeria, *Nigerian Pogrom*, between pp. 20 and 21.

demands of the situation. The texts frequently emphasized that among the victims were many professionals and students.[52] Brutally mutilated victims could only be "saved by the skill of Eastern Nigerian surgeons" (Figure 2.4).

The 1966 massacres were vital to the eastern leadership's decision to secede.[53] Yet, to understand their significance for the escalation of the conflict, the massacres have to be situated within a longer history of suspicions and fears which characterized inter-ethnic relations in Nigeria since late colonial times. Anti-Igbo propaganda featured prominently in Federal constructions of nationhood.[54] In the *Sabon Gari*, the "strangers quarters" of Hausa cities, the Igbos had repeatedly become the victims of persecution and violence; victim narratives thus already held a special place in Igbo cultural memory because of, for example, the riots in Jos in 1945, and Kano in 1953, during which Igbos had been targeted. These outbreaks, however, were also driven by Northerners' fears about

[52] Eastern Nigeria, *Nigerian Pogrom*, captions to images between 20 and 21.
[53] Anthony, *Poison and Medicine*, ch. 3; See further Ahazuem, "Perceptions," 16–18; Isichei, *History of the Igbo*, 245–6; McNeil, "Nigerian Civil War," 546–7; Wirz, *Krieg in Afrika*, 149–52.
[54] Anthony, *Poison and Medicine*, ch. 4.

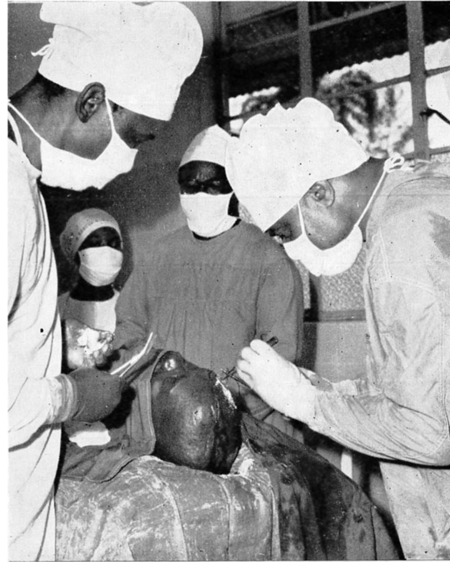


Figure 2.4 Eastern Nigeria, *Nigerian Pogrom*, between pp. 20 and 21.

Igbo domination.[55] A fertile ground for Igbo exceptionalism was hence already in place before 1966.

Against this background, an analogy that already had a long history in Igbo tribal ethnography became increasingly important: the idea that the Igbos descended from one of the lost tribes of Israel. By the mid-nineteenth-century, the conviction that the ancient Jews had migrated to sub-Saharan Africa was widely held among missionaries, ethnographers, and educated West Africans trying to unravel the origins of Africa's peoples, steeped in myth and legend. The Jewish connection held a special allure for many Africans. With it, a divine genealogy could be constructed which also created some distance from the Christian missionaries associated with colonial power. Accordingly, many Igbos also began to consider themselves the "Jews of Africa."[56] In the aftermath of the massacres, this connection gained a new quality. Like the Jews, the Igbos had seen themselves as a people spread in a diaspora where they became the victims of racial and religious hatred. Now, founding an independent state was necessary to safeguard their right to life. Soon, the

[55] Kirk-Greene, *Genesis*.
[56] Bruder, *Black Jews*, 142–6; Bruder, "Proto-History"; Harnischfeger, "Igbo Nationalism"; Parfitt, *Black Jews*, here esp. 102–16.

Eastern Region / Biafra modeled itself as an African Israel.[57] Accordingly, Biafran propaganda referred to the massacres as "pogroms"[58] or "the most heinous crime ever known": "genocide."[59]

Similarly, the argument that in this "era of human rights [. . .], it must be regarded as a fundamental law of politics that genocide will always result in the creation of a new state for the protection of the victims of this most abominable of all crimes," became a common line in Biafran propaganda. According to Biafra's propagandists, Nigerian genocidal warfare would lead to the creation of the state of Biafra, just as "Hitler's crime of genocide against European Jews led to the creation of the state of Israel."[60] Referring to Rousseau, the Biafrans claimed the Nigerian Federal government to be "in clear breach of her social contract with the people of Biafra" as it had failed to protect the Biafrans' human right to life.[61] Genocide and human rights occupied prominent places in the conceptual bricolage of the Biafran self.[62] At its core, however, this political vision evolved around the classic anticolonial idea of the "rights of man": the right to self-determination.

This rhetoric tied the Biafran project to the conceptual history of decolonization. Originally, the notion of self-determination was the contested brainchild of social democrats and Marxists who started debating the idea in the decades before World War I. From its inception, the idea was enmeshed in political discussions which traversed the Atlantic Ocean in both directions. But it developed its full force through its globalization in an entangled history of world wars and visions of postwar order, of decolonization and the Cold War.[63] After Woodrow Wilson had invoked the idea in his Fourteen Points Speech a few months before the end of World War I, it became a central point of reference for anticolonial movements. The US President wanted to make sure the American commitment in the Great War was perceived as a moral cause. Unintentionally, however, Wilson also lent moral legitimacy to liberation movements in the colonies of America's European allies. When Wilson failed to approve of the right to self-determination of peoples in the colonial world, anticolonial leaders increasingly turned their backs on liberal ideologies as represented by the US president. The "Wilsonian moment" was over. Yet after this reorientation, the right to self-determination remained on

[57] See Günter Gnodtke, "Nigeria an der Jahreswende 1967/1968," Lagos January 3, 1968 (Political Archives of the German Foreign Office Berlin, B 34/741).
[58] Ministry of Information Eastern Nigeria, *Nigerian Pogrom*, 1.
[59] Republic of Biafra, *Nigeria and Biafra*, 1, 3 [italics in original]; see also ibid., 18.
[60] Ministry of Information Republic of Biafra (ed.), *Genocide*, 2.
[61] Ministry of Information Republic of Biafra, *Concept*, 1, 4.
[62] Anthony, "'War"; Doron, "Marketing Genocide."
[63] Fisch, *Selbstbestimmungsrecht*.

the anticolonial agenda, reformulated along Marxist lines. Lenin had written about the idea prior to Wilson, and, in the changing climate a few years after World War I, his views were increasingly endorsed.[64]

For the colonies in sub-Saharan Africa, World War II was probably an even more important "moment," one that brought heavy burdens to African societies but also engendered hopes for a more equal international order. The vital contribution of African soldiers in Allied imperial armies and the sacrifices Africans at home had made to keep the military campaign of their colonizers running led many of them to believe that change was to come. In a replay of the western campaign of the previous world war, Allied rhetoric of freedom and self-determination again provoked an optimistic echo in some colonies. The Atlantic Charter of August 1941, drafted by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill, laid down the Allied vision for a new postwar order. The two heads of state pledged that their governments "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them [. . .]."[65] In the colonies, the Charter was perceived as an endorsement of a universal right to self-determination, and World War II as their own "Rooseveltian moment."[66] However, once more wartime hopes were followed by postwar disillusionment; in sub-Saharan Africa in particular, the end of war was not followed by the end of colonialism. Britain and the other European empires held on to their possessions. The American stance on the right to self-determination was also much more ambivalent than many anticolonial agitators had expected. Afraid of a destabilization of international order through the fragmentation of states into units too small to merit self-government, American policymakers continued to support self-determination as a political slogan, but widely limited its scope. American officials wanted, in the words of Brad Simpson, "to have their Atlantic Charter and retreat from it too." Just like their Asian and Arab predecessors, many African leaders, disappointed by the hypocrisy of Western politicians, began to embrace more radical ideologies.[67]

Nevertheless, during decolonization, the idea of self-determination had become the colonial world's rhetorical weapon of the day. In the changing global order in the period after World War II, this idea had

[64] Manela, *Wilsonian Moment*.
[65] Brinkley and Facey-Crowther (eds.), *Atlantic Charter*, xvii.
[66] Fisch, *Selbstbestimmungsrecht*, 209–16. On the Nigerian case: Ibhawoh, *Imperialism*, 151–61.
[67] Simpson, "United States," quote 679.

been entrenched in the norms, institutions and practices of international politics. The right to self-determination had become a well-established and incredibly potent part of the arsenal of international political claim-making, included in various covenants of the United Nations and also of regional organizations such as the OAU.[68] The growing influence of diplomats from the Third World – itself enabled by the influx of recently independent new member states – transformed intergovernmental human rights in the 1950s and 1960s. They successfully agitated to add the right to self-determination, which had not been part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, to the program with the two rights covenants of 1966.[69] Biafra's future leaders – most of whom were part of the native elite, which voiced the harshest critiques of colonial rule – thus grew up amidst such ideas as the right to self-determination. Some like anticolonial nationalist leader Azikiwe had themselves been at the forefront of agitation for this right.[70] Accordingly, in their publications the Biafrans tied their agenda to this rhetoric, explicitly referring to the OAU Charter, which asserts "that it is the inalienable right of all people to control their own destiny."[71]

In various respects, the idea of "civilization" was equally central to Biafran rhetoric. Biafrans cast themselves as progressive Africans who believe in Christ, but also in modern technology, democracy, and human rights. With such constructions of their self, Biafran modernity was juxtaposed with the Islamic northerners, remnants of a "feudal" past, "savages" who ferociously kill innocents. The discourse of civilization provided tools for nation building from within. Yet the "standard of civilization" also measured the differences between Western "states" and non-Western communities; the attainment of sovereignty rights depended on the fulfillment of this standard.[72] After the "mid-twentieth century disjuncture," the importance of the standard of civilization for the conferral of independence lessened.[73] However, the connection of the idea of civilization to the attainment of national sovereignty did not disappear completely: the Biafrans still argued along these lines. But in a postcolonial world of states, it was uncertain whether claims for self-determination not cast in the anticolonial dye would find a forum in international diplomacy. The Biafran nation needed to be turned into an imaginable community for the population at home and in the circles of international diplomacy. But the success of the Biafran project was also dependent on the secessionists' performance in the theatre of war.

[68] Fisch, *Selbstbestimmungsrecht*, 232–48.
[69] Burke, *Decolonization*.
[70] Ibhawoh, *Imperialism*, Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*.
[71] Republic of Biafra, *Concept of Territorial Integrity*, 3.
[72] Anghie, *Imperialism*; Gong, *Standard*.
[73] Mazower, "End of Civilization."

The Early Stages of the War: Political Possibilities, Military Impasses

The Biafran declaration of independence was followed by "the phony war." It was the rainy season, when most people struggled to meet the demands of everyday life and did not have much time to think about the war. The combat power of both opponents was quite limited, so the battlefields were similarly quiet. The Nigerian officers commanded more and better equipped men, but the Biafran military comprised a majority of the more experienced officers, as Igbos had been well represented in the higher echelons of the army since colonial times.[74] Even if Gowon, elevated to the rank of General the first day after secession, had commanded a more modern military force, the rains had turned the roads leading into Biafra into impassable swamps – in the ensuing weeks, most of the secessionist territory was impenetrable.[75]

The most important step taken during these weeks was the Federal government's decision to blockade the secessionist state and cut off Biafra's lines of communication with the outside world. All air and sea ports were blockaded, foreign currency transactions banned, incoming mail and telecommunication impeded, and international business obstructed. It was initially questionable whether the Nigerian navy would suffice to patrol Biafra's coastline of 200 miles and whether the Federal air force, which lacked any bombers or fighters, could effectively hinder aerial movements. Biafra's air fleet was also of minor strength; but perhaps it would be enough to break through the blockade.[76]

What Nigeria lacked in resources, it compensated for with the international recognition of its sovereignty. The blockade proved successful, and in the ensuing two and a half years of fighting, Federal forces upheld it without large gaps or long interruptions. According to international law, any government was obliged to recognize a blockade put into effect by another sovereign state, and the Nigerian Federal Government issued a statement that it would "react very strongly" to a refusal to respect the blockade.[77] Nigeria's neighbor Cameroon made an agreement with the Nigerians to suppress movement across the border to what had now become Biafra, using Cameroonian troops for border controls and sending secret police into Biafran villages across the border to prevent larger cross-border transfers of goods and people.[78] Shipping lines re-routed

[74] Luckham, *Nigerian Military*, here esp. ch. VIII.

[75] St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*, 123–44; Stremlau, *International Politics*, 69–73.

[76] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 72–3.

[77] Herbert Bowden, "Nigeria: Possible Blockade and Secession of Eastern Region," May 8, 1967 (UK NA, FCO 25/232).

[78] Torrent, *Diplomacy*, 140–2.

ships with Eastern Nigerian directions. The handful of seafarers smuggling goods into Biafra were discouraged when the Nigerian Navy shelled and captured two of their ships. The support of other states and international corporations turned the Nigerian "paper blockade" into a reality on the ground.[79]

The same can be said about the ability of the Nigerian Federal Government to import weapons from international markets. As a sovereign state defending its interests, they had the required financial and political resources. The British, who, as the former colonial power, had usually supplied the Federal army with weaponry, hesitated to pick sides. However, the Soviets, hoping to gain a foothold in a major West African state, were more than happy to help and quickly began supplying arms.[80] Meeting the demands of the arms build-up was much more difficult for the Biafrans, who had to go through black market channels.[81]

On July 5 or 6, somewhere near Biafra's northern border, the first shots were fired. Nigerian forces soon began to advance into secessionist territory on two fronts: through the eastern minority area of Ogoja in the east, and toward the major university town Nsukka in the west. By mid-month, both areas were under Federal control.[82] Perhaps an even more important success for Lagos was the capture of Bonny Island, Nigeria's only sea terminal for oil, where the Federal navy secured about 3 million barrels of crude oil. This advance helped decide the oil war that escalated parallel to the conflict. Initially, the Gowon regime, expecting revenue payments from oil companies, excluded oil tankers from the blockade in anticipation of the next annual installment, an estimated £7 million, on July 1. The largest share of the Nigerian oil reserves lay in the former eastern region. Arguing that international law foresaw the payment of revenues to the government in control of the territory at the time of the payment, Biafra claimed 57.5 percent of the sum.[83]

Internationally, the politics of oil have to be seen against the background of the Six Day War between Israel and Egypt in June 1967. Arab states had jointly limited their oil shipments to states supporting Israel, in particular the United States and the United Kingdom. The embargo was not effective enough to lead to severe oil shortages, but it led foreign policy advisors to look for alternative sources. Nigeria was high on the list. Its geographical position far west of the blockaded Suez Canal, made it an ideal potential provider for the Atlantic World. With these

[79] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 74. [80] Ibid., 79–81. [81] Ibid., 48–9.
[82] St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*, 147–9.
[83] Kirk-Greene, "Coups and Aftermath," 103–5; Steyn, "Shell-BP," 427–37; Uche, "British Interests."

considerations in mind, Whitehall had an interest in keeping the oil flowing out of Nigeria.[84]

Most oil companies preferred to continue dealing with the Federal government. However, at least initially, the British joint venture Shell-BP, which produced 83.8 percent of Nigeria's oil, was leaning toward paying revenues to Biafra. This was partly a hedge in case the secessionists' endeavor was successful, but even more a nod to the company's close relationship to Eastern Nigeria – a majority of the company's staff in Nigeria was Igbo. The company consulted the British High Commission, which advised caution. London feared that paying the royalties to Biafra would prompt Nigeria to extend the blockade to oil tankers.[85] Whitehall, however, had also been advised by the British High Commissioner that it must be an equal priority to avoid

> anything which could seriously antagonise the State of Biafra in case it is successful in vindicating its independence. Our interests, particularly in oil, are so great that they must override any lingering regret we may feel for the disintegration of British-made Nigeria.[86]

On June 29, Ojukwu informed the Shell-BP General Manager that the request for the payment of revenues by July 1 was "firm and unchangeable," but that Biafra would be willing to accept an advance "token payment." The company arranged for £250,000 to be paid to Biafra. However, even this low sum, which infuriated Ojukwu, never reached Biafra. The Biafrans insisted on having the sum paid in Francs to a Swiss bank account, a request the company needed to clear with the treasury of the Bank of England. This provided an opportunity for the British Government to intervene. By then, London's loyalty was leaning toward the Federal side, and Whitehall forestalled the money transfer to prevent alienating Lagos because of the token payment.[87] Even so, Lagos took the cautionary step of extending the embargo to oil tankers, fearing even a small payment might be interpreted as recognition of the Biafran secessionist state – an implication that Nigeria wanted to avoid at all costs. London immediately entered new negotiations with Lagos, declaring the delivery of weapons conditional on the lifting of the oil blockade. However, Gowon was not willing to compromise, forcing Whitehall to take sides. London soon began to sell arms to Lagos, not least because of the expectation that this would keep the oil flowing.[88]

84 Nafziger, *Economics* 104–6; Uche, "British Interests."
85 Uche, "British Interests," 122–3.
86 Hunt, "Nigeria," (UK NA, FCO 25/232), 2. For the British deliberations see also Bowden, "Possible Blockade" (UK NA, FCO 25/232).
87 Uche, "British Interests," 123–4.
88 Njoku, "Nationalism," 347; Uche, "British Interests."

On August 9, 1967, the Biafran leadership tried to break through the impasse and initiated what Ojukwu later called a strike at the "serpent's head."[89] In the morning hours, the roadblocks at both ends of the bridge across the Niger between Onitsha and Asaba were quietly removed, allowing a Biafran convoy to enter Federal territory. By the evening, virtually the whole Mid-Western State had been overrun by secessionist troops. Almost no shots were fired. A mutiny by Igbo officers and soldiers in the Federal troops in the Mid-Western state had paved the way.[90] Seizing the moment, secessionist troops moved further toward Lagos to take the capital or at least Ibadan. The commander of the Biafran forces in the Mid-West was the Yoruba Brigadier Victor Banjo, who, instead of marching directly toward Lagos, slowed down the advance at the border to the Western state to ensure the administration of the Midwest. He had special radio announcements broadcast in which he tried to incite his fellow Yoruba to rise against the domination of the "Fulani Hausa feudal clique." Understanding himself as the leader of a "Liberation Army," he pledged that his mission was to end the domination of one tribe over the other in the Nigerian Federation.[91] Banjo's goal was most likely to revive the idea of a Southern front against Northern domination in the form of a confederation of independent states.[92] For the Yoruba, this was a moment for decision. In parts of Yorubaland, popular opinion tended toward support of the Biafran project and to follow the example set by the secession.[93] But Awolowo's stance was surprisingly unequivocal: he was "irrevocably committed to Nigerian unity."[94] The stance of the Yoruba leadership prevented Nigeria's further disintegration. Popular support for the Biafran cause in the Western Region did not wane throughout the war. But in Awolowo, the most popular Western politician, Gowon had a decisive ally in the region.[95]

Other decisions on the part of the leadership hurt the Biafran cause. Banjo's decision to install a civil administration in the Mid-West bought Lagos time to prepare for the onslaught. Ojukwu dispensed Banjo from his duties as Military Governor but left the Yoruba officer, highly popular with his troops, in command of the military advance. The secessionist forces entered the Western State on August 17 – more than a week after the initiative had begun. The advance slowed down at Ore, where

[89] St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*, 153.
[90] The most vivid account can be found in ibid., 153–60. See also Wirz, *Krieg in Afrika*, 157.
[91] Kirk-Greene, "War and Peace," 6–8, quotes on 7.
[92] Wirz, *Krieg in Afrika*, 157.
[93] Nolte, *Awolowo*, 199.
[94] Quoted in St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*, 156. See also Kirk-Greene, "War and Peace," 8–9.
[95] Nolte, *Awolowo*, 176–81, 198–200.

a drawn-out battle ensued. Over the next few weeks, the Nigerian army recaptured the advantage and began to drive the secessionist army back toward Biafra.[96]

Before the Biafrans lost control of the Mid-West, a last sign of the vision of a southern Nigerian confederation flared up. On September 19, while the Federal Army's counteroffensive was progressing, the Mid-Western Region declared its independence as the Republic of Benin.[97] Twenty-four hours later, the newborn state was recaptured by Federal forces.[98] Yet it signaled something important: Banjo was not the sole Biafran leader who wanted to create a southern front of confederate states. In a confidential report to the Commonwealth Office, a Lagos High Commission staff member outlined that Ojukwu had repeatedly emphasized his willingness to accept a "Benelux type of association based on sovereign units."[99] In a talk with an American diplomat before secession, Ojukwu had suggested the breakup of Nigeria into four sovereign states, and the creation of a larger West African regional organization under Biafran leadership.[100] In keeping with the prospect that the Nigerian federation would break up into "independent and sovereign units," Biafra issued a "Memorandum of Proposed Future Association," outlining a plan for the economic and infrastructural cooperation with the other former regions: common usage of railway and harbor services, interterritorial roads, shipping and aviation, postal and telecommunications services, the strengthening of ties in higher education and research, special agreements in customs and currency matters, and citizenship arrangements that would enable the free movement of citizens between the states, even as all constituent parts retained full sovereignty.[101]

The decisive setback in the Western Nigerian theatre of war soon brought an end to Biafra's confederate vision. Interestingly, the bulk of Biafran statements outlining this vision sought control of cross-border movements. The secessionist leadership wanted to keep the borders between the different parts of Nigeria open for the movement of people and goods while rearranging control of the gates linking Nigeria with the rest of the world. The Biafrans, given their linkages to the global economy, held some advantages in this area. In the end, however, Nigeria's political capital – its recognized sovereign statehood – was a crucial

[96] St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*, 160–1.
[97] "Major Okonkwo's Adress," and "Major Okonkwo Announces."
[98] Kirk-Greene, "War and Peace," 10–11; St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*, 160–2.
[99] G. David Anderson to Patrick H. Moberly, September 2, 1967 (UK NA, FCO 25/232), 1.
[100] Mathews, "Secret Report" (UK NA, FCO 25/232), 1.
[101] "Biafran Memorandum on Proposed Future Association," 163. See also "Ojukwu's Address," 443.

advantage. We will never know what Biafra's prospects would have been had Banjo's forces continued their march to Lagos and taken the capital. But the international respect for Nigerian sovereignty was a structural advantage which proved extremely difficult to compensate.

Biafra, the OAU, and the United Nations

In mid-September 1967, just days before the stillbirth of the Republic of Benin, the heads of the member states of the OAU met in the Congolese capital Kinshasa for the first OAU summit since the outbreak of the Nigeria–Biafra war. Expectations were not high that the organization would address potentially contentious issue such as the conflict in Nigeria. However, surprised commentators noted that progressive steps were taken in Kinshasa,[102] including the passage of a resolution on the civil war, mandating a consultative mission to Nigeria. This step seemed to make reconciliation more likely.[103] Stanley Meisler of the *Los Angeles Times* speculated that although

> the resolution says the visiting heads of state intend to assure Gowon of the OAU's desire for the territorial integrity, unity and peace of Nigeria, Gowon may find that he will face strong pressure from his visitors to make another try at a reconciliation with Biafra.[104]

In hindsight, the resolution turned out to be the most decisive step that the OAU would take to exert influence on the conflict. However, this was not a step toward reconciliation. The resolution did not even give the mission a mandate for mediation. It did what it explicitly stated: it condemned secession and recognized the Nigerian civil war "as an internal affair," reiterating the OAU's "trust and confidence in the Federal Government of Nigeria." Accordingly, the organization sent a consultative mission of six heads of state to the Nigerian head of state "to assure him of the Assembly's desire for the territorial integrity, unity and peace of Nigeria." In contrast to the pledges of support to the government in Lagos, the word "Biafra" did not even appear in the resolution.[105]

[102] "Thorny issues tackled by Africa's OAU," *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 18, 1967, 2. See also "Around the World: Congo and Nigeria Discussed in OAU," *The Washington Post*, September 12, 1967, A12.

[103] G. David Anderson to Patrick H. Moberly, September 2, 1967 (UK NA, FCO 25/232), 3; "Biafran Memorandum Circulated to Heads of States at O.A.U. Meeting, Kinshasa, September 1967."

[104] Meisler, "OAU's Tiny, Exciting Steps," F3.

[105] Organization of African Unity, "Resolution on Nigeria: AHG/RES. 51 (4), Fourth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Kinshasa, Congo, September 11 to 14, 1967," ibid. (ed.), *Resolutions, Decisions and Declarations*

When the members of the Consultative Mission arrived in Lagos for their first meeting, General Gowon left no room for misunderstanding what the consultative mission was about: securing the end of Biafran secession. The Nigerian head of state welcomed his peers with the assertion that it is "in the interest of all Africa that Nigeria remains one political and economic entity. The O.A.U. has rightly seen our problem as a purely domestic affair and in accordance with the O.A.U. resolution your Mission is not here to mediate."[106] By inscribing their rhetoric into the traditions of OAU principles, federal Nigeria could employ the language of non-interference and postcolonial sovereignty to their advantage.[107] After the Biafran announcement of secession, Gowon transmitted a message to all OAU member states announcing his government's firm determination to defend Nigerian unity. As the OAU's Administrative Secretary General noted in a report for the Kinshasa summit, Gowon appealed to the solidarity of fellow African governments, but warned "against any recognition of the so-called Republic of Biafra, a recognition which the Nigerian Federal Government could only regard as interference in its domestic affairs, and thereby an unfriendly act towards Nigeria." In Kinshasa, there was only one initiative to refer the issue to the OAU, by the Government of Lesotho. This, however, "was very short lived, the Nigerian Federal Government being categorically opposed to this initiative because of the purely domestic nature of the situation [...]." None of the member states "showed any sympathy with, or support for the attempted secession."[108]

It was not only the action of the Nigerian government that decided the OAU's course of action, however. It was also the other member governments' reaffirmation of the principles of territorial integrity and non-interference – sometimes preemptively formulated – that determined this policy. In mid-April 1967, when the die of civil war was not yet cast, Ojukwu had sent a special envoy to the five-nation African summit conference in Cairo. The would-be Biafran leader wanted to enquire as to whether the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser might be willing to mediate between the Eastern Region and the Federal Government of Nigeria. According to Western diplomats, Nasser replied that he was

adopted by the Conferences of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Sessions (I–XXXV), AHG / RES 1963–1999, 70 (African Union Archives, Addis Ababa).

106 Yakubu Gowon, "Welcome Address to the O.A.U. Consultative Mission," November 23, 1967 (CAD Afrique Levant, Nigéria 1966–72, No. 18/1).

107 See, e.g., Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Unity in Diversity*; Federal Ministry of Information, *Struggle for One Nigeria* and *Blueprint for Nigerian Unity*.

108 Organization of African Unity, "Report of the Administrative Secretary General, Covering the Period from February to August 1967, Kinshasa, September 1967," (African Union Archives, Addis Ababa), 25–6.

"anxious to maintain the unity of Nigeria," feeling "bound in this issue by its relations with the Federal Government."[109]

The Biafrans found that, without exception, African governments were united in their rejection of secessionism. During the emergence of the OAU, non-interference and the principle of territorial integrity were defined as the yardsticks of postcolonial African politics. A clear indication of OAU non-interventionism is given in the organization's charter, which, in its first sentence, echoes the preamble of the American Declaration of Independence: "It is the inalienable right of all people to control their own destiny." But, in contrast to the American model, these rights are explicitly collective, the rights of states that gained their independence from colonial rule. The text emphasizes the member states' determination "to safeguard and consolidate the hard-won independence as well as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our states, and to fight against neocolonialism in all its forms." References to the Charter of the United Nations and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are included, although they are used to "provide a solid foundation for peaceful and positive cooperation among States" – not individuals. An assertion of the rights of individuals – or minorities – is also missing in the list of the principles of the Charter as laid down in Article III. Instead, it highlights the postcolonial sovereignty of the member states, proclaiming their "sovereign equality" (No. 1), "non-interference in the internal affairs of States" (No. 2) and the "respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State and for its inalienable right to independent existence" (No. 3). The language of the OAU charter is that of a society of states united to safeguard the sovereignty of its members.[110]

Some African heads of state had sympathy for the Biafran cause. However, the consultative mission sent to Lagos by the OAU had largely pro-Nigerian leanings. In the communiqué issued at the end of the first meeting on November 23, the mission "reaffirmed that any resolution of the Nigerian crisis must be in the context of preserving the unity and territorial integrity of Nigeria." The Committee declared that "as a basis for return to peace and normal conditions in Nigeria the secessionists should renounce secession and accept the present administrative structure of the Federation of Nigeria [. . .]."[111] The Biafrans were infuriated

[109] W. H. G. Fletcher (Canadian Embassy Cairo (British Interests Section) to Peter W. Unwin (North & East African Department), "Easter Nigerian Delegation in Cairo," April 20, 1967 (UK NA, FCO 25/232).

[110] "OAU Charter," 3 and 4. See further Naldi, *Organization*, 4–14 and Murray, *Human Rights*, 7–21.

[111] Organization of African Unity, "Report of the Consultative Committee on Nigeria, AHG/34," Algiers, September 1968 (African Union Archives, Addis Ababa), Annex II.

when they received the Kinshasa Summit resolution and the communiqué of the consultative committee's first meeting.[112] It is possible that General Gowon wanted to use the office of the OAU Secretary-General Diallo Telli as a channel to communicate with his opponents. However, Telli, a Guinean of Fulani origin, apparently did not even want to lend this form of recognition to the secessionist regime. As a result, the OAU peacekeeping machinery became unacceptable as a forum for negotiations for Biafra.[113]

The African heads of state assembled at the Kinshasa summit condemned the Biafran secession as a threat to Nigerian unity. At the next summit, in Algiers in September 1968, the OAU passed another resolution on the conflict – little more than a reiteration of the Kinshasa resolution. It called on "the secessionist leaders to co-operate with the Federal authorities in order to restore peace and unity [in] Nigeria," but did not appeal to the Lagos regime, as if the secessionists were wholly responsible for the conflict.[114] Thus the OAU did intervene in the conflict – by strengthening the Nigerian position and possibly keeping some African governments from recognizing Biafran sovereignty.[115]

The United Nations – which had been transformed into a "Third World" international organization after the influx of newly independent former colonies over the preceding two decades – also followed the policy line defined by the OAU.[116] The conflict was hardly raised for discussion in the General Assembly. Two African delegates referred to the conflict in the plenary meeting on September 25, 1967, shortly after the Kinshasa summit. A Ghanaian delegate enlisted the conflict among the "urgent matters" with which the OAU has to deal, but assured the Assembly "that everything possible will be done by us in Africa to assist our brothers in Nigeria to end this most regrettable fratricidal war and to restore the country to peace and harmony." A Gambian delegate was a bit bolder and called for international mediation, but agreed that "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federation must be respected [. . .]."[117] However, even these cautious calls for mediation sufficed to provoke a displeased Nigerian reaction. The Nigerian

[112] Akuchu, "Organization," 159–61. See also "Biafra Sees itself as David."

[113] Akuchu, "Peaceful Settlement," 39–58, 45–9 and Akuchu, "Organization."

[114] Organization of African Unity, "Resolution on Nigeria: AHG /Res. 54 (V), Fifth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Algiers, Algeria, September 13 to 16, 1968," ibid. (ed.), *Resolutions, Decisions and Declarations Adopted by the Conferences of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Sessions (I-XXXV), AHG / RES 1963–1999*, 76–7, quote on 77.

[115] Fasehun, "Nigerian Politics," 130–8; Oyebade, "Role of the Organization."

[116] Sluga, "Transformation."

[117] *Official Records of the General Assembly, 22nd Session, Plenary Meetings, Verbatim Records of Meetings, vol. I*, New York: UN Office of Information 1971, 1565th Meeting, July 25, 1967, 8, 20.

delegation successfully silenced any debate on the matter in the General Assembly. Referring to the Kinshasa summit's resolution, the delegation explained that "raising the internal affairs of Nigeria in the United Nations is incompatible with respect for the [state's] sovereignty and territorial integrity."[118]

Nevertheless, the Biafrans tried to use the UN machinery for their cause. They sent quasi-ambassadorial representatives to New York, who submitted memorandums and petitions to the United Nations. In these writings, complaints about human rights violations amounting to genocide were used as a basis for claims to self-determination. Matthew Mbu, Biafra's Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, called on the UN General Secretary U Thant to put an end to the "genocide" committed against the Biafrans, which was alleged to be "of an enormity only equalled in recent times by the experience of Jews from the Nazis." The Biafran delegation in New York argued that it should be allowed to present its case before the UNCHR, which should establish "a special committee of experts [. . .] to investigate these charges of genocide now being perpetrated by Nigeria."[119] In early 1968, the Biafrans prepared a *Memorandum on the Deliberate and Continuous Contraventions of the United Nations Charter Provisions on Human Rights*, which was circulated as a pamphlet and submitted to the United Nations. Systematically outlining their allegations, the Biafrans referred to the UN Charter and the Anti-Genocide Convention, which would oblige the organization to intervene in the conflict.[120] The New York delegation sent the memorandum to the United Nations, speaking for "the remainder of the 14 million souls in Biafra who have not yet been exterminated [and] pray Your Excellency to ensure that this formal petition" would be considered by the UNCHR.[121]

The UN's answer was devastating for the Biafrans. The UNCHR acknowledged the receipt of the bundle and informed that the communications would be dealt with in accordance with resolution 728F of the Economic and Social Council. According to the first paragraph of the resolution, attached to the reply, "the Commission on Human

[118] Ibid., 1567th Meeting, July 26, 1967, 11–12.
[119] Telegram to Secretary-General U Thant, February 24, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A). See also the 1967 declaration of Michael Okpara, "Declaration of Mr. Michael Iheonukara Okpara of Biafra," December 15, 1967 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A).
[120] Republic of Biafra, "Memorandum on the Deliberate and Continuous Contraventions of the United Nations Charter Provisions on Human Rights by Nigeria and her Practice of Genocide," February 24, 1968 (OXA: Nigeria Civil War Box 2209, file 3: Relief on the Secessionist side "Biafra").
[121] Office of the Special Representative of the Government of the Republic of Biafra to Secretary-General U Thant, February 28, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A).

Rights has no power to take any action on any complaints concerning human rights."[122] From its inception, the United Nations had received letters from individuals and groups around the globe trying to further their cause, or those of others. Yet the United Nations denied itself any power to act in reaction to such written complaints. Anticolonial and anti-apartheid groups had already begun promoting the right to petition. Through the efforts of the UN Special Committee on Decolonization, this led to the "accidental birth of a universal right to petition." Yet at the time that the Biafrans submitted their petitions, this right had not yet been acknowledged.[123] The secessionists continued their efforts. These, however, remained futile.[124]

The office of UN Secretary General U Thant did not look favorably on the Biafran campaign either: the conflict was an African problem, and thus something the OAU needed to deal with. At a press conference in Dakar shortly before the end of the war, U Thant was asked about the contradictions between the UN's recognition of the peoples' right to self-determination and its treatment of the Biafran issue. U Thant's answer could not have been any clearer: "As an international organization, the United Nations has never accepted and does not accept and I do not believe it will ever accept the principle of secession of a part of its Member State." According to the Burmese diplomat,

> when a State applies for membership in the United Nations, and when the United Nations accepts the membership of that applicant, all the members tacitly accept the principle that that particular State has an entity or unity. In other words, when a Member State is admitted to the United Nations, there is the implied acceptance by the entire membership of the principle of territorial integrity, independence, and sovereignty of that particular State.

According to this circular argument, the UN's recognition turns a nation-state into a time-transcending, incontestable natural unit: because the United Nations acknowledged its existence, the state has to exist. The borders recognized in the moment of the state's accession are thus in principal fixed for ever. U Thant illustrates this line of thought with a reference point that frequently surfaced in discussions of the Biafran "threat" to Nigerian unity by reminding his audience that the United Nations

[122] United Nations Division of Human Rights to Office of the Special Representative of the Government of the Republic of Biafra, March 20, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A).

[123] Burke, *Decolonization*, ch. 3.

[124] See Office of the Special Representative of the Government of the Republic of Biafra, to Secretary-General U Thant, March 26, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A); Biafran Mission to the United Nations to U Thant, November 11, 1968 (SCRBC: Biafra War Collection (1966–70), MG 788, Box 2, Folder 9).

spent over $500 million in the Congo to prevent the secession of Katanga from the Congo. So, as far as the question of secession of a particular section of a State is concerned, the United Nations' attitude is unequivocable [sic].[125]

To prevent a new Katanga – or even worse: the independence of a new Katanga – the United Nations and the OAU firmly took sides with the FMG.

In a London press conference in July 1967, the Nigerian Commissioner for Information Anthony Enahoro also played on these fears of postcolonial disintegration. If Biafra attained independence, it would disintegrate further, once the minorities within Biafra also asserted their right to self-determination. However, the process would not stop there: "a chain reaction will be set up all over Africa. Africa would end up in petty little principalities. Each successor 'mini-state' would be sovereign enough to acquire foreign protectors and purchase arms." This scenario would certainly lead to protracted wars and the intervention of foreign countries "on behalf of their 'protectorates'."[126] The Biafrans tried to work against these associations, refuting the theory of a secession chain reaction welded from Katanga to Biafra.[127] And even though there was little evidence that one secessionist movement would lead to the next, this domino theory was a cogent model for many contemporaries, and Nigerian officials continuously reverted to such analogies.[128] These fears were encapsulated by the dystopian vision of the so-called "Balkanization of Africa." In parliamentary debates, newspaper accounts, scholarly commentaries, and statements by activists, contemporaries evoked – or refuted – the scenario of Balkanization as a possible result of the Biafran secession. These analogies emerged right at the beginning of the conflict, yet remained a staple in these discussions.[129]

[125] "Secretary-General's Press Conferences," *UN Monthly Chronicle* 7 (February 1970), No. 2, 36.

[126] "Enahoro's Press Conference," 148.

[127] Republic of Biafra, *Parting of the Ways*, 5–19; "Biafran Memorandum on Proposed Future Association"; Birch and St. George, *Biafra*, 32; Ministry of Information, Republic of Biafra, ed., *Genocide Breaks up Nations*, 4, 5–6 "Biafra-Bericht des Biafra-Referenten im Katholischen Büro," August 10, 1968 (AEK, Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 II.), 2; "La 'Balkanisation' dans le monde," *Bulletin d'information de la Délégation biafraise à Paris*, July 6, 1969 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–72, No. 14).

[128] Bowden, "Possible Blockade" (UK NA, FCO 25/232); Kahn, "O.A.U."; "Dokument 408: Aufzeichnung des Ministerialdirektors Harkort," in Blasius, ed., *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik, 1967, vol. III*; Nixon, "Self-Determination," 492–4; Panter-Brick, "Right to Self-Determination," 260. For critical views see Uma Oke Eleazu, "Nigeria, Biafra"; Kamanu, "Secession," 366–7; Neuberger, "African Concept," 526, and, for the Nigerian view also Arikpo, *Testimony of Faith*, 5.

[129] See e.g. *Hansard Lords*, July 20, 1967, Columns 1369 and 1373, hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1967/jun/20/nigeria#S5LV0283P0_19670620_HOL_288 (accessed September 6, 2012); *Hansard Commons*, August 27, 1968, Column

But why had the Balkans become such a potent point of reference within discussions about the Nigerian Civil War? The term "Balkanization" entered the political lexicon in the aftermath of World War I. The main reason for the negative connotations of the term was the ensuing violence that visited the region against the background of the dissolution of first the Ottoman, then the Romanov and Habsburg Empires, for instance during the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, seen as a prelude to global war. Accordingly, "'Balkanisation' [...] had become a synonym for a reversion to the tribal, the backward, the primitive, the barbarian."[130] "Balkanization" thus indicated a violent descent into chaos in post-imperial situations – and had become a dreaded vision for a postcolonial Africa ever since decolonization had become imaginable.[131] During decolonization, Pan-Africanists grew particularly afraid of the continent's Balkanization.[132] After independence, the fears of the colonial past did not disappear immediately, but re-entered the scene in the guise of neocolonialism.[133] This dystopia of disintegration testifies to the openness of political imagination in the early postcolonial period. Colonial empire had disappeared from the range of legitimate political options. But what came after was still not entirely clear. Moreover, civil war is *per se* an open political situation. With many contemporaries pondering the possible implications of the civil war in West Africa, the opponents battled not only for territorial and political power, but also for the future of postcolonial Africa. Yet, with the principle of territorial integrity outweighing the right to self-determination, the political possibilities for Africa were also increasingly limited. As the Biafran case shows, the creation of new nation-states, which had become the focal point of the mindset of decolonization, still defined the political imagination of many contemporaries. However, for postcolonial secessionist movements like Biafra, it was beyond the realm of the possible.

From early on, the secessionist leadership, aware of their rather dim chances on the battlefield, attempted to open a new front on the world stage of international politics. During decolonization, the success of militarily hopeless anticolonial endeavors such as that of the Algerian *Front*

1514, hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1968/aug/27/nigeria#S5CV0769P0_19680827_HOC_69 (accessed September 6, 2012); "Nur beten," *Spiegel*, August 19, 1968, 75; Baker, "Emergence of Biafra"; Post, "Case for Biafra" 34; Nwankwo, *Truth about Biafra* 12–3; Dike, "Nigeria," 30.

130 Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 3, 32–4.

131 Du Bois, *Colonies and Peace*, 286; Langley, *Pan-Africanism*, 100–1.

132 Nkrumah, *Speak of Freedom*, 201; Shepperson, "Pan-Africanism."

133 See e.g. Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism*; Sartre, *Situations, vol. V*.

de Libération Nationale had shown the importance of the internationalization of Third World conflicts.[134] However, whereas anticolonial independence movements had changing international norms on their side, a secessionist movement like Biafra's had to claim independence against these norms. To some degree, the history of colonial rule and decolonization had produced both: a world of states fiercely defensive of their sovereignty, and a world of other communities haplessly claiming their independence. The globalization of political ideas such as self-determination and sovereignty, nation and ethnicity, has helped foster a plethora of diverse communities that engage in political claim making.[135] The politics of late imperial anticolonialism cannot be reduced to nationalism: "the 'imagined communities' Africans saw were both smaller and larger than the nation, sometimes in creative tension with each other, sometimes in repressive antagonism."[136] These diverse communities did not simply disappear after the end of empire. Out of the connection of two of these "imagined communities" – the regionally based identity of Eastern Nigerians, and the ethnically based identity of the Igbos – the Biafrans tried to fashion a new postcolonial nationalism. It is hard to ascertain how deeply identification with the new nation took root in the population, but it can be assumed that it did not engender a full-fledged Biafran nationalism. Yet it was also probably not any less developed than national identification in a number of former African colonies after independence. To gain recognition, the question, however, was not whether Biafra was a functioning state. Partly due to Nigeria's federal structure, Biafra maintained a relatively well-functioning administration. The secessionist republic's resources and economy also fared favorably in comparison with quite a few "Third World" states.[137] However, in the postcolonial world of states, the practice of state recognition had moved "from assessing fact to evaluating right."[138] With colonial empire deleted from the range of legitimate political configurations, a specific group of peoples "deemed to be entitled to state sovereignty" was defined: the populations within the borders of colonized or trust territories, who would inherit those borders from the time of imperial rule. International recognition did not depend on their prior attainment of de facto statehood; what counted was the new moral and legal norm of the anticolonial right to independence.[139] Accordingly, when colonial states had claimed independence, recognition by other states had

[134] Connelly, *Diplomatic Revolution*. [135] Kelly and Kaplan, *Represented Communities*, 5.
[136] Cooper, "Conflict and Connection," 1519. [137] Wirz, *Krieg in Afrika*, 153.
[138] Fabry, *Recognizing States*, 148. [139] Ibid., 12–13.

become "a formality regardless of how viable or unviable the new states might have appeared [...]."[140] In effect, many of the member states of the UN world have become mere "quasi-states." Unable to maintain internal sovereignty, they are only kept alive through external recognition and their participation in the UN society of states.[141]

Biafra might have become an "imagined community." However, it could not be turned into a "represented community."[142] Some of the communities which had emerged under colonial rule became "the materials [...] out of which nations could then be fashioned, with varying success, to fit the slots in the new world order as it actually came into being: slots for new national communities."[143] The number of such slots was limited soon after independence; the forums of international organizations were closed to postcolonial secessionist movements in particular. With the doors to the international stage closed to them, the Biafrans could not perform their statehood as an equal among the members of the UN-centric international community. As Prasenjit Duara writes, what "is novel about modern nationalism is not political self-consciousness, but the world *system* of nation-states. This system, which has become globalized in the last hundred years or so, sanctions the nation-state as the only legitimate form of polity."[144] The UN plays a key role in bringing these nation-states into being.[145] In turn the organization is thus equally central in keeping polities without recognition outside. A basic dissonance between two guiding principles of postcolonial international politics lay at the heart of the reaction of the OAU and the "Third World UN" to the Biafran campaign: both organizations called for self-determination, but condemned acts of secession. The Biafrans' problem was that when they "spoke of self-determination, much of the world heard secession."[146] The OAU Charter explicitly declares that the sovereignty of member states must be defended against any threat – whether internal or external. This left the OAU incapable of mediating in the war in Nigeria and, in effect, the United Nations as well, since the latter defined the conflict as an African affair that fell within the OAU's area of responsibility.[147] If the American Declaration of Independence had opened the "floodgates" of demands for self-determination, the society of states emerging from these demands

[140] Ibid. [141] Jackson, *Quasi-States*. See also Clapham, *Africa*.
[142] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Kelly and Kaplan, *Represented Communities*.
[143] Kelly and Kaplan, *Represented Communities*, 5.
[144] Duara, "Historicizing National Identity," 157 [italics in original].
[145] Ghosh, "Global Reservation," 421. [146] Simpson, "Biafran Secession," 339.
[147] Kamanu, "Secession."

themselves have become the gatekeepers, deciding which claims should be let past, and which should be stopped at the gates.[148] Biafran self-determination turned out to be too great a stretch of the imagination for most diplomats. Lacking UN recognition, Biafra never became a state in international law.[149]

148 Wight, "International Legitimacy," 153–73, 160.
149 This is for instance the verdict of Crawford, *Creation*, 265 and Ijalaye, "Biafra."

3 The Transnational Internationalization of the Biafran Campaign

The arrival of the first official delegation of a foreign sovereign, in December 1967, was welcomed in Biafra with a frenzy of excitement. In their report to the authorities at home, the envoys colorfully detailed how "roads lined with joyful people waving palm branches greeted them as they passed, sometimes for an unbroken distance of twenty miles . . . garments were strewn before them . . . churches were filled with over-flowing congregations . . . they crowded town-halls with representatives of the civil authorities . . . all sectors of the community hailed them."[1] The much-celebrated visitors were Monsignor Conway, Rector of the Pontifical Irish College in Rome, and Monsignor Rocheau of the Vatican's relief agency Caritas Internationalis, whom Pope Paul VI had sent into the secessionist enclave. Prior to the visit to Biafra, the Monsignori had toured the ecclesiastical provinces on the Federal side. The reserved reception there contrasted sharply with that in Biafra. Lagos stressed that they considered the mission to be a private, not a political, one.[2] The FMG had also turned down the Vatican's request for a ceasefire, and forbade a direct entry into Biafra from Federal territory. The papal envoys, however, were under pressure to include the enclave in their tour. Representatives of the Protestant churches had already demonstrated their willingness to defy the blockade to tend their flock when Reverend E. H. Johnson of the Presbyterian Church of Canada flew into Biafra. Now, also because the Biafran bishops had sent the Holy Ghost Father Anthony Byrne to Rome to lobby on their behalf, Catholic Church leaders strove to prove their dedication also. Through

[1] "The Papal Mission of Peace and Relief to the Ecclesiastical Province of Onitsha, 7–12 February 1968," unpublished report, 5, quoted in Stremlau, *International Politics*, 122 [omissions in original quote].

[2] British Legation to the Holy See to Foreign Office, West and Central African Department, "Vatican Mission to Nigeria," March 26, 1968 (UK NA, FCO 38/262) and Günter Gnodtke, "Schriftbericht-Fernschreiben aus Lagos Nr. 74," February 10, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741).

Fr. Byrne, the papal mission contracted a flight from Lisbon aboard one of the cargo planes of Biafra's American gunrunner Henry Wharton.[3]

Biafra's prospects were bleak at the time. The fall of the secessionist capital Enugu in October 1967 had initiated a series of territorial losses. In January 1968, Lagos introduced a new paper currency that rendered millions of Nigerian pound notes in the Biafran treasury valueless overnight.[4] From the outset, Biafra had couched its campaign in religious terms, presenting itself as a Christian nation. Now, these Christian ties they had stressed so fervently promised to redeem them right when Biafra's prospects looked dimmest. In his "Message to Africa" of October 31, 1967 Pope Paul VI asked, in words interpreted as a thinly veiled appeal to Lagos, "What are We to say when violence reaches such proportions that it becomes almost equivalent to genocide and pits tribe against tribe within the borders of a single nation?"[5] Biafra used the papal delegation's visit to political gain, staging it as a diplomatic encounter with envoys of the head of the Vatican state – rather than only the head of the Catholic Church. The Biafrans' hopes that the Holy See would declare open support were not unfounded, as the pontiff certainly entertained personal sympathies for the Biafrans. Partly as a result of his tour of Africa as a cardinal in 1962, Paul VI understood the conflict as a religious war engendered by Northern Nigerian jihadists. His meetings with Northern Islamic leaders had aroused concerns about their expansionist desires; in contrast, he had left the Eastern Region deeply impressed by the devout Christians he met there.[6] In the month after the Vatican mission to Biafra, the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches (WCC) issued a call for peace together. In the joint statement, the Christian churches declared that "it is not our part to declare on the issue of contention." But they felt "bound to call the most immediate attention to the sacred issue of the human right to life itself, which is so seriously threatened on such a vast scale by the horrors and effects of the war."[7]

The ecumenical call for peace was part of a slowly growing international interest in the conflict. In the first months of 1968, many religious groups and individuals were alerted to the civil war, alongside people with direct ties to Biafra or Biafran expatriates. Missionaries stationed in Biafra, especially Catholics from the Order of the Holy Ghost,

[3] Wiseberg, "Christian Churches," 308–11; Stremlau, *International Politics*, 120–3.
[4] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 219–22.
[5] Paul VI, "Africae Terrarum," *L'Osservatore Romano*, November 1, 1967, quoted in Wiseberg, "Christian Churches," 308.
[6] Sattler to Auswärtiges Amt, July 24, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741), 1; Hatch, *Paul VI*, 114.
[7] "The Churches' Call for Peace."

played a key role in awaking international interest in the conflict. As the Biafran case shows, religious networks remained important as alternative forums of global exchange in the postcolonial period. Whereas the "classic" sphere of international diplomacy dominated by intergovernmental relations was thwarted for the secessionists' advances, in early 1968, the Biafran campaign began to make international headway in transnational channels populated by non-state actors, such as missionaries and Church groups. This change in focus from international diplomacy to transnational advocacy would come to define Biafra's outreach strategy.

In this chapter, I analyze the relevance of religion for the international history of the conflict. I will first examine the role of religion in Biafran representations of the conflict and situate it within the longer history of religious antagonism in Nigeria. Second, I highlight the Biafran efforts to reach international publics through publicity and the activities of their expatriate communities. In a third step, I present the transnational religious networks that helped to make Biafra an object of international concern. Fourth, I briefly sketch the limits of pro-Biafran religious internationalism, which, in itself, was not sufficient to to turn the conflict into an issue of substantial global concern.

"A Christian Country": Biafran Propaganda and the History of Religious Antagonism

Despite the perpetual survival, invention and reinvention of religious customs deemed "traditional," to a large degree the history of religion in what is today called Nigeria has for centuries been defined by competing global forces of proselytization. The Islamic and Christian "empires of religion" extended their influence over different parts of the region, entangling the northern steppes with Islamic networks of trans-Saharan Africa, and the southern coast with the Christianities of the "Atlantic World."[8] These religious divides were further buttressed by the system of "indirect rule." In between the mostly Islamic north and the widely Christian south was the minority Middle Belt area, a frontier zone that was inhabited by large numbers of Christians and Muslims.[9] The Catholic missionary effort was concentrated around the coast of the Bight of Biafra, while the Protestant mission was more broadly spread across the whole of southern Nigeria. However, Protestant evangelization was also strongest in the south-east, where Christianity struck the

[8] On the global entanglements produced by "empires of religion" Bayly, *Birth*, ch. 9.
[9] Kastfelt, *Religion and Politics*.

deepest roots. Thus Igboland developed into the heartland of Christianity in the territory that was about to become Nigeria.[10]

That the Eastern Nigerian campaign for self-determination acquired a strong religious coloring almost from the outset accordingly needs to be situated in the *longue durée* of the history of religion in West Africa. Similarly, the role of Islam in Nigerian politics cannot be understood without reference to the Fulani *jihad* – and its reverberant reception. Despite the Sokoto Empire's fall to the British Empire in 1903, the Northern Nigerian Muslim aristocracy retained its power throughout the colonial period. The Islamic rulers had successfully adjusted to the demands of British colonial rule, but, as many Nigerian Muslims believed, betrayed their faith in the process. Calls for "Islamic renewal" abounded since the 1940s, amidst growing demands for political participation. The NPC, created in this atmosphere, was to define the region's politics for decades to come, in part because it had successfully absorbed the popular resurgence of Islamic ideals.[11] The key figure in the conjuncture of Islam and politics was Ahmadu Bello, purportedly a direct descendant of the Fulani emperors. After his unsuccessful bid for the position of Sultan of Sokoto in 1938, Bello was made "Sardauna," a traditional honorary title. He became the leader of a new generation of Northern politicians who wanted to reconcile Nigerian politics with what they considered the demands of Islam, and exerted a great influence over regional and national politics, partly through his close associate Balewa, Nigeria's first Prime Minister.[12] Concerns about the Muslim leaders' clandestine influence had grown throughout the Nigerian federation. Many Christian Nigerians feared that one and a half centuries after the forests of Yorubaland put a halt to Dan Fodio's expansion, Islamic rule over Nigeria was supposed to be completed after independence. The Sardauna died in the coup of January 1966. But the fears of Northern Islamic domination remained, as some of Bello's associates, the so-called "Kaduna Mafia," survived.[13]

Also against this background, and further fueled by the 1966 massacres, many soon-to-be-Biafrans understood themselves as a Christian people caught up in a war against *jihadist* Muslim oppressors[14] The Biafran conception of a Christian self was also due to the religious

[10] Ayandele *Missionary Impact*; Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise*; Isichei, *History of the Igbo*, ch. 11; Udo, "Missionary Scramble."

[11] Abun-Nasr, "Muslime"; Kane, *Muslim Modernity*; Loimeier, *Islamische Erneuerung*, 42–77.

[12] Kane, *Muslim Modernity*, 150–62; Loimeier, *Islamische Erneuerung*, 92–103.

[13] Loimeier, *Islamische Erneuerung*, 100–7.

[14] Omenka, "Blaming the Gods"; Walls, "Religion and the Press."

outlook of the secessionist elite. Most upper class Biafrans had attended missionary schools, and many went on to study in theological seminaries. When the European colonial empires crumbled, slowly but steadily increasing numbers of native clergy were allowed to leading church positions previously principally reserved for white personnel.[15] A number of Biafran leaders had this background, such as Francis Arinze, who, in 1965 at an age of 32, had become the world's youngest Catholic bishop, and was anointed as Archbishop of Onitsha two years later.[16]

The most influential example was governmental advisor Akanu Ibiam, member of the presidential board of the WCC.[17] Like many of his fellow Biafran leaders, Ibiam had a special relationship to Nigeria's former imperial power. In 1919, he had taken on the British first name Francis. After studies in Glasgow and Cambridge, Ibiam graduated from the University of St. Andrews with a medical degree in 1934 and went on to serve as a medical missionary for the Church of Scotland in Nigeria for more than a decade – a service for which he was knighted in 1951. Having acted as Governor of the Eastern Region since independence, Ibiam remained loyal to the new regime in the East when Ojukwu succeeded him after the onset of military rule.[18] When Whitehall came out in support of the FMG, Ibiam renounced his knighthood in a lengthy letter to Queen Elizabeth II.[19] In view of Britain's role in the world, its promotion of civilization and Christianity, it "is simply staggering for a christian country like Britain to help a moslem country militarily to crush another christian country, like Biafra." This act of treachery by the British Government "is just too much for me, Your Gracious Majesty [. . .]." Renouncing his British name Francis, Ibiam took the name Akanu, and returned his Insignia of the Orders of the British Empire with his letter to the Queen.[20]

Anti-British allegations were often intertwined with the portrayal of the North as an Islamic feudal state. The Committee of National Survival, a grass-roots group formed in the Biafran town of Obeledu, accused the former imperial power of masterminding the conflict – what they called "the inglorious drama that the British Government wrote for Nigeria" – in a letter to the Archbishop or Canterbury. The factors

[15] Hastings, *History*; Ludwig, "Unabhängigkeitsbestrebungen."

[16] Omenka, "Blaming the Gods," 369.

[17] Njoku, *Values*, ch. 4.

[18] Alfred Friendly Jr., "Civilians Are Reported Fleeing Enugu, Nigerian Rebel Capital," *New York Times*, September 27, 1967, 4; Alfred Friendly Jr., "Nigeria: After the War, What?," *New York Times*, October 1, 1967, 186; Letter to Eugene C. Blake, August 10, 1967 (WCCA, 42.3.007, WCC General Secretariat, Nigeria/Biafra, 1), 1.

[19] Akanu Ibiam to J. R. W. Parker, August 21, 1967 (WCCA, 42.3.007, WCC General Secretariat, Nigeria/Biafra, 1).

[20] Akanu Ibiam to Queen Elizabeth II. (ibid.).

transcend politics, as the authors claim. The North's Muslim political leadership

> had invariably enunciated the co-ordinated Moslem program to swing the sword [. . .] until they could dip the Koran into the Sea. [. . .] It is only in this light of a ruthless jihad that the pogrom of 1966 could be understood. [. . .] Christian churches were violated and christians were killed praying. Churches were looted, sacred vessels were desecrated. [. . .] All these were calculated to exterminate Christians of Biafra who stood as a Gibraltar obstacle to Islamism and blind rule.

Accordingly "the war between Nigeria and Biafra [was] essentially a war between Islamism and Christianity." These castigations evolved into the plea that the Archbishop of Canterbury would have to do everything possible to exert his influence to let the government in London "work hard and promptly to blot out and erase this heinous scandal of 'Christians betraying Christians to Moslem Satanism.'"[21] The Biafrans connected their campaign with the Cold War discourse of a Christian civilization fighting impious communists. Allegations against the Soviet Union, which also supported Lagos with weapons, were added to the chorus of anti-Islamic and anti-British tirades.[22]

However, the hawkishness of Ibiam and his followers was met with disapproval by many. In a letter to the WCC, a Nigerian student at the Lancaster Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania called for Ibiam's resignation from his WCC presidential office, as such warmongering could not be reconciled with the office's demands.[23] Ibiam remained in office. However, the top brass of the WCC hierarchy were neither pleased with Ibiam's activities, nor with some of his claims – such as his assertion that the British Government had sent 1,000 troops to aid Lagos, which turned out to be false.[24] WCC circles agreed that not too much attention should be paid to Ibiam.[25]

Without the means to breach the Federal communication ban, the harsh rhetoric of Biafra's allegations remained toothless. Moreover, depictions of the conflict as a religious war between the Muslim North and the Christian South fell short of explaining the conflict's complexity. The civil war was the result of a number of interrelated factors,

[21] F. C. Akabogu, "Memorandum Submitted to the Archbishop of Canterbury by the Obeledu Committee of National Survival, Obeledu, Awka Province Biafra – West Africa," August 1967 (ibid.).

[22] Ginger O. Mba to Hermann Kunst, May 16, 1968 (EZA 87/1118), 1.

[23] Festus O. Ogunbanjo to WCC, September 29, 1968 (WCCA, 42.3.007, WCC General Secretariat, Nigeria/Biafra, 1), 1.

[24] Akanu Ibiam to Eugene C. Blake, January 17, 1968 (ibid., Nigeria/Biafra, 2).

[25] A. Dominique Micheli to Eugene C. Blake, January 19, 1968 (ibid.); Alan R. Booth to Eugene C. Blake, November 22, 1967 (ibid.).

none of which could claim primacy as an explanatory force. The Islamist zeal amongst a portion of the Northern aristocracy was not representative of Nigerian society at large, or even only the Northern-dominated government. Gowon, the head of state, was a Christian. The member of a Northern-belt ethnic minority tried his best to minimize fears of Northern Muslim domination. With the decree of late May 1967 partitioning Nigeria into twelve federal states, he effectively curtailed the powers of the North's conservative Muslim leadership, elevating the influence of minority groups. In August 1967, Gowon reportedly instructed his forces that they "'are not fighting a war with a foreign enemy'"; "'[n]or are you fighting a religious war or Jihad,'" he explained.[26]

Biafran Efforts to Internationalize the Conflict

The two opponents' performances in the theatre of war quickly led, after some advances and setbacks on both sides, to a military standoff after the first few months of fighting. By autumn 1967, the conflict had reached a military stalemate, with no prospects for mediation. Accordingly, the Biafrans intensified their outreach campaign, which had been part of their strategy from early on. In mid-February 1967, more than three months before the declaration of independence, the Eastern Region government had contracted the New York based agency Ruder & Finn, which also maintained a London branch, to internationalize their public relations campaign. By the turn of the year, when the secessionists' early optimism was dying down under the slackening military and economic performance, the Biafrans increasingly sought new possibilities to circumvent the political and military impasse.

In early 1968, the Biafran regime repositioned its propaganda machine. After the fall of the secessionist capital Enugu, the administration units were evacuated and moved to Umuahia. Structural changes accompanied the geographic ones. The Biafran government created the Directorate of Propaganda and began to dock the funds of the Ministry of Information, which had been almost entirely staffed by former civil servants from the Eastern Region. Former faculty of the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, an intellectual stronghold of Biafranism that fell to Federal troops in July 1967, filled most senior positions in the newly formed Directorate. The institutional reorganization resulted in a new focus in content. With the Biafran territory continually shrinking, the new propaganda line had become one of a people under siege.

[26] "Nigeria's Greater Test," *New York Times*, August 6, 1967, 150.

This gave new weight to Biafran allegations of genocide: with Biafra encircled by Nigerian forces, the potential racial and religious aggression of their opponents became a much more imminent threat.[27] Alongside this, the efforts to internationalize the conflict through public relations were intensified as well. Initially the Eastern Region's external PR was aimed at the discreet lobbying of politicians and elite circles. Yet, in the first months of the war, they quickly realized that such activities were futile. The Biafran government set its sights on a new target: Western publics. The contract with the London-based External Development Services – an inheritance of the former Eastern Region government – was allowed to expire a few months into the war. Some of the personnel of the agency who had personal ties with the former Eastern Region continued to lobby the secessionists' cause voluntarily, however. The services of the New York agency Ruder & Finn were discontinued before the end of 1967.[28] Californian Robert S. Goldstein Enterprises, which entered a contract with the Biafran government in December 1967, and, a month later, the Geneva-based agency Markpress, filled the resultant void. Both organizations had their expertise in PR activities that the secessionists felt they needed: Goldstein was particularly adept at the production of multimedia campaigns, including television and movie formats.[29] Markpress had the facilities to produce press releases for mass international circulation, which previous Biafran propaganda had failed to achieve. Markpress' personnel, far from specialized in African affairs, considered the task a non-political one, and were willing to print press releases from the Biafran government without any substantial editing. This allowed Biafra to provide news agencies, journalists and editors with material from a Biafran angle.[30] Markpress also brought journalists to Biafra, arranging flights with the gunrunner Henry Wharton to allow them to report from inside the enclave.[31] The ploy yielded results: an early February 1968 press conference with 20 journalists present in Biafra resulted in coverage in both *Time* and *Newsweek*.[32]

[27] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 110–17.

[28] Davis, *Interpreters*, 107. [29] Ibid., ch. 6.

[30] Ibid., ch. 7; Dieter Grimm, "Werbung in Watte," *Spiegel*, July 8, 1968, 32–42; John Peck, "Confidential Note," January 30, 1968 [sic! 1969] (UK NA FCO 26/299); B. R. Curson, "Confidential Note to John Peck," January 23, 1969 (UK NA FCO 26/300); "Biafra's Publicity Machine," *The Scotsman*, July 10, 1968 (UK NA, FCO 95/225); "War of Words," *Financial Times*, June 17, 1968 (UK NA, FCO 95/225); Bamisaiye, "Nigerian Civil War."

[31] Arengo-Jones to O. W. Everett, August 10, 1968 (UK NA, FCO 95/225); Günter Gnodtke, "Zur Lage in Biafra," February 12, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741).

[32] Gnodtke, "Zur Lage" (PA AA B 34/741).

The Biafran leadership also intensified their efforts to reach international audiences by sending envoys abroad. In early 1968, Akanu Ibiam traveled to Europe and the United States to speak to church leaders and public audiences.[33] His visits made an impact in Germany, where he gave press conferences and met with Catholic and Protestant church leaders such as Kurt Scharf, protestant Bishop of Berlin and Brandenburg and former chairman of the Council of Evangelical Churches in Germany, who was to become a devoted pro-Biafran lobbyist.[34] After his visit, the EKD synod issued a declaration, and concerned bishops sent letters to their pastors and parishes.[35] In early 1968, the Biafrans began to build a network of roving emissaries and quasi-ambassadorial representatives abroad with offices in New York and Paris. Their representatives included distinguished personalities like Eni Njoku and Kenneth Dike, former vice-chancellors of the universities of Lagos and Ibadan respectively, the Sirs Louis Mbanefo and Francis Ibiam, the former Premier of the Eastern Region, Michael Okpara, and, probably most significantly, Nnamdi "Zik" Azikiwe, the famed leader of the Nigerian anticolonial movement.[36]

However, these pseudo-ambassadors faced severe limitations. Government officials were hesitant to meet with them, wanting to avoid an affront to the FMG.[37] Still, they had an impact on Western publics and citizens, some of whom collaborated with Biafrans abroad to create lobby groups. Biafra Unions began to take root at universities across

[33] "Churchmen Tells of Slaughter in Biafra," *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, March 31, 1968, 18 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1875); Peter Vogelsanger, "Schlussbericht zur Delegation der Schweizer Landeskirchen nach Grossbritannien in der Frage des Krieges zwischen Nigeria und Biafra," July 5, 1968 (EZA 87/1118).

[34] Reiseplan für Präsident Dr. Akanu Ibiam vom 26. Januar bis 9. Februar 1968 (EZA 2/2157); "Becher an Mitglieder des Arbeitskreises: Einladung zum Rundgespräch von Dr. Akanu Ibiam," January 17, 1968 (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 I); "Ungeheuerliches Mordgemetzel," *Das Wort*, February 11, 1968 (EZA 2/2157); "Dr. Akanu Ibiam besucht Deutschland"; "Brief von Bischof Dr. Kurt Scharf."

[35] "Synode V, Nr. 14a: Erklärung zu Biafra" (EZA 2/2157); "Appell des Hannoverschen Bischofs"; Präsident Wischmann berichtet . . . , March 24, 1968 (ibid.). See also EKD, Kirchliches Außenamt, "Die Leiden der Christen in der Welt: Eine Materialzusammenstellung," April 1968 (ibid.), 12–14 and "Besuch von Dr. Akanu Ibiam in der Bundesrepublik," March 15, 1968 (ibid.).

[36] "Dr. Azikiwe Holds Press Conference"; Sous-Direction d'Afrique, "Note," December 12, 1967 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–1972, No. 10/1); Sous-Direction d'Afrique, "Note," October 2, 1968 (ibid.); "Note: Représentation du Biafra," November 7, 1968 (ibid.); Biafra Historical Research Centre to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 18, 1968 (ibid.); Ministère des Affaires Étrangères Sous-Direction d'Afrique, Note de Dossier, August 21, 1969 (ibid.).

[37] See e.g. Buffum to State Department, August 30, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol Aff. & Rel Biafra – U, Box 1892).

the global North, especially in the United Kingdom and the United States, but across Western and in parts of Eastern Europe as well. The London headquarters of the Biafra Union of Great Britain and Ireland acted as the network's international information and coordination office. It issued statements criticizing British arms sales to Nigeria, organized small rallies and lobbied foreign representations in London.[38] US embassies also received attention.[39] The small chapter in Prague leaned on Cold War rivalries, threatening to seek Chinese support rather than American.[40] In their calls to extend governmental recognition to the Biafran state, a recurrent feature of the students' calls was the language of genocide.[41] Speaking to audiences overseas, Ibiam also referred to genocide.[42] The synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany issued a statement on Biafra declaring that it should leave nobody indifferent when "the threat of genocide is looming."[43] Among Church audiences overseas, the Biafran genocide allegations slowly began to reverberate.[44]

The Biafrans in exile tried to employ UN channels as well, sending petitions from Israel, Western Europe, and the United States.[45] In the first such petition, sent in October 1966, representatives of the apparently Igbo-dominated Nigerian Union in Germany alleged "[a] crime against humanity is being committed everyday": "We are back to the

[38] Central Executive Committee of the Biafra Union of Great Britain and Ireland, "Statement on British Arms Supplies"; Bruce to State Department, September 19, 1967 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol Aff. & Rel Biafra – U, Box 1892); "Schreiben biafranischer Studenten in Österreich an deutsche Botschaft in Wien," June 28, 1967 (PA AA B 34/710).

[39] M. B. Ekpang to the President of the United States of America, February 28, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1878); McGhee to Department of State, September 25, 1967 (ibid., Pol 12 Biafra, Box 1871).

[40] McGhee to Department of State, September 25, 1967 (ibid.); J. Beam to Department of State, November 15, 1968 (ibid.); J. Beam to Department of State, December 1, 1967 (ibid.).

[41] Biafra Students Association in the Americas (Massachusetts Branch): Donation appeal, August 10, 1967 (ibid.).

[42] "Churchmen Tells of Slaughter in Biafra," *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, March 31, 1968, 18 (ibid., Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1875).

[43] Synode der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschland: Synode V, Nr. 14a: Erklärung zu Biafra (EZA 2/2157).

[44] "Das Diakonische Werk an Die gliedkirchlich-diakonischen Werke der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland," April 16, 1968 (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 I), 1, 2.

[45] Azuka Dike to U Thant, August 10, 1967 (UN ARMS, S-0198–0004–03: Human Rights – Nigerian War – Biafra, 8011.8); Secretary of Biafra Students Union University of Illinois at Urbana to U Thant, August 18, 1967 (ibid.); Biafran Students Israel to U Thant, August 19, 1967 (ibid.); Chukwunaduanyi Bu Ndi to U Thant, August 19, 1967 (ibid.); Biafran Union Oxford to UNCHR, "A Cry to Humanity," October 28, 1967 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A); The Biafran Union of the Netherlands to Secretary-General U Thant (ibid.).

situation in which the Jews were under Hitler [...]."[46] Appeals to humanity and allegations of genocide were frequently tied together in these Biafran appeals. The Biafra Students Association in the Americas introduced themselves in their letters as "human beings, as citizens of the world, and as persons belonging to the peoples of the world in whose name this organization was set up,"[47] or directly spoke for the secessionist population: "We the citizens of the Republic of Biafra call on the United Nations to condemn Nigeria for genocide against the people of Biafra." They asserted that the UN's dismissal of the conflict as Nigeria's internal affair was "the very same excuse for indifference and moral cowardice offered by many Governments when Hitler was exterminating millions of Jews in Europe only 30 years ago."[48] Some of this rhetoric was intended to create a sense of an Igbo/Biafran exceptionalism within Nigeria. But perhaps more importantly, it targeted Western audiences. If the aim had been to target Third World governments, the representation of Biafra as an African Israel would have been an absurd strategy: in the late 1960s, Israel was, alongside the South African apartheid regime, the state most often criticized by the anticolonial bloc, recurrently castigated for suppressing the Palestinians.[49] In any case, because of the inclinations of a United Nations devoted to postcolonial non-interventionism, these endeavors did not meet any considerable success.

Perhaps more important than these activities were the contacts and networks the Biafran expatriates built up. Through their direct lobbying efforts and the circulation of pro-Biafran propaganda material to Church groups, human rights activists and the media, they helped cultivate the soil on which the transnational Biafra lobby would soon began to grow. The secessionist allegations against the FMG were put into higher circulation and now began to reach Western human rights organizations and activists. In mid-March, the International League for the Rights of Man petitioned the United Nations, stating that they received "information of a very serious nature," indicating "what appears to exhibit a 'consistent pattern of violations of human rights.' [...] We note that the serious charge of genocide has been raised."[50] By early spring, members of Congress in the United States also started to receive letters from citizens – many of whom had personal Biafran

[46] Letter to UNCHR. October 18, 1966 (ibid.), 1, 2.
[47] Biafra Students Association in the Americas Inc. to Secretary-General U Thant, July 5, 1968 (ibid., Part C), 1.
[48] Idem to Secretary-General U Thant, February 27, 1968 (ibid., Part A).
[49] Burke, *Decolonization*, 94–5, 101.
[50] The International League for the Rights of Man to U Thant, March 6, 1968 (ibid., Part A). See also Ligue Belge Pour la Defense des Droits de l'Homme, "Motion: Nigeria et Soudan," March 29, 1968 (ibid.).

contacts – expressing their concern about the conflict.[51] One letter-writer, who had lived in Eastern Nigeria for more than five years, wrote that the Igbos are "intelligent, hard-working, friendly people. They are especially friendly toward America, and they are more like Americans in their political and economic outlook and in their love for freedom than most other tribes in Nigeria."[52] Yet State Department officials replied that the conflict was an internal Nigerian matter.[53]

A slowly growing number of petitions, most of them sent by individuals with personal bonds to Biafrans, began to flow into United Nations post boxes in New York and Geneva in the first half of 1968.[54] Reports in the media, which began to devote more attention to the conflict, also began to arouse the feelings of some contemporaries without direct connections to Biafra, and letters from individuals who wrote they were stirred into action by newspaper articles about the civil war reached the United Nations.[55] In Germany, one of the first Biafra committees formed by Westerners was created – as they wrote in a petition to the United Nations – in response to reports they had received about the genocide.[56]

In the USA, the civil rights movement – vigorously fueled by religious convictions, motifs and semantics[57] – seemed a promising venue for Biafran appeals. And indeed, in March 1968 American newspapers reported that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., pastor of an Alabama parish and famed leader of the civil rights movement, planned to venture on a peacemaking mission to Nigeria/Biafra a month later. Fellow civil rights leaders Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young Jr., and A. Philip Randolph were supposed to accompany King.[58] However, he would never make the trip. On April 4, 1968, less than a fortnight before King's scheduled departure, he was assassinated.[59]

In spring 1968, it became increasingly obvious that Biafra was facing a humanitarian crisis. International pressure was mounting to bring the combatants to the negotiation table. The Commonwealth, filling

[51] See e.g. Richard Fulton to the President, March 22, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1875).
[52] Robert Dixon to Richard Fulton, March 16, 1968 (ibid.), 1–2.
[53] William B. Macomber, Jr. to Richard Fulton, April 3, 1968 (ibid.).
[54] See UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A and B.
[55] See for instance Letter to UNCHR, January 5, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A); Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, March 13, 1968 (ibid.).
[56] Aktionskreis Biafra to United Nations, April 22, 1968 (ibid.).
[57] Chappell, *Stone of Hope*.
[58] Jean M. White, "Dr. King Plans Peace Mission," *The Washington Post*, March 9, 1968, A3.
[59] Branch, *Canaan's Edge*, 759–66.

the void left by the OAU and the United Nations, had intensified its efforts toward reconciliation since late 1967. After a series of preliminary discussions between Nigerian and Biafran officials in London, the warring sides agreed to convene peace negotiations in the Ugandan capital Kampala starting on May 23.[60] But, four days before the meeting, on May 19, Port Harcourt fell to Federal troops, placing the principal economic and commercial centre of the secessionist state, including an airport, docks, and an oil refinery, in Federal hands. This was the crucial moment in the war. By cutting off the secessionist state from its main remaining economic link to the outside world, the Federal Military Regime had completed its blockade. Biafra's territory was continually shrinking. But its population, fleeing the advance of the troops into Biafra's interior, had grown. The secessionist state was now a landlocked, overcrowded enclave, its population threatened by the scarcity of food and other resources. It looked as though Biafra would either collapse or surrender.[61]

Yet just as Biafra's military and economic situation deteriorated, the secessionist's diplomatic prospects seemed to improve. On April 13, 1968, the Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere recognized Biafra. With this single-handed decision, Nyerere, who did not consult his Cabinet before issuing the recognition statement, broke the diplomatic stalemate in which the Biafran campaign had been stuck. Less than a month later, Gabon followed suit, another week later the Ivory Coast, and on May 20, Zambia recognized the secessionist state. With Félix Houphouët-Boigny, President of the Ivory Coast, and Albert-Bernard Bongo of Gabon, these new "friends" of Biafra included conservative politicians often accused of enabling neocolonial rule over their countries through external forces, as well as proponents of a genuine African socialism, which was promoted by Julius Nyerere in Tanzania and his friend Kenneth Kaunda in neighboring Zambia. Their individual decisions to break rank with the OAU line of non-recognition were at least partly motivated by their disappointment in the Pan-African organization's handling of the matter and Federal Nigeria's inability to settle the conflict using political means. As the former Biafran diplomat Raph Uwechue has argued, the recognitions did not necessarily imply any support of the "political choice of secession." Nyerere explicitly stated humanitarian reasons for his decision to grant recognition to Biafra in a situation where the Ibos feared for their lives.[62]

[60] Stremlau, *International Politics*, ch, 6. [61] Ibid., 165–6.

[62] St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*, 199; Stremlau, *International Politics*, 127–41; Uwechue, *Reflections*, 126–8; "Tanzania Recognizes Biafra" and "'Why We Recognized Biafra' – President Nyerere."

Catholic Missionaries and Global Religious Networks

The activities of Biafran clergy were not the only efforts to activate global religious networks. Catholic missionaries were probably the most influential group in the first stages of the internationalization of the conflict. Also because of their activities, reports of violence against Christian Igbos began arriving in Western Catholic parishes in 1966. When foreign citizens were evacuated after the outbreak of war, many missionaries in Biafra decided to stay with their flock. Among Catholic missionaries, Irish members of the Holy Ghost Fathers and the Order of the Holy Rosary were particularly sympathetic to the Biafra secession and its projected creation of a Christian nation. In contrast to the Protestant churches in Nigeria and Biafra, Westerners still mostly inhabited the leading positions in the Catholic Church.[63] The Catholic missionary effort in Nigeria's south-eastern coastal areas was primarily promoted by Holy Ghost Fathers. After British colonization of the region in 1902, the first priests of the order that arrived from France were replaced by Irish brethren. In 1920, the Vatican declared Eastern Nigeria the exclusive missionary field of the Irish priests of the order.[64] In Ireland, missionary traditions were strong since the nineteenth century at least, and these ties were not cut after the end of imperial rule. In the preceding decades Nigeria had become, as Enda Staunton writes, the "showpiece of Ireland's 'religious empire'."[65] Now, Biafra seemed to assume this position. When the humanitarian situation in the enclave began to worsen in early 1968, foreign missionaries and other clergy were the first group of foreigners to be alerted to the threat of human crisis. Soon, these Irish missionaries in particular supplied Western journalists and news agencies with reports that soon emanated not only through Christian media, but also through mainstream outlets. The Irish fathers began to create vital networks of support for the secessionists.[66]

The efforts of some these missionaries had already started earlier. In May 1967, when the Biafrans declared independence, the Owerri Diocese director of orientation, Holy Ghost Father Raymond Kennedy, was in the United States pursuing a training course in development techniques. Kennedy had extensive contacts in Biafra, where he had lived for more than a decade, and began to lobby for their cause in the United States. Particularly receptive to Kennedy's lobbying was

[63] Wiseberg, "Christian Churches," 302–3.
[64] Clarke, "Methods and Ideology"; Kevin Kenny, "Irish," 116–21.
[65] Staunton, "Case of Biafra," 513; Kenny, "Irish."
[66] Waters, "Influencing the Message."

Hollywood Jewish-American PR agent Robert S. Goldstein. Goldstein's client, the actor and World War II veteran Audie Murphy, had been contacted by a Biafran exile businessman hoping to gain access to the US arms industry. Murphy was of no help on that score, but he did take notice of the Biafrans' lack of access to media coverage in the United States, and contacted Goldstein to help. Goldstein, sympathizing with the well-educated enterprising Biafrans he had met, began to campaign for Biafra *pro bono*. Kennedy arranged for Goldstein to travel to Biafra, where the two met Ojukwu and other governmental officials. After the visit, Robert S. Goldstein Enterprises became Biafra's official PR consultant in the United States.[67]

After their departure from Biafra, Kennedy continued his journey to Dublin. There he gave a press conference on Biafra that his brother John, a member of the lay missionary organization Viatores Christi, had organized. The initiative met with disapproval from the higher echelons of the Holy Ghost Order and Church and governmental circles.[68] It received only scant coverage in the press "after 'somebody' rang the newspapers and killed the story."[69] Despite the setback, the Kennedy brothers continued their efforts. Raymond Kennedy returned to the United States to continue campaigning there. In Ireland, John Kennedy, his wife Kay, and a number of members of Viatores Christi and others with a background in development work for Catholic organizations founded the humanitarian NGO Africa Concern, today known as Concern. The organization's beginnings were humble. Starting with the group's first meeting in John and Kay's house near the Dublin docks in March 1968, the group began to meet once a week. But it proved difficult to translate their dedication into tangible rewards. There was still little attention devoted to the conflict in the mainstream media, and few people were willing to donate money.[70]

However, due in part to the efforts of the missionaries, the issue slowly started to resonate among Western publics. The networks of the Irish Fathers were about to become one of the main channels through which Biafra's misery was communicated to the world. Along with the Irish missionaries, a young English journalist played a crucial role in providing the sources of information necessary to allow for international reporting from the enclave. Frederick Forsyth, who later wrote bestselling war and spy novels, the second of which, *The Dogs of War*, is partly based on his

[67] Richard West, "Backed by $400,000 Bankroll: L.A. Men Crusade for Biafra, *Los Angeles Times*, April 1, 1968, A1–2; Davis, *Interpreters*, 108–10; O'Sullivan, *Ireland*, 113.

[68] Omenka, "Blaming the Gods," 380–2.

[69] O'Sullivan, *Ireland*, 113.

[70] Ibid., 113–14.

experience in Biafra, went to the war zone in July 1967 to cover the conflict as a BBC assistant diplomatic correspondent. Forsyth grew increasingly critical of the British government's pro-Nigerian stance. After his return to London in September, the station wanted to withdraw Forsyth from the war zone. He resigned and returned to Biafra in early 1968, continuing to report as a freelance journalist.[71] Ojukwu allegedly provided Forsyth with lodging, a car, gasoline vouchers, and access to a telex to facilitate the quick transmission of his reports to Western media outlets. Forsyth began to work with the Holy Ghost Fathers, informing the clerics about possible Nigerian advances in their direction; the latter in turn provided Forsyth with material for his articles.[72] In the ensuing months, facilitated by Markpress, the enclave became a destination for a growing number of journalists, humanitarian field workers and pro-Biafran activists. As the sole Western witnesses in the field, Forsyth and the Irish Fathers and Sisters turned into vital contacts for journalists and activists.[73] The missionaries also appealed to church leaders, including the Vatican, to raise attention, and made use of their access to religious news agencies and media outlets. Soon, their reports began to reach Western media.[74]

Christian newspapers began to cover the war regularly, most often highlighting the plight of the civilian population, expressed sympathies for the Biafran cause.[75] The initially slow growth in the number of travelers to Biafra started with delegations of the Anglican Church and of the WCC in March 1968. The WCC mission was significant as one of the first flights that brought relief supplies – ten tons donated by German and American churches – into the enclave.[76] Reports written by delegation members began to appear in the press.[77] In Britain, Whitehall's decision to sell arms to Nigeria had begun to garner criticism in the media as well as from religious and political authorities. On

[71] See esp. Forsyth, *Making*.

[72] Waters, "Influencing the Message," 701–3. See also Frederick Forsyth, "The terrible slaughter that Britain ignores . . . ," *Evening Standard*, May 14, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1875) and idem, *Making*, 210.

[73] Margot Parish, "Impressions of Biafra," *Labour Monthly*, June 1968, 269–72; "Ojukwu's Interview with Britain-Biafra Association Delegates."

[74] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 118–20; Waters, "Influencing the Message."

[75] See for instance François Roussel, "La Reconnaissance du Biafra par la Tanzanie," *La Croix*, April 16–17, 1968, 6 and Roland Itey, "Biafra: Solution pour une guerre? *La Croix*, May 5–6, 1968, 6; "Nigeria: Der vergessene Krieg, *Christ und Welt*," March 22, 1968, 6; Ruth Bowert, "Wir sind noch am Leben," *Rheinischer Merkur*, April 26, 1968, 28.

[76] Wiseberg, "Christian Churches," 316–17.

[77] See for instance Geoffrey Murray, "Journey to Biafra," *Christian Century*, May 15, 1968, 662–4.

February 13, 1968, the Labour politician and passionate internationalist Lord Fenner Brockway introduced a motion into the House of Lords calling for the cessation of the supply of arms to both sides; this was seconded by Michael Ramsey, the Archbishop of Canterbury.[78] Alongside the emergent parliamentary debate, articles critically examining the conduct of war of Britain's partners in Lagos began to appear in the press in Britain.[79] Slowly, the Biafran campaign started to resonate among Western publics.

Biafra and the Limits of Church Internationalism

The missionaries soon played the leads in the humanitarian campaign. The mission stations in the enclave were turned into distribution centers, and the networks of missionaries, volunteers, and church groups provided the vital infrastructure for the effort to handle the crisis. In the process, some of the Irish missionaries assumed public roles themselves, becoming "international celebrities" for their work in Biafra.[80] When religious aid NGOs from Europe and America pooled their resources under the umbrella of Joint Church Aid – abbreviated as JCA, which inspired some of the activists to dub the airlift "Jesus Christ Airlines" – the newly created organization could build on these structures, and on the previous efforts of other firmly pro-Biafran religious groups, such as the Scandinavians in Nordchurchaid. But, as an effect, the groups assembled in this inter-confessional joint venture – the first ecumenical humanitarian endeavor of such a size – were widely perceived to be part of the Biafran lobby. The dedication of some national church bodies – especially from Germany and Scandinavia – created a stir within the WCC and, to a lesser degree, the Catholic community. The activities of clerics with strong pro-Biafran inclinations like Bishop Scharf were met with strong internal criticism.[81] WCC General Secretary Eugene C. Blake was "concerned that our constituency in Nigeria should suppose that we have taken a political rather than a humanitarian orientation in our World Council policy," and hence the organization could not be associated to closely with the pro-Biafran stance of many religious groups in the field. Not wanting to alienate its Nigerian

[78] *Hansard Lords*, February 13, 1968, columns 69–92; Chadwick, *Ramsey*, 250–5.
[79] Waters, "Influencing the Message," 703.
[80] Ibid., 698. See also, O'Sullivan, *Ireland*, chs. 4–5.
[81] Helmut Reuschle, "Memorandum," April 11, 1968 (WCCA, 42.3.007, WCC General Secretariat, Nigeria/Biafra, 3). For another example for this split see Helmut Gollwitzer to Eugene C. Blake, January 5, 1970, (WCCA, 42.3.009/3, WCC General Secretariat, Nigeria/Biafra).

member churches, the WCC remained politically neutral, despite pro-Biafran sentiments among its members.[82]

To some degree, the divergent assessments of the situation were due to the different channels of information open to them. The pro-Biafran sympathies of clerics in Germany and elsewhere were an outgrowth of their direct ties to Biafran Protestant church leaders or Catholic missionaries. But, unlike the bodies of national churches, the Secretariat of the WCC was provided with information from both sides of the front-line, since Biafran *and* Nigerian churches were members of the international organization, and the WCC was responsible for Protestant churches on both sides. Blake criticized pro-Biafran lobbyists for failing to take "the Lagos side of the conflict" into consideration. With members on both sides of the battle lines, the WCC "cannot and will not put all the blame on either side."[83] A similar observation can be made in the case of the Vatican, which, after initial pro-Biafran proclamations, moved toward a neutral position. During their mission, Conway and Rocheau had apparently realized that religion was only one among a number of divisive factors. Paul VI maintained sympathies for the Biafran side. But the Holy See bureaucracy, thinking of diplomatic considerations, made sure the Vatican remained neutral.[84] This dilemma put the Vatican in a tough position. Criticized from many sides, Paul VI tried to assuage the Nigerians, but also continued to press for concessions at the negotiation table.[85] In his Sunday sermon on July 21, 1968, the Pope addressed the suffering that resulted from the war, cautiously expressing his sympathies for the people of the former Eastern Region. However, the Pope refrained from taking sides publicly. He therefore spoke of "Biafra" as well as of the "Eastern Region."[86] Nevertheless, the papal rhetoric met a strong response from pro-Nigerian circles. After that, official statements of the Holy See omitted the usage of the word "Biafra."[87]

On July 2, 1968, Hermann Dietzfelbinger, President of the Council of the German Evangelical Church and one of the most influential conservative bishops in postwar German Protestantism, petitioned the

[82] Eugene C. Blake to Hans J. Middelkoop, December 19, 1968 (WCCA, 42.3.008/2, WCC General Secretariat, Nigeria/Biafra).
[83] Eugene C. Blake to Alan J. Berman, International Witnesses against Genocide, August 7, 1968 (WCCAG, 42.3.007, WCC General Secretariat, Nigeria/Biafra, 3).
[84] British Legation to the Holy See to Foreign Office, West and Central African Department, "Eastern Nigeria," October 1, 1967 (UK NA, FCO 38/262); Wiseberg, "Christian Churches," 308–13.
[85] See e.g. Daeschke, "Der Vatikan und die Lage in Nigeria," August 14, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741), 1–2.
[86] Sattler to Auswärtiges Amt, July 24, 1968 (ibid.), 1.
[87] Omenka, "Blaming the Gods," 378.

government of West Germany, the United Nations, and the WCC. Biafra had become a "disgrace for the whole of Christendom": "Children are starving in Biafra [. . .], but for the simple right to live of these people who barely raise our voice." His Christian faith obliged him to speak on behalf of these victims: "Christians sometimes have to speak out with no regard for politics and diplomacy"[88] Two days later, the WCC was to open its fourth assembly. Delegates from member churches of the WCC around the globe were traveling to Uppsala – among them representatives of Nigerian and Biafran churches. Like the Biafran church delegates, Dietzfelbinger pinned high hopes on the assembly in the Swedish university town: the church leaders could enable the reconciliation that the politicians had failed to achieve. The Biafran delegates expressed their regrets over two documents circulated by "unnamed Nigerian authors": the Nigerian delegation had thus "chosen the forum of this respectable church 'world parliament' to spread their vile propaganda by which they have attempted in the past two years to cover their crime of genocide on the 14 million Biafrans." However, the Biafran delegates would now "make available the true picture." For "14,000,000 peoples thrown out of Nigeria like the 'exiles who poured into Israel after the last World War'," Biafra had become "the last hope of security to life, to property and to the will to exist [. . .]."[89] Presenting their case as that of a Christian nation facing Islamic aggression, the "Christian and peace-loving people" of Biafra wished for nothing but to be left alone by the Nigerians and their "savage fury."[90]

Despite these efforts, the chairman of the fourth general assembly of the WCC, Dr. E. A. Payne, emphasized that the Church body comprised members from the other side of the conflict as well – and called for neutrality. It was not the WCC's duty to pass judgment on the rights and wrongs of the political situation, as he argued. But the WCC assembly thus did not in fact remain neutral. Instead, it reinforced the Nigerian position. Referring to the OAU's affirmation of Nigeria's territorial integrity, the Nigerian delegation resolutely objected to any reference to "Biafra" in official WCC resolutions. In the Uppsala Assembly's resolution on the conflict, mention was only made of a "conflict between

[88] Hermann Dietzfelbinger, "Appell zum Krieg in Biafra," July 2, 1968 (EZA 87/1118). See also "Dietzfelbinger: Biafra-Konflikt – eine Schmach für die ganze Christenheit," *epd: Evangelischer Pressedienst*, July 2, 1968, No. 148.

[89] Biafran Delegation to the 4th Assembly of the WCC: Biafra's rebuttal of Nigeria's falsehood in two documents Nigerians circulated during the Conference of the WCC, July 1968 (WCCA, WCC Assembly Uppsala 1968, 34.6./5bis2), 1, 2, 7–8.

[90] Biafran Delegation to the 4th Assembly of the WCC, "Nigeria's war of genocide on Biafra," (WCCA, WCC Assembly Uppsala 1968, 34.6./5bis3), 2, 10.

Nigeria and the former Eastern Region."[91] The involvement of religious groups and individuals in the conflict can thus not be presented as a "response of the churches." In her effort to analyze religious responses to the crisis, Laurie Wiseberg has reminded us that the Catholic Church is not a "monolithic" bloc. The Biafran conflict was a divisive issue for the Vatican, religious orders and different other church institutions. The Protestant churches were no more unified. Whereas a growing number of missionaries, clerics and Western church publics began to embrace the Biafran cause, the Church hierarchies and international bureaucracies – apparatuses resembling those of states – entertained neutral inclinations, which, in their effects were largely pro-Federal.[92]

In mid-June 1968, Heinrich Tenhumberg, head of the Katholische Büro, received a letter from Francis Arinze, to which the Archbishop of Onitsha attached his "Reflections on the Nigeria-Biafra War."[93] Arinze explains that a "conspiracy of silence by news media and diplomatic manoeuvres around the world succeeded for a long time in hiding the facts from the world." Arinze's comments point to a new, and powerful line of Biafran rhetoric: leveling allegations about Western governments and a world that remained silent in the face of genocide. "The Biafrans are shocked," Arinze writes, "that even governments of Christian [sic] countries can be so selfish, heartless and unchristian." The Biafran bishop continues, "Have [Biafrans] none at all of the fundamental human rights?"[94] Arinze's writings are indicative of a tipping point in the secessionists' campaign: the networks of activists that had begun to develop were growing in a transnational sphere of non-state humanitarianism. The rhetoric of the campaign began to transcend religion or politics: first and foremost, the human rights of Biafrans were at stake.

Given the impasse that the secessionists were confronted with in international diplomacy, the Biafran lobbyists needed to go through transnational channels of non-state advocacy, such as missionaries and other clerics. But in the long run, that Biafra found support in a sphere allegedly transcending politics did not help their political project. Even in view of the worsening humanitarian situation, only a handful of states formally recognized Biafra. However, not even the government of Ireland, where pro-Biafran sympathies based on Christian solidarity were particularly strong, extended recognition. The government in Dublin

[91] Goodall (ed.), *Bericht aus Uppsala*, 164–6; Wiseberg, "Christian Churches," 319–20.
[92] Wiseberg, "Christian Churches," 298; Forsythe, *Humanitarians*, 63–8; Hentsch, *Face au Blocus*; Moorehead, *Dunant's Dream*, 614–27.
[93] Francis A. Arinze to Tenhumberg, July 7, 1968 (EZA 87/1118).
[94] Idem, "Reflections on the Nigeria-Biafra War," 1968 (EZA 87/1118), 1–2.

did not want to jeopardize its traditional position of neutrality in Africa. Most governments similarly chose to remain neutral. Yet at the same time, the secessionists made considerable inroads into the sphere of transnational non-state advocacy. Without the transnational networks of missionaries and the activities of a plethora of religious actors, the Nigerian Civil War may have remained nothing more than a marginal African conflict.

In order to understand how Biafra became a topic of global discussion, one must consider the structural differences and frictions between international and transnational relations. The Biafran project was mostly furthered through transnational channels. The efforts of Catholic missionaries, Biafran expatriates and roving emissaries were important because they started to build up the ties that would grow into the transnational network of Biafra activism. But to acquire their full force, the allegations needed to transcend the issue of religious conflict; such representation of the conflict struck a chord with some Western Christians – especially those with personal contacts to Biafran society – but did not establish the conflict as a major international cause. In the first half of 1968, the representation of the conflict as "genocide" became increasingly important. It became particularly powerful once the threat of a severe humanitarian crisis in the landlocked Biafran enclave became imminent.

Coda: The Advent of Humanitarian Catastrophe

In late May 1968, only days after Port Harcourt fell to Federal forces, a small team of the British International Television Network (ITN) arrived in Biafra. The journalist Alan Hart and his cameraman filmed combat between Federal and secessionist troops, intending to provide relatively conventional war reporting. By early June, the two were about to wrap up their work. However, the airplane that was to fly the journalists out of the enclave was delayed. This coincidence opened up an unexpected window of opportunity. Father Doheny, a seasoned missionary who had lived in Nigeria for years, approached Hart, telling him that "[t]here's a real story here." "Do you want to know it? Do you want to see it?" Doheny recalled later that he asked the journalist. The Irishman took Hart to the mission station, turned into a makeshift hospital, where the ITN journalists were confronted with suffering children dying of malnutrition and starvation. Realizing that dying children would spark much greater interest than their frontline reporting, Hart changed the focus of his report to the hospital. Around the same time, five British journalists arrived in Biafra, including *Sun* correspondent Michael Leapman and his photographer Ronald Burton. The *Sun* journalists got scent of the

story – maybe because Hart boasted of his discovery – and also went to the mission station to report on the starving infants. On the morning of June 12, the *Sun* ran a front-page article about the children of Biafra. On the evening that same day, the television pictures that Hart shot in the mission station aired on ITN.[95] Suddenly, Biafra became an issue of international concern.

[95] Harrison and Palmer, *News*, 28–31; Kunczik, *Meinung*, 135; Waters, "Influencing the Message," 697–8.

Part II

Biafra on a Global Stage

4 Creating "Biafra"

The Discovery of Civil War as a Humanitarian Crisis

On June 12, 1968, a new icon of the Third World was born: the "Biafran babies." That day, the British daily newspaper *Sun* devoted most of its first three pages to articles and images that Michael Leapman and his photographer Ronald Burton had sent home from the secessionist Republic.[1] For the first time, a large British and international public was confronted with the ghastly images of Biafra's starving children. That evening, the British television station ITN aired the pictures that Alan Hart shot at the Holy Ghost Father's missionary station – the first TV images of the humanitarian crisis to be broadcast.[2] Other stations soon followed. In the ensuing months, Western media feverishly reported about the West African conflict. The images of the "Biafran babies," tiny, malformed human beings doomed to die of hunger, lodged "Biafra" in the mental landscapes of people around the globe.

In Nigeria, the civil war had entered its second year of fighting. Despite Biafra's intensive efforts, the conflict still had not attracted much international attention. Competing with the Six-Day-War, the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, the Prague Spring and the events of May 1968, the conflict retained a marginal status in newspapers' international politics pages. But in mid-1968, this changed dramatically: The reports of journalists and photographers, the fundraising and lobbying campaigns of humanitarian organizations and Biafra committees gave the conflict purchase in international politics. Many contemporaries in the global North donated money to the relief efforts set up by humanitarian organizations such as JCA or the ICRC, which tried to fly food and medicine into the enclave. The conflict also fostered the founding of new Biafra committees throughout the West, which began to raise funds for the relief operation, and to privately lobby or publicly censure international organizations and Western governments. Harold Wilson's Labour

[1] "The Land of no Hope" and "Biafra: Where Children Wait to Die," *The Sun*, June 12, 1968, 1–3.

[2] "Transcript of ITN Film 3amine in Biafra," June 12, 1968 (OXA, COM 3/3/1: Nigeria/Biafra Appeal).

administration was heavily criticized as the main foreign power supporting Federal Nigeria with arms. In answer to these challenges, governments and international organizations intensified their relief efforts.[3]

Biafra was thus turned into an object of international concern. However, as Reinhart Koselleck reminds us of the dictum ascribed to the Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus, "it is not deeds that shock humanity, but the words describing them."[4] Similarly, Biafra had become an event *as* representation.[5] Many contemporaries who started to worry about the plight of the Biafrans had no direct ties to the region. Very few had traveled there. Most had very little previous knowledge of West Africa. For most contemporaries, the making of this humanitarian media and protest event was also what turned Biafra into a recognizable concept. In the following, I will analyze this making of the "event" Biafra, and account for the event's "materiality" through a thick description of this moment, its contexts and structural conditions, the relevant media, and its principal speakers and actors.[6] First, I will present the early stages of this event, which coalesced on one day, June 12, 1968, in London with the first media reports about the humanitarian crisis and the first emergency debate about the conflict in the House of Commons. In their interplay, journalists, politicians, and activists set the tone of much of the ensuing political communication about the conflict. In a second step, I outline the infrastructures of technology and travel, and the networks of interaction that enabled a rapidly increasing stream of journalists that soon produced a backflow of texts and images. In a third step, I describe the arrival of international news about the humanitarian crisis in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. I survey the channels of distribution and reach of these journalistic accounts. I introduce the activities and the advocacy networks of humanitarian organizations and the quickly growing ranks of pro-Biafran activists in a fourth and final step, in particular in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

London, June 12, 1968: The British Prologue

On the morning of June 12, readers of the *Sun* – a year before its takeover by the Australian media magnate Rupert Murdoch and not yet the tabloid it has since become – were confronted with the deteriorating situation in Biafra. The texts and images cast Biafra as place of suffering

[3] Desgrandchamps, "coopération"; Wiseberg, "Humanitarian Intervention."
[4] Koselleck, "Begriffsgeschichte," 75. See also Barthes, "Writing."
[5] See Dayan and Katz, *Media Events*; and further Barth, "Medien," 724–7; and Foucault, *L'archéologie*.
[6] See esp. Foucault, *L'archéologie*.

innocents, a "Land of no hope," "Where children wait to die," as the headlines ran (Figures 4.1 and 4.2).[7]

The *Sun* reporters visited Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Umuahia where they met the "Edinburgh-born supervisor, Dr. Clyne Shepherd": "As we arrived – pandemonium. A Nigerian bomber, a Russian-built Ilyushin 27, had been spotted overhead and the 500 or so mothers and children in the main waiting hall were screaming and fleeing outdoors." Yet bombing raids were not the sole problem. The patients suffered from serious malnutrition and illnesses. "'We don't take the hopeless cases,' said Dr. Shepherd. 'About a quarter of the children who come here are going to die anyway, so there is no point in taking them in.'"[8] The reporters also talked to the Church of Scotland Mission doctor in charge of the Hospital's children's ward, "Dr. Anne Jackson, of Chapel Street, Carluke, Lanarkshire."[9] The *Sun* did not merely confront its readers with a distant place of suffering. This was a humanitarian catastrophe in which British doctors tried to operate against the misery at least partly caused by their own government. Britain sent small arms, ammunition, and armored cars, as the articles emphasized. With the bulk of Nigerian weaponry made in Britain, "[i]t is difficult and embarrassing to be a Briton in Biafra just now. We are mighty unpopular."[10] Biafra was thus turned into a geographically distant yet connected site of suffering. Similarly, another article evoked the "'Stop British Arms' Storm" approaching Whitehall with the emergency debate, which was to be held in Commons in the afternoon of the same day.[11]

The *Sun's* feature story was part of a first massive wave of media reports on the humanitarian crisis, produced by a rising tide of criticism emanating from Fleet Street already before. Critical reports on the conflict in the British press had been published by Frederick Forsyth, for instance.[12] The public clamor of Catholic leaders, influenced by the advocacy of Irish missionaries, also raised some attention.[13] Biafrans in British exile and Britons with personal ties to the breakaway region

[7] "Land" and "Biafra" *The Sun*, June 12, 1968, 1–3.

[8] "Land," *The Sun*, June 12, 1968, 1–2, quotes on 1.

[9] Ibid., 1, 2.

[10] Michael Leapman, "Why British Arms Count," *The Sun*, June 12, 1968, 2.

[11] Robin Page, "'Stop British Arms' Storm," *The Sun*, June 12, 1968, 1.

[12] Frederick Forsyth, "Gutted Hamlets, Rotting Corpses – This Is Genocide," *The Sunday Times*, May 12, 1968, 9; Frederick Forsyth, "The Terrible Slaughter that Britain Ignores . . . ," *Evening Standard*, May 14, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1875).

[13] David Winder, "British Arms Policy under Fire in Nigerian Civil War," *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 4, 1968, 4. See also "Cardinal Protests on Biafra," *The Guardian*, June 3, 1968, 1; Dennis Barker, "Save Biafra Movement gets a Fillip," *The Guardian*, June 4, 1968, 5; "Protests Too Selective, Cardinal Says," *The Times*, June 3, 1968, 8; "Heenan erinnert die Briten an Biafra," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 4, 1968, 5.

'We don't take hopeless cases. About a quarter of the children who come here are going to die anyway, so there is no point in taking them in.'

A HOSPITAL DOCTOR IN BIAFRA

THE LAND OF NO HOPE

WEDNESDAY

THE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

SUN

JUNE 12 1968 FIVEPENCE No. 1,160

In a Biafran hospital, Dr. Anne Jackson with a child who is dying of hunger

Diplomatic reporter MICHAEL LEAPMAN and photographer RONALD BURTON flew back to London last night after ten days in war-torn Biafra. Here, on the day of an emergency Commons debate on Britain's arms involvement in the misfortunes of the beleaguered state, is their first report. The report adds a tragic new dimension to the debate, and has accordingly been sent to every Member of Parliament today.

HUNDREDS of thousands of Biafrans will starve to death this summer as they are hemmed into an ever-shrinking area in the middle of their country.

By the end of the rainy season in August, more than a million of the country's 14½ million people may have died. Several thousand, mainly children, are dead already. As Nigerian troops, mainly armed by Britain, nibble remorselessly at the edges of Biafran territory, an estimated 4million Biafran refugees are trekking to the comparatively safe areas of the interior.

Biafra's Ibo people fear that, if they stayed in occupied territory, they would be massacred by the invaders. Several thousand Ibos in Nigeria were killed in 1966 and 1967.

The trek to the interior is a phenomenal and terrifying thing to witness.

The place is swarming with people looking for somewhere to go and something to eat.

In the hospitals thousands of mothers queue only to have their sick, listless children diagnosed as victims of malnutrition.

ECONOMICS

It is a disease which doctors cannot cure, for the only remedy is food. And this is a commodity in dreadfully short supply in Biafra as the rainy season—the traditionally hungry time—gets under way.

It is a matter of simple economics. Many of the regions now occupied by the Nigerians contain some of Biafra's most fertile land.

The land which remains cannot support the unprecedented influx of homeless, penniless people. And the Nigerian blockade effectively prevents anything more than token quantities of emergency supplies from getting in.

Breaking point came last month when half a million people fled from Port Harcourt, Biafra's biggest city, after nights of Nigerian shelling.

HOSPITALITY

By now most have found shelter. Some go to the hundreds of refugee camps established by the Government in temporarily disused schools throughout the country.

Others take advantage of the "extended family" social system, by which even distant relatives can claim, as of right, the hospitality of members of their family.

Whether they accept public or private charity, the problem of feeding them remains.

Sun photographer Ronald Burton and I visited the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Umuahia, Biafra's temporary capital, when the Edinburgh-born supervisor, Dr. Clyne Shepherd, was taking morning clinic.

As we arrived — pandemonium. A Nigerian bomber, a Russian-built Ilyushin 27, had been spotted overhead and the 500 or so mothers and children in the main waiting hall were screaming and fleeing outdoors.

In the 10 minutes or so before calm was restored, Dr. Shepherd had time to talk.

"We get about 2,500 cases of malnutrition every week now and it is going up," he said. "It was mainly children at first, because they need most protein, but now we're getting adults, too.

"Of course, we only get people who are within walking distance of the

Continued on Page Two

'Stop British arms' storm

By ROBIN PAGE, Parliamentary Reporter

THE COMMONS will hold an emergency debate today over the Government's refusal to halt the supply of arms to Nigeria for use against Biafra.

Permission for the debate was granted yesterday — to the embarrassment of the Government—by Dr. Horace King, Speaker of the Commons.

He had heard protests from M Ps of all parties over the attitude of Mr. Michael Stewart, Foreign Secretary.

Mr. Stewart announced that a new effort to settle the civil war was being taken by Britain following the breakdown of peace talks at Kampala, Uganda.

REFUSED

Later Lord Shepherd, Minister of State at the Commonwealth Office, saw the leaders of both negotiating teams in London and arranged to meet the Biafran representative again on Saturday.

In the Commons Mr. David Winnick, Labour MP for South Croydon, demanded that while talks were going on, arms to the Nigerian Federal Government should be cut off "so that we would not be a party to the slaughter."

Mr. Stewart would not agree. He said: "It would not in any way enable us to contribute towards a settlement."

Mr. Reginald Maudling, Opposition Deputy Leader, said the Government should reconsider the policy "particularly when the dangers of a massive slaughter appear to be brooding over the scene."

Left-winger Mr. Frank Allaun (Lab., East Salford) demanded that Britain approach other governments supplying arms to Nigeria to get the traffic stopped.

PUZZLED

He said: "Many M Ps are distinctly puzzled by the Government's continual and persistent refusal to take this normal procedure."

Mr. Michael Barnes (Lab., Brentford and Chiswick) moved that there should be an emergency debate. The Speaker said he would grant one if the necessary 40 M Ps stood in support. At this almost the whole House—except the Government Front Bench—got to their feet.

● Britain is supplying a great deal of Nigeria's small arms and ammunition, as well as Ferret and Saladin armoured cars.

In terms of value British arms account for only 15 per cent of Nigeria's arms, but this figure is deceptive. The other 85 per cent include expensive Russian jets.

CHINESE WORD TORTURE FOR BRITONS

WIFE STAYED

SHOCKED

Anxiety over heart men

By RONALD BEDFORD, Science Editor

TEN DAYS

GALES BATTER RACE YACHTS

By CHARLES GUEST

Danny here—for a day

By ROBERT HART

DYED HAIR

BOAC PILOTS ISSUE STRIKE ULTIMATUM

By BRIAN WOOSEY, Air Correspondent

OFFER

Lead-swingers

Rise and fall

Staying sunny

Another win

Nude grabbed

Figure 4.1 *The Sun*, June 12, 1968, 1. Reproduced by permission of News Syndication.

THE SUN SAYS

Mrs Castle's army

The land of no hope

BIAFRA WHERE CHILDREN WAIT TO DIE

One month on the road, a refugee family of 23

Two cups of milk in a fortnight

'No plot against Thorpe'

BERLIN IN NEW SQUEEZE

Why British arms count

LBJ FURIOUS OVER GUN LAW DELAY

Dinner defeat for Government

The last straw

Cats on a limb

Boy's arm saved

YOUR WEATHER

THE WORLD AT LUNCHTIME

CENTRAL HEATING

I INSTALLED MY OWN IT'S EASY!

FREE

Motor Cycle

HOT FROM THE ISLE OF MAN

How to relieve TENSE NERVOUS HEADACHES

Nothing acts faster than ANADIN

FRENCH STRIKER SHOT DEAD

The tough judge who cares . .

RUSH FOR THE NEW COINS

Brian Jones opts for a jury

THE BEST EYEFULS IN LONDON

Concordes get noise-run

Conned, but only slightly

Blue light puts driver in red

More ferries

£82,000 bonus

Do you roll tomorrow's cigarettes today or one at a time?

RIZLA 1/-

RIZLA CIGARETTE PAPERS LIMITED, WEMBLEY, MIDDLESEX

Figure 4.2 *The Sun*, June 12, 1968, 2–3. Reproduced by permission of News Syndication.

had already begun to organize Biafra committees from late 1967. This emergent lobbyist scene comprised media representatives alongside politicians.[14] A key figure was Auberon Waugh, son of the novelist Evelyn Waugh. The Catholic journalist worked as political correspondent for the *Spectator*. Like Forsyth, he was a member of the Britain-Biafra Association (BBA), formed in late 1967.[15] But it was when the Kampala peace talks collapsed on May 31 that more and more voices questioning Whitehall's policy line made were raised in the London press. As long as the talks in the Ugandan capital were ongoing, governmental representatives had successfully quelled criticism which could "upset the [peace talks'] sensitive basis."[16] After the collapse of the negotiations, the *Economist* commented caustically that now "the Government will have to think up some other excuse."[17] The conservative weekly *Spectator*

[14] See Fafowora, *Pressure Groups*, 118–21.

[15] Fafowora, *Pressure Groups*, 126. "Another More Murderous Harvest," *Spectator*, May 31, 1968, 729–730 and the files in UK NA FCO 65/452.

[16] *Hansard Lords*, May 30, 1968, columns 1224–7, quote in column 1224, hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1968/may/30/nigeria-supply-of-arms (accessed January 18, 2013).

[17] "More War, More Weapons," *The Economist*, June 8, 1968, 37.

published a lengthy article about "Nigeria's phoney talks" penned by Sir Louis Mbanefo, in which the head of the Biafran delegation to Kampala blamed his Federal counterparts for the breakdown of the negotiations.[18] In the British media landscape, the *Spectator* provided for much of the most candid pro-Biafran opinion.[19] But its support of the secessionist cause was indicative of a general trend. Many journalists inferred that, even if Nigeria would still be able to obtain weapons from other sources, these considerations should not prevent Britain from leading the way toward an international arms embargo. Public pressure rose further with the Netherlands' arms embargo to both sides, the French halt to arms for the Federal camp, and Czechoslovakia's ban on arms sales in early June, which even made a reconsideration of the Kremlin's policy line imaginable. Britain increasingly seemed like an impediment to moral progress, rather than a force working toward it.[20]

Parliament was in recess as public pressure began to mount. The Kampala peace talks had broken down on the day before the Whitsun break. Yet when Westminster reconvened on June 11, Labour backbencher Michael Barnes put forward an adjournment motion requesting an emergency discussion in the House of Commons. The Speaker acceded, and a three-hour debate was to be held on the following afternoon.[21] The government was not pleased by this prospect. Neither was Lagos. The Federal Commissioner for Information and Labour Anthony Enahoro – temporarily Nigeria's main representative in London – immediately penned a letter for distribution among MPs, lamenting that Britain might fall prey to the secessionist propaganda machine's outflow of lies.[22] In the opposing camp, the BBA acquired direct access to parliamentary circles through Barnes and the Conservative MP Hugh Fraser, and issued documents outlining the Biafran perspective to MPs. In effect, vital networks between the activist scene, media representatives, and Westminster were established.[23]

[18] Sir Louis Mbanefo, "Nigeria's Phoney Talks," *Spectator*, June 7, 1968, 770–1.

[19] See "Another More Murderous Harvest," *Spectator*, May 31, 1968, 729–730, probably penned by Auberon Waugh.

[20] See for instance: "Britain and the Nigerian War," *Financial Times*, June 4, 1968, 10; "Nigeria, Biafra, and the British," *The Guardian*, 03, 1968, 8 and "Time for Generosity," *The Times*, June 1, 1968, 9; "Dutch Suspend All Arms Deliveries to Nigeria," *Financial Times*, June 7, 1968, 7; "France Bans Arms Shipments to Nigeria," ibid., June 13, 1968, 7. Accounts of the British supply of arms had been much less critical just a few months before. See for example Hugh Hanning, "Lessons from the Arms Race," *Africa Report* 13, No. 2 (1968), 42–7, here esp. 44–5.

[21] *Hansard Commons*, June 11, 1968, columns 40–1, hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1968/jun/11/nigeria-supply-of-arms (accessed January 16, 2013).

[22] Nigeria High Commission, "Chief Enahoro Writes to British M.P.s on Nigerian Civil War," London, June 12, 1968 (Churchill College Archives NBKR 4/41), 3, 5, 4.

[23] Fafowora, *Pressure Groups*, 123, 127–8.

The next day, the attention MPs paid to the conflict was heightened further by the reports in the *Sun* of that morning as well as that in the leading political program on British radio, BBC 4's *The World at One* on which, during lunchtime just before the debate, *Sun* reporter Leapman was interviewed about the looming famine in Biafra.[24] A heated debate followed in the Commons. In the opening statement, Barnes lamented that the government was underestimating "world opinion," and had jettisoned its potential role as a leader of negotiations between the conflict parties.[25] The Labour MP's motion was seconded by Tory MP John Eden, who questioned the morality of the Wilson administration's policy line in a conflict that could lead "to the extermination of a race."[26] When the Conservative MP John Cordle came to the defense of the Labour government, his contribution provoked a serious backlash. Labour backbencher John Lee asserted that most MPs will now no longer be prepared to discuss the matter "in a non-partisan way." Lee considered the religious dimension of the conflict "a continuation of something that has been going on for 150 years – [. . .] the conquest of the non-Muslim peoples in West and Central Africa by the militant Muslim movement." Now this was turning into "genocidal war."[27] Labour left-winger Frank Allaun, explicitly referring to the *Sun* reports, emphasized the ties linking Britain and Biafra. "The fighting in Nigeria may be thousands of miles away," but "so long as we are sending arms we are partly responsible for the bloodshed."[28] MPs like the Tory John Tilney, former Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, called on the government to "take the lead in [. . .] a mission of mercy," demanding the creation of a Commonwealth peacekeeping force.[29]

Both critics of and apologists for Whitehall's position agreed that the ethnic divisions created by tribalism were substantial. Yet the question of how the effects of tribalism should be dealt with was proving contentious. According to Labour MP James Johnson, the "Ibos are not a usual type of African. They have in many ways the attributes of the Jews and the Lebanese."[30] For the Conservative MP Sir Harry Legge-Bourke, adding his voice to the small choir backing the government, tribalism was the problem at the core of the conflict: "sometimes it is not the colour of a man's skin so much as his tribal affiliation that can divide mankind." He, however, argued for strict non-intervention, warning that a challenge to Nigerian sovereignty, was a "very dangerous step" that would make

[24] For instance the Labour MP James Griffiths referred to the program. *Hansard Commons*, June 12, 1968, columns 248–9, hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1968/jun/12/nigeria-supply-of-arms (accessed January 16, 2013).
[25] Ibid., column 245. [26] Ibid., column 247. [27] Ibid., columns 255–7.
[28] Ibid., column 263. [29] Ibid., columns 269–73, quote in column 271.
[30] Ibid., columns 273–4.

"a deep inroad into the keystone of international relations," which is "that in our relations overseas we deal with the de facto and preferably the *de jure* Governments of the different countries."[31] Yet Labour politician, peace activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Philip Noel-Baker questioned "whether the Federation of Nigeria is really sacrosanct?"[32] The Labour backbencher Michael English added that as "the boundaries of States in Africa are the artificial creations of European Powers," it could not be expected that these borders "should necessarily prevail for the rest of history [. . .]."[33] At the end of the debate, Michael Stewart, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, had the chance to react to the allegations, and betrayed some qualms about London's policy line. He conceded that if some of the allegations leveled against the regime Whitehall supported in Lagos turned out to be correct, "we would have to reconsider, and more than reconsider, the action we have so far taken." At the moment, however, he was not convinced that the situation was as dire as Biafran propaganda and the London press would have the world believe.[34]

The media reports of June 12 and the Commons emergency debate set the tone for the public outcry over Biafra in the following months, and served to define the debate's core questions. Was it "a war leading possibly to the extermination of a race," and hence a conflict in which outside intervention was called for?[35] Or was it a result of tribal animosities, characteristic of a postcolonial Africa in which Britain should remain on the sidelines? Was it maybe even merely a "large-scale internal police action and an attempt to restore law and order and harmony"?[36] Furthermore, which side could be trusted? Was it Biafran propaganda that produced untrustworthy accusations? Or did the Wilson government try to hide the immoral base of their support of their sovereign friends in Lagos?

After the MPs in Commons had closed their debate, Biafra continued to linger in the minds of Britons that day. In the evening, ITN broadcast the pictures that Alan Hart shot on-site at the Holy Ghost Father's missionary station.[37] A few days earlier, the grand dame of British liberalism, Lady Violet Bonham Carter, an acute observer of contemporary political developments, had noted in her diary that "Biafra is the ghost – no alas reality – which haunts me at present."[38] On the night of June 12, when they went to bed, many Britons would have felt the same.

[31] Ibid., columns 278–81. [32] Ibid., column 281. [33] Ibid., column 300.
[34] Ibid., column 293. [35] Ibid., column 247. [36] Ibid., column 252.
[37] "Transcript of ITN Film 'ranscript of ITN,''"June 12, 1968 (OXA, COM 3/3/1: Nigeria/Biafra Appeal).
[38] Pottle (ed.), *Daring*, 348.

Discovering "Biafra": Humanitarian Crisis, the Aid Operation, and the Arrival of International Media Representatives

On July 12, one month after the media discovery of the Biafran crisis and the Commons debate, Reverend Nicholas Stacey, Deputy Director of Oxfam, wrote in the *Spectator* that for months the humanitarian organization's efforts to evoke interest in Biafra amongst press and public met no success. This was at least partly because, as the churchman reasoned, "few papers had reporters in Biafra." However, this situation had changed now: The reports in the *Spectator*, the *Sun* and on ITN broke the "barriers of public ignorance and indifference."[39] Whether or not Stacey's portrayal of Oxfam's earlier dealings with the crisis were correct, the humanitarian was right in one regard: at the time he was writing, the Nigerian civil war had become the subject of dramatically increased media interest – and this was widely due to the increased first-hand coverage of the conflict by reporters who journeyed to the crisis area.[40] The increased media attention was further due to Whitehall's hapless diplomatic efforts. During the House of Commons debate, Biafran and Nigerian emissaries met behind the scenes in London, trying to continue peace talks outside the spotlight. However, the two sides could not agree on the terms for a ceasefire, and British initiatives later that month did not produce a diplomatic breakthrough either. Biafran and Nigerian officials looked askance at the British initiative, which was widely covered by the BBC and thus appeared as primarily aimed at projecting a positive image of Whitehall's role.[41] Paradoxically, London never banned the sale of arms to Federal Nigeria,[42] while it increased its humanitarian effort at the same time. By July 1969, it had provided $7.5 million in relief aid – a figure that was not only far outstripped by the American government, which provided about ten times as much, but also by the governments of West Germany, Norway, and the Netherlands, which donated $23, $13, and $10 million respectively.[43] Because of it ambivalent role, London continually faced a barrage of criticism in Parliament, in the media and soon on the streets as well.

The reports in the London press also marked the onset of the conflict's internationalization as a humanitarian crisis, and Whitehall's supply of arms to Federal Nigeria soon also engendered harsh criticism

[39] Nicholas Stacey, "Must Biafra starve?," *Spectator*, July 12, 1968, 44–5, quote on 44.
[40] See Zieser, "Propagandastrategie."
[41] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 174–80.
[42] See, e.,g. "The War in Nigeria," *The Times*, June 13, 1968, 11.
[43] Young, *Labour Governments, Vol. 2*, 206

internationally.[44] Media representatives and activists from across Western Europe and North America soon joined in the campaign. The increased media attention ran partly in parallel with an increasingly serious humanitarian situation on the ground in Biafra. Reports of the death toll of starvation victims peaked, as some claimed, at 10,000 victims per day in around August and September.[45] Such widely publicized assertions amassed considerable weight, even though the predictions partly contradicted each other.[46] Most newspaper readers, however, saw themselves confronted with a catastrophe in which millions could die.[47] In hindsight it can be said that these estimates were probably exaggerated, even though reliable figures are still difficult to come by. However, while Biafran elites – and the troops – still had adequate food supplies, the poorer, more vulnerable parts of the civilian population were seriously hit by starvation.[48]

In reaction to the crisis, three groups of foreigners began to travel to Biafra in quickly increasing numbers: humanitarian aid workers, pro-Biafran activists, and journalists. In early summer 1968, the sole air passage into Biafra was operated by the American gunrunner Henry Wharton. Humanitarian organizations like the ICRC and the church groups had to rely on these services, and chartered or bought space on Wharton's planes. The main route was from Lisbon, via Bissau in Portuguese Guinea to São Tomé, an island about 500 km south of Port Harcourt, and also a part of the Portuguese Empire. From there, planes set off for Biafra.[49] Salazar's *Estado Novo* dictatorship never granted official recognition to the Biafran secessionist republic. But it was one of the few states that supported the Biafrans. As the last colonial empire standing, Lisbon

[44] See e.g. "Schwarze Seelen," *Spiegel*, July 15, 1968, 7–8 and "Britain and Biafra," *The Observer*, December 15, 1968, 9.

[45] Biafran Mission to the United Nations to U Thant, November 11, 1968 (SCRBC: Biafra War Collection (1966–1970), MG 788, Box 2, Folder 9); see also "Land," *The Sun*, June 12, 1968, 1 and "Notes on the Meeting with Father Byrne," July 2, 1968 (OXA, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 1).

[46] See *The Times*, July 11, 1968, 16; Iain Somerville, "Text of Speech at 'Save Biafra' Rally Trafalgar Square 7th July, 1968" (OXA, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 1); Nixon for President Committee, News Release, July 18, 1968 (SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 5); "Leaders Argue, Children Starve," *The Economist*, July 13, 1968, 21–2; L. E. Walton, "Urgent: Biafra Emergency. Letter to Oxfam Headquarters," c. July 15, 1968 (OXA: Nigeria Civil War Box 2210, file 2: Bennett, Nigeria 1968).

[47] See e.g. *The Times*, June 18, 1968, 8 and June 25, 1968, 3.

[48] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 238–52; Thompson, *American Policy*, 51–73; Wirz, *Krieg in Afrika*, 162–4; Young, *Labour Governments, Volume 2*, 193.

[49] Britain-Biafra Association, "Report of Visit to Biafra," April 1968 (RHL, MSS.Afr.S. 2399, Box 1, Britain-Biafra Association); Hunt, *Memoirs*, 272–3; Wiseberg, "Humanitarian Intervention," 67–74.

was already universally opposed by postcolonial African governments, and therefore had little to lose politically in allowing Biafra access to an airport from which international flights into the blockaded state could be organized. The Biafrans installed a pseudo-diplomatic delegation in the Portuguese capital to coordinate the operation on the ground.[50] Lothar Kühl, the Pastor of the German Protestant Parish in Lisbon, assumed a principal role in the coordination of relief flights via the Portuguese capital.[51] Lisbon was turned into the main international hub through which the relief operation and media representatives passed on their way to Biafra. The route's schedule was marked by frequent irregularities and insecurity, however. Journalists and others on their way to Biafra often had to wait for days until they could depart. The pilots and crews had to deal with a number of challenges, ranging from delicate political negotiations, technical failures of the often heavily overloaded machines, and the not-inconsiderable risk of being shot down by Nigerian forces. On Wharton's planes, missionaries, politicians, and journalists traveled shoulder to shoulder. All the space available for cargo was frequently stuffed with food and medicine alongside weapons and ammunition.[52]

The fact that they had to use the services of a gunrunner to bring aid to the victims in Biafra confronted the humanitarian organizations with a moral dilemma. As news about the impending famine became more threatening, the JCA and the ICRC began to buy their own airplanes to facilitate the transport of relief, freeing them from reliance on Wharton. In July, the JCA members Caritas Internationalis and Diakonisches Werk bought the first church-owned planes, a breakthrough for the establishment of the ecumenical airlift. The Scandinavian Church relief organization Nordchurchaid quickly followed suit. By August 1968, enough JCA member organizations had purchased aircraft that the relief operation could support itself, without assistance from the gunrunners. Interested in keeping the humanitarian crisis in the international news to keep up the flow of donations, the JCA also permitted some journalists on their planes.[53]

[50] Ministère des Affaires Étrangères Sous-Direction d'Afrique, Note de Dossier, August 21, 1969 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–72, No. 20); Buhler, *Tuez-Les Tous!*, ch. 1.

[51] See, e.g., Helmut Reuschle, "Memorandum," April 11, 1968 (WCCAG, 42.3.007 WCC General Secretariat, Nigeria/Biafra, 3); various files in OXA DIR/2/3/2/35: Nigeria/Biafra and EZA 2/2158, EZA 2/2159 and EZA 634/466.

[52] See Buhler, *Tuez-Les Tous!*, ch. 1. See also George P. Hunt, "Ex-Paparazzo in Biafra," *Life*, July 12, 1968, 3.

[53] Wiseberg, "Christian Churches," 318–9 and Wiseberg, "Humanitarian Intervention," 69–73.

The second major airlift was operated by the ICRC, which began to acquire planes in July 1968. The ICRC flights started on an island off the West African coast called Fernando Pó, a former Spanish colony that had become part of newly independent Equatorial Guinea in October 1968. The ICRC had strict regulations with regards to non-humanitarian personnel on relief planes, which meant that very few journalists, politicians, or activists were transported into Biafra on this route.[54] This contrasted with the policies of the airlift the French Red Cross and, beginning in February 1969, the Irish organization Africa Concern organized from Libreville. Where ICRC sought to maintain neutrality, this French–Irish joint venture was colored by pro-Biafran sentiment, despite the French section's organizational dependence on the ICRC, and allowed journalists on their planes out of the Gabonese capital to Biafra. The support of the French government – and the fact that French arms were flown in on the same route, perhaps even on the same planes – blurred the boundaries between humanitarian aid and political or military support.[55] Soon, the small landing strip in the Biafran town of Uli was transformed into a well-oiled machine. Bruno Gans, head of Oxfam's field team in Biafra, marveled at the sight of the probably "busiest airport in Africa, outside Johannesburg," where airplanes "land every few minutes, hardly taxi to a stop before a crowd of loaders and trucks come up, and unload the plane in a matter of minutes."[56]

With the humanitarian airlift providing the infrastructure, media representatives began to flock into the enclave in the summer months of 1968.[57] Biafra was covered by television, radio, and the press; teams sent by TV and radio stations, newspapers, magazines, press or photo agencies as well as freelancers went into the warzone. The stream of media representatives into Biafra was characteristic of a new breed of journalists. At the time, television cameras were still very large apparatuses transported in chests, which restricted the reporters' mobility and limited the scenes that could be shot. Photojournalists, in contrast, used small 35 mm cameras. Recent technological advances had allowed integrated light meters and automatic exposure systems in easily portable devices. Partly enabled by these technologies, a new style of photojournalism had developed in the 1960s, with photojournalists

[54] Hentsch, *Face au Blocus*; Moorehead, *Dunant's Dream*, 614–27.
[55] Wiseberg, "Humanitarian Intervention," 71–4.
[56] Bruno Gans, Letter to Carter, November 12, 1968 (OXA: Nigeria Civil War Box 2214: Gans file), quote on 1.
[57] See "Journalisten, Politiker, Rotkreuzhelfer, Kirchenmänner, Wissenschaftler, die Biafra besuchten," c. December 1968 (GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–71).

turning their attention to conflicts in non-Western regions. Epitomized by the coverage of the Vietnam War, this new style of front-line reporting did not come without a price: more than 130 photographers were killed on the battlefields of America's war in Southeast Asia.[58]

Some of their colleagues in Biafra shared their fate. One of the first Western photographers in the West African warzone, Marc Auerbach, sent there in 1967 by Gamma, a recently founded Parisian photo agency that promoted this new style of photojournalism in France, was killed in Calabar in October 1967. Half a year later, Gamma sent one of their best-known photographers to Nigeria, in part to retrieve the remains of his dead colleague. Gilles Caron, who had previously covered Vietnam and the Six Day War, returned to Biafra two more times before the end of the calendar year, and would die on mission in Cambodia two years later.[59] The flagship magazines of American photojournalism, *Time* and *Life*, sent a team to Biafra in June 1968, which comprised photographers who had been crucially involved in the creation of a new imagery of the Third World: the London-based Italian Romano Cagnoni, the first western non-communist photographer allowed into North Vietnam where he portrayed Ho Chi Minh, and Priya Ramrakha, a Kenyan photographer of Indian descent, one of the first Africans to be contracted by *Life* and *Time* magazines.[60] Ramrakha returned several times, and was fatally wounded in early October 1968. Together with a team of international print and TV journalists he interviewed a Federal Nigerian major in the field, and ended up in a Biafran ambush.[61] The list of journalists and photographers who worked in Biafra could be extended almost endlessly. They included "old African hands" like the *Observer* correspondent Colin Legum,[62] as well as newcomers to the continent like Winston S. Churchill, Jr., the grandson of the Tory wartime Prime Minister, who was sent to Biafra in spring 1969 by the *Times*.[63] Perhaps the most

[58] Benthall, *Disasters*, 230; Kennedy, "Compassionate Vision." On advances in camera technology see also Rosenblum, *World History*, 630–5.

[59] *Mort du Biafra*; Ritchin, "Zeitzeugen," 603; Cookman, "Caron's Coverage"; Ugochukwu, *Biafra*, ch. 1.

[60] George P. Hunt, "Ex-Paparazzo in Biafra," *Life*, July 12, 1968, 3; Michael Mok, "Biafra: A War of Extinction and Starvation," ibid., 20–9.

[61] "'Why Can't the World Understand?,'" *Life*, October 11, 1968, 46–9; James R. Shepley, "A Letter from the Publisher," *Time*, October 11, 1968, 9; See also Ramrakha's pictures in "An African Tragedy," *Transition* 36 (1968), 26–44, and the excellent documentary film: Vidyarthi, dir., and Bell, ed., "African Lens."

[62] Akinyemi, "British Press," here 424. See Colin Legum, "When Two Rights Conflict," *The Observer*, March 16, 1969, 8; Colin Legum, Personal Letter to Michael Stewart, October 17, 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/446).

[63] Winston S. Churchill, "Civilians Die in Bombing Raid on Clinic," *The Times*, February 21, 1969, 1, 7; Churchill, "Nigerian Planes Bomb Biafra Market and Clinic," *The Times*, February 26, 1969, 6; Churchill, "Nigerians kill 120 in air raid on Biafra village,"

prestigious photographer to work in Biafra was Don McCullin. The *Sunday Times Magazine* foreign correspondent was part of a new caste of photographers who had begun to revive and reinvent the tradition of critical social photography of the interwar period.[64] Their works were aimed at producing shocks among their readers by confronting them with what John Berger called "photographs of agony."[65]

Because of new camera technologies, accelerated travel and communication, many contemporaries felt conflicts in the "Third World" moving increasingly closer, even in an age before the widespread use of satellites.[66] With the military forces of the West's major power entrenched in the battlefields of Southeast Asia, the Vietnam War had become the first testing ground for this new style of photojournalism.[67] Whether or not the journalists intended to influence public opinion, the international media coverage provided a fertile breeding ground for the growth of the protest movement against the American war in Vietnam.[68] However, when the wave of media attention washed increasing numbers of journalists into Biafra, what they found was unlike any conflicts they had previously covered. Whether the journalists and photographers were motivated by humanitarian concerns to work in Biafra is hard to say. What is clear, however, is that after their arrival, these journalists found themselves deeply affected by the human suffering, of humanitarian disaster and postcolonial catastrophe they saw around them. And this was the story that they presented to the world.[69]

Creating "Biafra": Turning the Nigerian Civil War into a Humanitarian Media Event

In mid-July 1968, Jean Finois of the French weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur* opined that Nigeria and Biafra fought a forgotten war, "too far away and too chaotic to interest publics in Europe."[70] Yet the steady

The Times, February 27, 1969, 8. For a scathing review of his work see for instance Akinyemi, "British Press."

64 Delany, *Bill Brandt*, 230; Ritchin, "Zeitzeugen"; Rosenblum, *World History*, 485.

65 Berger, *About Looking*, 41–4. See also Sontag, *Regarding*, 37.

66 See for instance Garavini, "Colonies Strike Back." On the first advances in satellite communication systems in the 1960s see also Flichy, *Tele*, 241–2.

67 On photojournalism during the Vietnam War see esp. Kennedy, "Framing Compassion" and Kennedy, "Compassionate Vision."

68 Pach Jr., "Tet on TV." Despite the media's critique of US policies, New Leftist protesters were also frequently unfavorably sketched in mainstream media in particular. Gitlin, *Whole World*; Small, *Covering Dissent*.

69 See e.g. McCullin, *Unreasonable Behaviour*, ch. 18.

70 Jean Finois, "Horreurs et tractations," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, July 15, 1968, 19. This statement echoed a headline of *Paris-Match* two months before: "Biafra: La Guerre Ignorée," *Paris-Match*, May 4, 1968, 62–7.

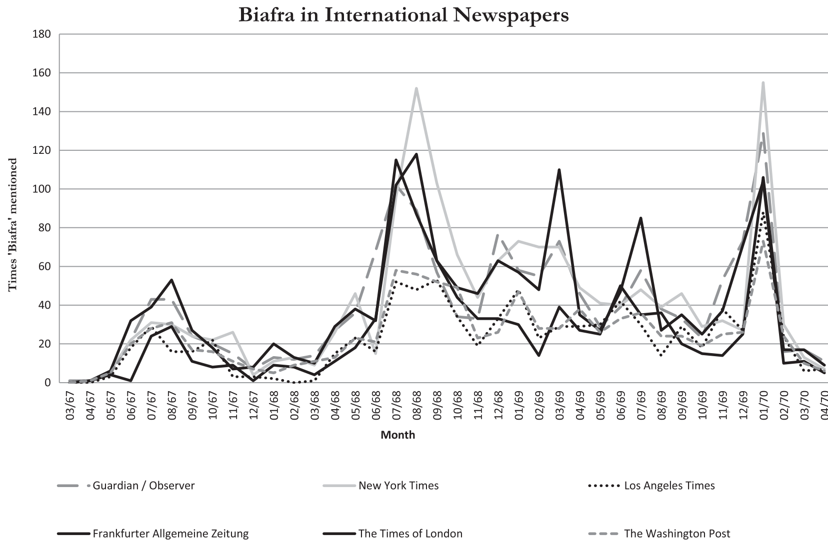


Figure 4.3 Mentions of "Biafra" in international newspapers.

flow of images and text reports from Biafra was beginning to change that. Where they had previously relegated coverage of Biafra to short articles in the international politics sections of their papers, editors had begun moving Biafra reports to the first pages, elevating the conflict to headline status.[71] The quantity of the coverage also increased markedly. In the *New York Times*, for instance, "Biafra" was mentioned less than 19 times on average per month in the first year of fighting, but 152 times in August 1968. The analysis of virtually all Western European or Northern American newspapers yields similar results: the mentions of "Biafra" multiplied within a few months from spring to summer 1968 (Figure 4.3).

Yet it was not just the number of references that mattered. It was their form. The flood of images from the crisis area in the international news produced perhaps the most tangible difference. Beginning in June 1968, newspapers and illustrated magazines began publishing lengthy editorials and long feature stories or articles accompanied by photographs. For their cover on July 12, *Life* used an image of Biafran children shot by David Robison of the Transworld Features photo agency in a refugee

[71] Lavoinne, "Médecins en guerre"; Thompson, *American Policy*, 63; Zieser, "Propagandastrategie."

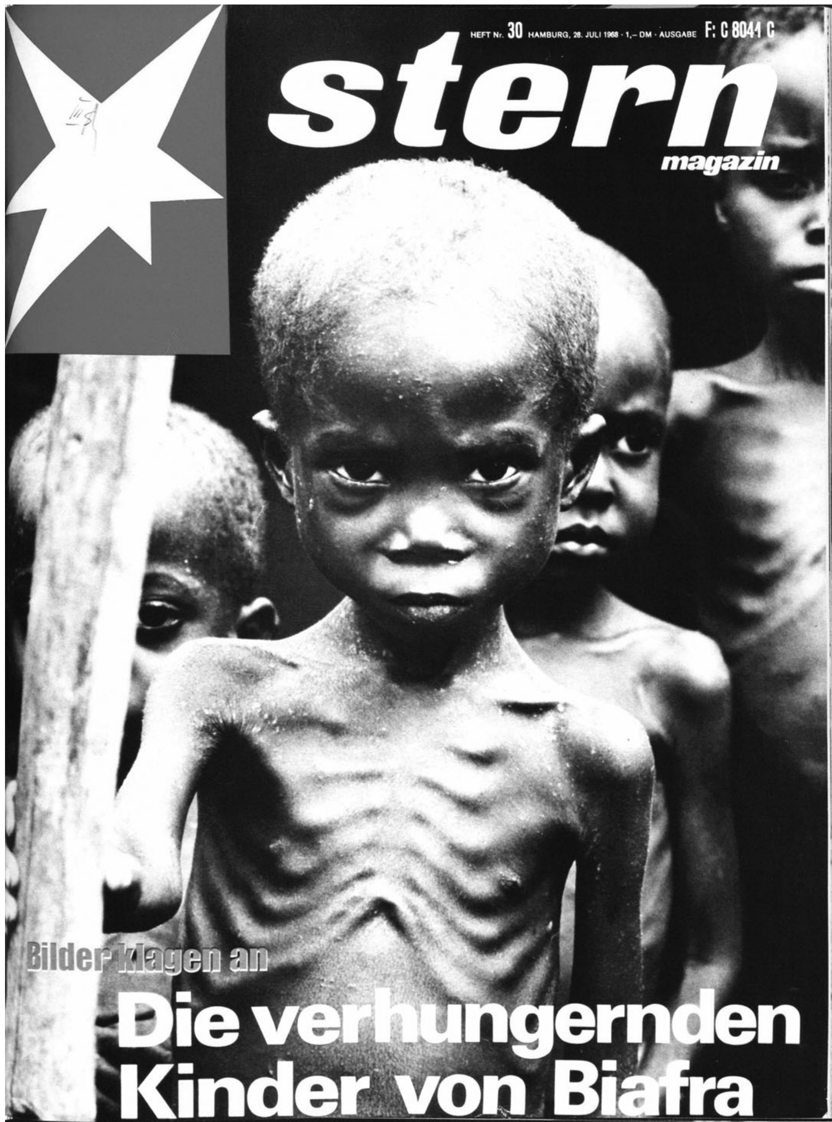


Figure 4.4 *Stern*, July 28, 1968, cover page; photographer: Hubert Le Campion. Reproduced by permission of Picture Press.

station.[72] In the following weeks, similar pictures appeared on the covers of a succession of major international pictorial magazines, including *Paris Match*, the Italian magazine *Epoca* (twice), and *Stern* in Germany (Figure 4.4).[73] Somewhat delayed, on October 7, the French news magazine *L'Express* put the image of a Biafran baby on its front page headlining "Biafra: La fin" (Figure 4.5).[74] The title is a play on words with the French word for hunger, "faim," which is pronounced the same as "fin," the word for "end."

The pictures taken by a number of the photographers who had visited Biafra were published in a number of widely circulated international magazines and newspapers, easily crossed national boundaries, defining a transnational imagery of the crisis.[75] Photojournalists like Gilles Caron[76] or those sent by *Time* and *Life*, played key roles in the creation of Biafra's visual landscape, considering the distribution of their photographs through the high circulation of these magazines and their frequent inclusion in other publications.[77] Press photographs were also included in activist publications.[78] McCullin's photographs, for instance, appeared both during the conflict and after: in various magazines and newspapers, in ads used by humanitarian organizations, and also in picture and coffee table books in the following decades.[79]

Television also began to focus attention on the war beginning in mid-June. News programs and longer features that focused on the conflict's humanitarian dimension were aired regularly.[80] Television became a

[72] *Life*, July 12, 1968.

[73] *Paris Match*, July 20, 1968; *Stern*, July 28, 1968; *Epoca*, July 21, 1968 and September 15, 1968.

[74] *L'Express*, October 7, 1968, front page.

[75] The first longer feature story that appeared in in *Paris Match* in early May 1968 did not yet include images of the victims of starvation. "Biafra: La Guerre Ignorée," *Paris Match*, May 4, 1968, 62–7.

[76] Cookman, "Caron's Coverage," 238, 240.

[77] David Robison (Transworld Photos) photo which *Life* used for its July 12 cover was for instance also published in *Paris Match*. Raymond Cartier, "Cette guerre qui coutera au moins un million de morts . . . ," *Paris-Match*, July 20, 1968, 34. Romano Cagnoni's photographs also circulated widely. See e.g. *Life*, June 12, 1968, 20–1; *Paris Match*, July 20, 1968, 32–3, *Spiegel*, August 19, 1968 cover.

[78] See for instance Waugh and Cronje, *Biafra*, which included photographs by Cagnoni and McCullin, among others.

[79] *Sunday Times*, Pictorial Supplement June 1, 1969; "Labour's War," *Peace News*, September 26, 1969, 1; "About 100 Europeans And Americans in Biafra," *New York Times*, January 13, 1970, 15; Lawrence Fellows, "Biafrans Capitulate to Nigeria, Ending 30-Month-Long Civil War, U.S. Increases Grant for Relief," *New York Times* January 13, 1970, 1, 14; Howe (ed.), *Shooting under Fire*; McCullin, *Sleeping*; McCullin, *Unreasonable*, 114–33.

[80] See Ajibola, *Foreign Policy*, 113–23.

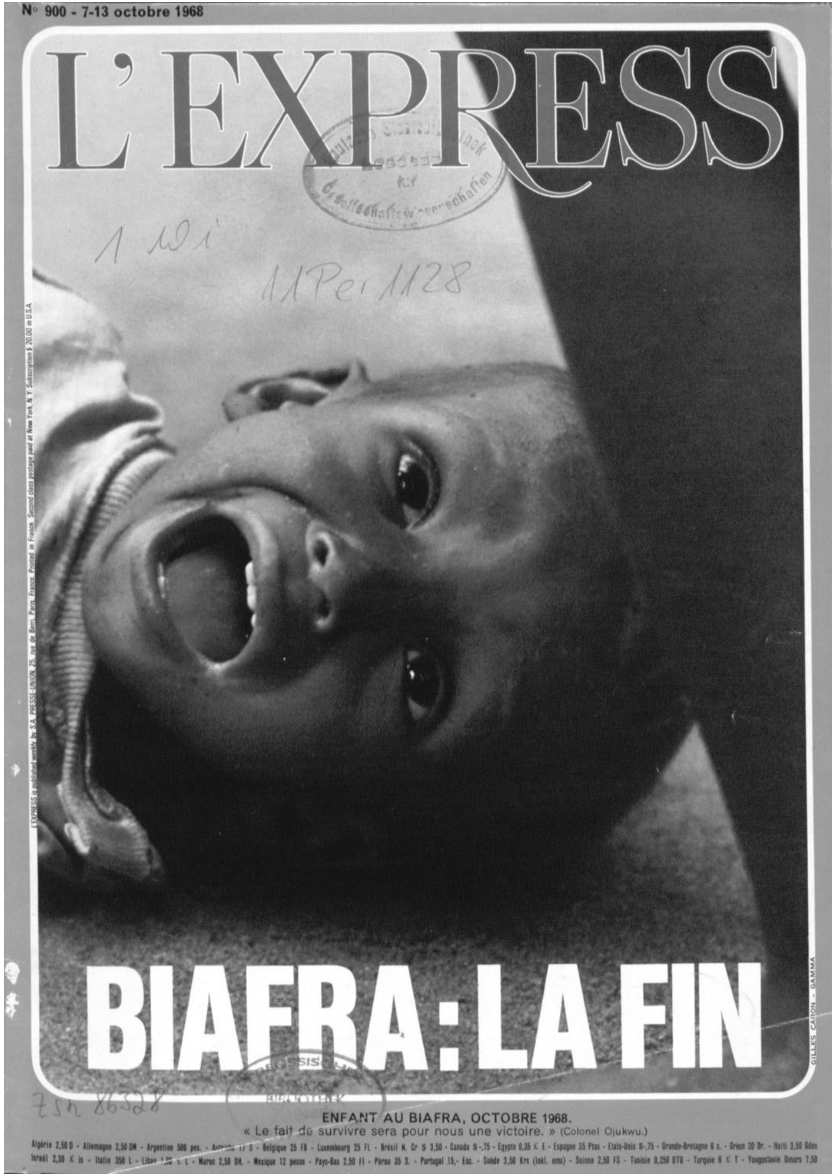


Figure 4.5 *L'Express*, October 7, 1968, cover.

prime channel through which reports about the crisis reached Western audiences. In 1968, TV images reached an increasing number of households, especially in the United States, but across Western Europe as well.[81] The networks of foreign correspondents utilized by TV channels had expanded substantially in the preceding years. As an effect, faraway conflicts moved into the focus of television coverage.[82] Audiences were confronted with images of Biafra through different media: black-and-white as well as full-color images of suffering Biafrans in the press and on television.[83] Seeing images of starving children near to death for the first time in full motion – sometimes in full color – and accompanied with audio, the sound of children's crying, further enhanced the impact.[84] Radio reports offered still another medium through which international publics were able to experience the sounds of suffering Biafra.[85]

In spite of the diffusion of television images to an increasing number of households, TV had not yet killed the photojournalist star. Compared to television teams, the more mobile photojournalists were better suited to the terrain of "Third World" conflicts. They also still had another vital advantage: time. Transmitting live television images was already technically possible, but TV stations were reluctant to pay the still substantial costs involved in covering faraway conflicts live. Sending photographs and written reports to the editors at home via telex and phone was quicker than the transport and production of TV images. The latter depended on film reel tins, which had to be flown home for the production process, chemical developing and cutting.[86] The rise of the TV age impacted on photojournalism, but it did not cause its end. Instead, television and photojournalism entered a "relationship of mutual influence"; in their interplay, these media defined a visual landscape of faraway crisis areas like Vietnam or Biafra.[87] Partly as a response to the challenge of television, photojournalists increasingly focused on capturing decisive moments or symbolically laden compositions, creating the iconic images of Third World wars, images that defined both contemporary perception and their afterlife in cultural memory.[88]

[81] Spigel, *Make Room*; Baar, "Abendunterhaltung," here 235.
[82] Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 267; Ludes et al., eds., *Geschichte, vol. 3*, 291–303.
[83] Colour TV was beginning to gain ground at the time. Baughman, *Republic*, chs. 5 and 6.
[84] See Jacques Siclier, "A la télévision: Un peuple en train de mourir de faim," *Le Monde*, August 15, 1968, 4.
[85] See Ugochukwu, *Biafra*, ch. 2.
[86] Benthall, *Disasters*, 102; Delany, *Brandt*, 230.
[87] Kennedy, "Compassionate Vision," 180.
[88] Hariman and Lucaites, *No Caption*, ch. 6.

Photojournalism may have hit its zenith at the time of the Nigerian Civil War. The position of general interest magazines like *Life* was waning,[89] but they still boasted enormous circulation; *Life* magazine reached its peak circulation of 8.5 million in 1969.[90] Outside the US pictorial weeklies, most of them modeled on *Life*, had also flourished after World War II. In 1960s France, between 1.5 and 2 million copies were printed of *Paris Match*, which reached an alleged readership of 10 million.[91] In Germany, the market leader was *Stern*, which was at the peak of its circulation in 1968 when more than 1.7 million copies were printed. *Quick*, the more conservative rival to liberal *Stern* also had a circulation above 1.5 million. The actual readership of both was probably much higher; according to a survey in 1970, *Stern* reached one-third of German citizens.[92] The flagship of British photojournalism, the *Picture Post*, had closed down in 1957. But the void it had left was filled by the pictorial supplements that the big Sunday papers had begun to publish, and which, like the *Daily Telegraph Magazine*, also ran cover stories about Biafra.[93] News magazines like *Der Spiegel* or *L'Express*, also main venues for photojournalism, flourished throughout the decade. *Time* passed the 4 million reader mark during the Biafran war.[94] Tabloids and other dailies which made heavy use of images, such as *France Soir*, which enjoyed the highest circulation of all Paris-based papers at the time with just below one million copies, also covered the war in long feature stories.[95] The prime popular press example is German *Bild*, which heavily covered the conflict. With a circulation of about 4 million, it was the most widely circulated newspaper in Europe at the time.[96]

By summer 1968, book accounts of the conflict also began to be published in Europe and North America. Numerous heavily illustrated books were written and edited by authors with staunch pro-Biafran

89 See the rather skeptical assessment of Baughman, *Republic*, here esp. chs. 5 and 6.

90 This was admittedly also due to the closing down of its main rival, the *Saturday Evening Post*. Doss, "Looking,oss, "L16–17; Sumner, *Magazine Century*, 128–9.

91 Chalaby, *de Gaulle Presidency*, 20; Hewitt, "Birth of the Glossy Magazines," 111–28.

92 Glasenapp, "Titelschwund," 129–43, figures on 132.

93 Delany, *Brandt*, 230; Hobson, *Pearl of Days*, 339; "Legacy of a War: Special Report from Biafra," *The Daily Telegraph Magazine*, August 23, 1968.

94 Baughman, *Republic of Mass Culture*, 129. *Spiegel's* circulation was also rising to almost 900,000 copies of its issues in 1968. Hodenberg, *Konsens und Krise*, 362.

95 Chalaby, *de Gaulle Presidency*, 10, 12.

96 See, e.g., "Kinder auf der Flucht vor dem Krieg" and "Der Tod umarmt Biafra," *Bild*, September 1, 1968. See Kruip, *"Welt"-"Bild,"* for a historical study of the Springer group.

leanings, including a number of journalists – or journalists-cum-activists – who visited Biafra.[97] In contrast to accounts in the mainstream press, book accounts sometimes refrained from using photographs, presenting themselves as serious journalistic accounts avoiding sensationalism. One example was Frederick Forsyth's heavily partisan *Biafra Story*. Published by Penguin in June 1969, the first edition of 30,000 copies sold out in weeks.[98] Another example for such an account by an author with equally strong pro-Biafran leanings was François Debré's *Biafra an II*. Published in mid-1968, Debré's essay was one of the first book-length accounts of the conflict and was awarded the 1968 Prix de la critique indépendante.[99] Biafran authors also produced books on the conflict, notably the two-volume compilation of speeches and essays by the head of state Ojukwu.[100]

Photojournalistic competitions and exhibitions provided another distribution channel for photographs from Biafra. Some journalists successfully partook in photograph competitions after visiting Biafra. This enhanced the distribution of the images, and also added further artistic or journalistic value to them. They, for example, featured highly on the prize lists of the World Press Photo Awards in 1968.[101] For his articles on Biafra in *France Soir* Yves-Guy Bergès received the prestigious Prix Albert Londres, named after an investigative journalist of the interwar period who became a staunch critic of the colonial system of forced labor.[102] Activists and journalists also organized photography exhibitions. Under the auspices of the Comité d'action pour le

[97] See e.g. Buhler, *Tuez-Les Tous*; Bühler, *Biafra* Parise, *Biafra*; Mok, *Biafra Journal*; Sullivan, *Breadless Biafra*; Sosnowsky, ed., *Biafra*; Waugh and Cronje, *Biafra*; Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Biafra*; Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben?*.

[98] An extended second edition was published in 1977. Forsyth, *Biafra Story* and Forsyth, *Making*; Harrison and Palmer, *News out of Africa*, ch. 2.

[99] Debré, *Biafra, an II*.

[100] Ojukwu, *Biafra, Volume I*; idem, *Biafra, Volume II*, published with Harper & Row in New York in 1969. See also Nwankwo and Ifejika, *Making*.

[101] A picture of a Biafran Baby taken by the British war photographer Terence Spencer came second in the main competition, and a series by the Dutch photographer Gérard Klijn, who worked for Associated Press and the US photo agency Pictorial Parade, won the runners-up slot in the "photo stories" category. www.archive.worldpressphoto.org/search/layout/result/indeling/detailwpp/form/wpp/start/2/q/ishoofdafbeelding/true/trefwoord/year/1968 (accessed February 12, 2013). www.archive.worldpressphoto.org/search/layout/result/indeling/detailwpp/form/wpp/start/1/q/ishoofdafbeelding/true/trefwoord/year/1968/trefwoord/category/Photo%20Stories?id=wpp%3Acol1%3Adat4253 (accessed February 27, 2013). Klijn's photographs were for instance published in Jean-Claude Sauer and Jean-François Chauvel, "Biafra: guerre sans merci," *Paris-Match*, September 7, 1968, 54–9.

[102] Bergès, "J'ai vu." On Albert Londres see Daughton, "Imperial Curtain," 503–28.

Biafra, the journalist-cum-activist Alexandre Sosnowsky showed parts of his works from Biafra together with photographs of Pierre Gaveau and Yves-Guy Bergès in the Théâtre de la Ville.[103] In July 1969, Romano Cagnoni's pictures were displayed at Trafalgar Square. Organized by Medical Aid for Biafra, a group that was sponsored by the *Spectator*, the exhibition was opened by Lord Goodman, chairman of the British Arts Council.[104]

In their interplay, these visual, audiovisual, and textual representations of civilian suffering turned the Nigerian Civil War into an international media event. Through different media, the images of starving Biafran children entered the everyday lives of people across the West. They were confronted with these images at home: at the breakfast table, when they read their newspaper in the morning, and in the living room, when they watched the TV news in the evening. Leaving the house did not enable them to get away from these images: photographs of starving children began to form part of the everyday cityscape, on posters that humanitarian organizations hung up on advertising pillars and walls,[105] on the magazine covers presented on bookstalls, and on leaflets and pamphlets that activists distributed to passers-by.[106] Similar images were also used on postage stamps for collectors,[107] on letterheads,[108] and in ad campaigns run in various newspapers.[109] Through these images, starving Biafra was almost omnipresent.

[103] Hervé Bromberger, "Images d'un genocide," *Biafra: Bulletin du comité d'action pour le Biafra* (April 1969), No. 1, 9–10.

[104] "Medical Aid for Biafra," *The Observer*, July 6, 1969, 2.

[105] Susan Garth Biafran Babies Appeal, "This Boy Died Only an Hour after the Picture Was Taken... Don't Let More Die," c. 1968 (SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 5); Unicef, "Join our Food for Nigeria/Biafra Drive," c. 1969 (SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 4).

[106] See e.g. A Non-Violent Action Group for Biafra, "Biafra: Blood on Britain's Hands," c. 1968 (Churchill College Archives, NBKR 4/42) or "Protest Genocide: If This Is Not Genocide, What Is?" c. August/September 1968 (SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 10).

[107] Lorelies Olslager, "Postmark, Biafra," *The Daily Mirror*, July 12, 1968 and H. Leslie Kirkley, Letter to Duncan Kirkpatrick, July 12, 1968 (OXA, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 1).

[108] See various letters sent by the Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968c70, Collection: DG 168, Box 1.

[109] See for instance the ads of Oxfam in *The Times* on June 15, 1968, 17; June 18, 1968, 8; June 25, 1968, 3; July 6, 1968, features; July 11, 1968, 16; July 19, 1968, 5; July 20, 1968, 20; July 27, 1968, 17 and in the *Guardian*, July 12, 1968, front page. See also Joint Biafra Famine Appeal, "You Can Help Give the Greatest Gift of All This Christmas: Life," *Irish Times*, December 10, 1969, 3 (SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 3).

Today, children – and indeed African children in particular – have become *the* major icons of humanitarian appeals, and the use of children as innocent victims has a long history in humanitarian work.[110] However, when the Biafran crisis hit the press and TV in the West, these images were new to most observers,[111] and for many, they were shocking. Partly because of these sentiments, "Biafra" did not remain a media event alone; the quickly emerging pro-Biafran advocacy network turned it into a humanitarian protest event staged on the streets of towns and cities across Western Europe and North America, and on the floors, foyers, and courtyards of parliamentary buildings, the headquarters of international organizations, and government offices.

The Emergence of Western Biafra Activisms

The "continual portrayal of death and misery on TV, as in the Vietnam war reports," incited some contemporaries to lament the effects of a "compassion fatigue – a numbing of the ability to feel and respond to human need because of the constant exposure to such need via TV and radio [. . .]." Yet this time, it was different: "Biafra somehow was getting through to people."[112] Within a few weeks, Biafra became an object of global concern. In mid-September 1968, *L'Express* published an opinion poll that had asked which "peuple" aroused "le plus d'émotion" among the respondents. At 42 percent, the Biafrans ranked first, relegating the Czechoslovaks and the Vietnamese to the second and third places.[113] Although it is difficult to ascertain the true emotion behind the poll numbers,[114] it does suggest that the French public understood Biafra deserved their concern. And many felt compelled to back up their concern with their wallets; beginning in the summer of 1968, monetary donations increasingly flowed to humanitarian organizations. Available figures vary. An estimate made in June 1970 put total worldwide donations to the relief operation during the conflict at $170 million. However, this figure is probably too low, as, DM 45.8 million were donated to the

[110] See e.g. Fehrenbach, "Children"; Koven, *Slumming*.

[111] Photographs of colonial famines, for instance, had not reached mass audiences. Vernon, *Hunger*; Twomey, "Framing Atrocity."

[112] Hilton, *Highly Irregular*, 12–13. "Compassion fatigue" is usually described as a later phenomenon. See Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue*.

[113] "Sondage," *L'Express*, September 16, 1968, 5.

[114] On emotions in history see Reddy, *Navigation*; Plamper, "History of Emotions"; Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions"; "AHR Conversation: The Historical Study of Emotions."

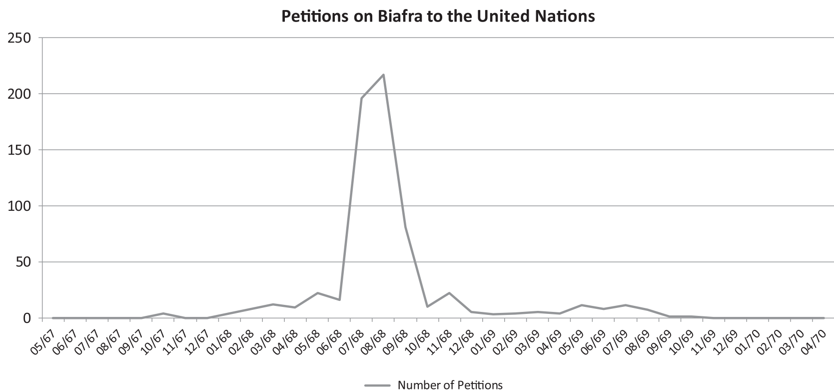


Figure 4.6 Petitions on Biafra in the UN Archives. UNOG Archives, Commission on Human Rights, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A–Part H.

relief effort from Germany alone in 1968.[115] Groups and individuals from across Western Europe and North America began to send letters and petitions, which soon flooded the desks of newspaper editors, governmental officials, and UN representatives.[116] The petitions kept on file in the archives of the UN Human Rights Commission can be interpreted as indicators of the cycles of popular international concern. Although they cannot indicate the true breadth of popular support – it is unclear which and how many petitions the United Nations kept – it is suggestive that, parallel to the media coverage, petitions retained by the United Nations multiplied also (Figure 4.6).[117]

Calls on the British and other governments to abandon the attitude not to "interfere in politics, in domestic matters of nation states, [or] infringe their sovereignty" became ubiquitous. Few wanted to contend themselves "with totally inadequate gestures [. . .] whilst we wait and

[115] Davis, "Audits of International Relief," 503; Engel and Schleicher, *Staaten*, 48, fn. 62.

[116] See for instance Aktionskomitee Biafra, "Resolution an die Bundesregierung," July 15, 1968 (PA AA B 34/747); Aktionskomitee Biafra Münster und Bonn, "An die Mitglieder des Deutschen Bundestages," September 26, 1968 (ACDP 01–158 Nachlass Fritz Burgbacher, 025/3); Letter to Rainer Barzel, July 17, 1968 (ACDP 08–006 AKV, 013/2); Letter to CDU-Fraktion des Deutschen Bundestags, June 14, 1968 (ibid.) and various letters in NARA, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27–9 Biafra – Nigeria, Box 1881. The German weekly *Die Zeit* reported in October 1968 that 19,119 letters had arrived in their offices after their reportage on the conflict in August. D. Z., "Briefe mit dem Kennwort Biafra," *Die Zeit*, October 11, 1968, 5.

[117] UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Parts A-G.

watch this ghostly tragedy being enacted on our TV screens," in the words of Oxfam's General Secretary H. Leslie Kirkley.[118] The British NGO was the first non-religious humanitarian organization to launch a massive public campaign. Despite leading Oxfam personnel's assertions to the contrary,[119] archival sources indicate that Oxfam increased its efforts on Biafra only after the media discovered the famine.[120] When Oxfam's Africa Field Committee met on May 30, 1968, Nigeria was not on the list of their priority countries in West Africa, and the committee had even discussed a drawdown of its commitment in Nigeria, with some members suggesting a reorientation of the organization's geographical priorities in West Africa toward former French colonies.[121] By June 12, the group was alerted to the conflict by reports about the humanitarian crisis in British media and by information received from Catholic missionaries and aid workers, especially telegrams sent by the Holy Ghost Father Anthony Byrne, one of the chief organizers of the Caritas Internationalis airlift.[122] Oxfam reacted and decisively devoted its resources to the crisis, initiating a major campaign and relief effort.[123] Oxfam's PR staff used different media and political channels to advance the campaign. Ads designed for their "Biafra Emergency Appeal" were placed in the national press on a regular basis.[124] The organization issued

[118] H. Leslie Kirkley, Letter to the Editor of the Times, August 4, 1968 (OXA, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 2), 2.

[119] Nicholas Stacey, "Must Biafra starve?," *Spectator*, July 12, 1968, 44–5, quote on 44.

[120] See e.g., OXFAM Africa Committee, Minutes of a Meeting of the Africa Committee, 28th September, 1967 (ibid.); J. W. Jackson, "Relief & Rehabilitation in Nigeria," November 22, 1967 (ibid.); OXFAM Africa Committee, Field Secretaries' Report to a Meeting of the Africa Committee, March 27, 1968 (ibid.).

[121] Africa Field Committee, "Geographical Priorities in West Africa," May 30, 1968 (OXA, Africa Field Committee, Oct. 1966–Nov. 1969).

[122] Ken A. Bennett, Letter to Ch. Ammann, Assistant Director of the ICRC, June 12, 1968 (OXA, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 1); "Notes on the Meeting with Father Byrne," July 2, 1968 (ibid.); Fintan Kilbride, "Statement by the Rev. Fintan Kilbride, a Holy Ghost Missionary, stationed in Port Harcourt, Biafra," July 1968 (NARA RG 200, ARC 1965–1979, Box 70, DR-900.02: AID Nigerian Conflict 1968); Samuel Krakow, "For the Record: Nigeria," July 11, 1968 (ibid.); OXFAM Africa Committee, Minutes of a Meeting of the Africa Committee, July 24, 1968 (OXA: Africa Field Committee, Oct. 1966–Nov 1969), 4–5.

[123] H. Leslie Kirkley, Letter to "The Honorary Officers," August 9, 1968 (OXA, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 2); H. Leslie Kirkley, Letter "Relief Team for Nigeria/Biafra" to Nicolas Stacey, Ken Bennett and Patrick Kemmis, August 8, 1968 (ibid.); Field Secretaries, OXFAM Africa Committee Meeting, March 26, 1969, Field Secretaries' Report (OXA: Africa Field Committee, Oct. 1966–Nov 1969).

[124] See the ads in *The Times* on June 15, 1968, 17; June 18, 1968, 8; June 25, 1968, 3; July 6, 1968, features; July 11, 1968, 16; July 19, 1968, 5; July 20, 1968, 20; July 27, 1968, 17 and in the *Guardian*, July 12, 1968, front page.

pamphlets, wrote to newspaper editors and supplied journalists with information about the situation on the ground, partook in protest rallies and lobbied the government directly and indirectly, with direct appeals to Harold Wilson and his cabinet, or by sending delegations to governmental officials.[125]

Due to these efforts, Oxfam was increasingly associated with Biafra. In governmental circles in London and Lagos, Oxfam had acquired the reputation of a pro-Biafran lobbyist group. In early July 1968, Harold Wilson's Labour administration sent a team to Nigeria in order to improve the aid operation that included representatives from the Red Cross and Save the Children, but not from Oxfam.[126] In a letter to Kirkley, Oxfam staffer Ken Bennett encouraged his colleagues to temper their rhetoric, warning them against using phrases such as "beating the blockade." "I cannot stress strongly enough that as far as our relations with Nigeria are concerned, and if we are to have any hope at all of preventing our lines of communication from being completely severed, this sort of statement is not just dynamite; it is the hydrogen bomb." He attests that it "is easy enough to say or write [. . .] that 'Oxfam is not concerned with the rights and wrongs of this conflict'. It is quite another thing to convince the Nigerians and Biafrans in the light of what we are doing that this is the case."[127] A neutral view of the conflict was hard to keep up. As Bennett explained in another letter to a co-worker "it is almost impossible to find people who are not deeply committed either to the Biafran cause or to the Federal one – and who are not correspondingly hostile to the other view point." The humanitarian even understood Nigerian hostility toward violations of their sovereignty: "Is it I wonder totally unreasonable for Federal Nigeria to want to have a say in flights across its air space?"[128] The organization tried to separate itself from the "Biafra lobby." Addressing the crowd of a Save Biafra Rally at Trafalgar Square in July 1968, the Oxfam representative emphasized that his organization "has no links" with the Save Biafra Committee, which organized the event: unlike the latter, "Oxfam is a completely non-political body" that

[125] J. W. Jackson, "Report of the Meeting in Trafalgar Square of the Save Biafra Committee," July 7, 1968 (OXA, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 1); H. Leslie Kirkley to Harold Wilson, July 05, 1968 (ibid.); idem to George Thomson, August 11, 1968 (ibid., vol. 2); idem to the Editor of *The Times*, July 23, 1968 (ibid., vol. 1). For an overview of Oxfam's activities see also Ajibola, *Foreign Policy*, 144–56.

[126] Black, *Cause*, 123.

[127] Ken A. Bennett to Stacey, July 18, 1968 (OXA: Nigeria Civil War Box 2210, file 2: Bennett, Nigeria 1968), 1.

[128] Ken A. Bennett to H. G. Fletcher, September 15, 1969 (OXA, file: Nigeria Civil War Box 2209, file 3: Relief on the Secessionist side "Biafra").

allocated half of its money to Nigeria.[129] In contrast to those who supported the political state-building effort of the Biafrans, Oxfam sought to recast "Biafra" as a space of victimhood, standing in isolation from the political agency of a secessionist movement.

The representatives of church organizations were more at ease in forming coalitions with the politicized branches of the growing Biafra lobby. Church bodies passed resolutions on the conflict, raised funds for the relief operation lobbied and petitioned governments and international organizations.[130] Organizations like the Catholic Church's humanitarian branch Caritas Internationalis issued pamphlets highlighting the affliction of the civilian population in Biafra and the activities of the organization to alleviate the suffering.[131] Religious authorities also assumed an important role for the newly emerging pro-Biafran scene.[132] When the tide of voices criticizing the arms trade to Nigeria began to rise in the United Kingdom, the public clamor of religious leaders was also loudly heard. Many of them, for instance Cardinal John Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster, consciously used the media to influence public opinion on Biafra.[133] As elsewhere, American religious leaders representing both various Christian denominations and the Jewish community close collaborated with Biafra lobbyist groups. The headquarters of the American Committee to Keep Biafra Alive (ACKBA), the most active lobby group in the United States, were established in New York's upscale Upper West Side, financed by the Protestant Council of the City of New York.[134]

[129] Iain Somerville, "Text of Speech at 'Save Biafra' rally Trafalgar Square 7th July, 1968" (OXA, DIR/2/3/2/32), 1, 3–4.

[130] Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken, "Entschließung zur Hilfe in Nigeria-Biafra," November 12, 1968 (PA AA B 34/747); "Biafra-Bericht des Biafra-Referenten im Katholischen Büro (Stand 7. August 1968),"August 10, 1968 (AEK, Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 II).

[131] See for instance Caritas Internationalis, *Intercaritas* (July–December 1968) or *Missionary Annals*, December 1968 (SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, Collection: DG 168, Box 1).

[132] See e.g.,"Der Direktor der Evangelischen Akademie Hamburg Pastor Joachim Ziegenrücker über das Komitee der AKTION BIAFRA-HILFE"(GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–1971).

[133] Peter Vogelsanger, "Schlussbericht zur Delegation der Schweizer Landeskirchen nach Grossbritannien in der Frage des Krieges zwischen Nigeria und Biafra," Zürich, July 5, 1968 (EZA 87/1118), 6.

[134] Bertram H. Gold to Rabbi Rudin, August 16, 1968 (American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1968, Biafra, Box 71); "A Protest Against Genocide: Biafra Rally, Statement by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum," www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/649.PDF (accessed December 15, 2010); *Biafra Lifeline* 3, November 5, 1968 (SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 10); Takashi Oka, "U.S. Aid to Biafra Urged by

The growing rift between the more politicized church groups and humanitarian groups such as the ICRC was also perpetuated within the Biafra lobby. The ICRC's cautious course of action frustrated many in the activist ranks, and in the media. In early August, staff from the Red Cross in Germany noted the bad coverage that the organization repeatedly received in the national media. The Tagesschau, West Germany's main national evening news, reported that the ICRC withdrew two field teams from Biafra out of concerns for their safety. This was false, according to the Red Cross staff's memo.[135] At least in hindsight the most significant example for the rift between pro-Biafran advocates and the Red Cross could be found in France. In late summer 1968, a group of young doctors left Paris to join the aid operation of the French section of the Red Cross. After their return, they organized a pro-Biafran advocacy group, the Comité de lutte contre le génocide au Biafra. As they later described, they disagreed with the ICRC's handling of the crisis; the French doctors were convinced that "neutrality" was not the right stance in a conflict they believed amounted to genocide.[136] There were also practical reasons why members of the church organizations entertained better relations with journalists and humanitarian activists than ICRC representatives. As the churches' airlift allowed journalists and activists onboard, clerics, media representatives and lobbyists rubbed shoulders and worked together toward common goals, which contributed to the emergence of a communal spirit. Red Cross workers, using separate aircraft on which journalists were not allowed, did not feature significantly in these networks. Instead, the ICRC was often cast as an external other to the "emotional community" of individuals and groups devoted to the Biafran cause,[137] understood to pose problems for the smooth running of the aid and lobbying machinery that the churches, journalists, and activists had put up.[138]

The United Kingdom evolved as an early center of pro-Biafran advocacy, because of the large numbers of Biafran expatriates in Britain and Britons with direct personal ties to the secessionist state. But the networks of Biafra activism were not limited to the United Kingdom. Through the Irish Missionaries and the Biafran expatriates, links between West Africa, Western Europe, and North America had already

Bishop: Hundreds end Vigil with a Service at St. Patricks," *New York Times*, October 27, 1968, 21. On ACKBA see further McNeil, "Starvation."

[135] Hohmann, "Vermerk," August 8, 1968 (Archiv Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, 4.8.1.1. Afrika, 11).

[136] Desgrandchamps, "Revenir." [137] Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions."

[138] Desgrandchamps, "coopération et concurrence."

been forged. After the emergence of Biafra lobby fronts in Western countries, these activists also corresponded and cooperated across national borders. However, these activists forged very few new transnational links.[139] The Biafra protest lobby fronts in the states of the West primarily emerged within particular, primarily nationally constituted publics that conceived of themselves as part of an imagined transnational or even global community of concerned citizens. In their petitions to the United Nations, many contemporaries expressed their concern by invoking "humanity,"[140] or evoked the idea of human rights as something promoted by citizens against the power of governments. Similarly, activists also lobbied governments of third states, for instance activists from outside the United Kingdom who criticized the British government quite fiercely.[141] Nevertheless, these imaginations of global community had their definite social and geographical place. It is striking that more than two-thirds of the petitions kept in the UN archives had been sent from the United States and Germany alone.[142] A large share of the petitions from the United States came from the East Coast,[143] a geographical concentration that indicates the presence of organized petition campaigns rather than general awareness.[144] That many petitions used the same formulaic sentences also points to their shared origin[145]

Many petitions came from the metropolis of international politics that is New York City, suggesting the power of a political imaginary defined by a "global city," where the local is directly connected to the global

[139] Fenner Brockway to Roger Baldwin, August 22, 1968 (American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1968, Biafra, Box 71); Brockway to Olivier Todd, July 14, 1969 (SOAS Manuscripts MCF/14/16); Brockway to Jean-Paul Sartre, July 14, 1969 (ibid.).

[140] See e.g. Letter to the United Nations, August 2, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part E); Telegram to UN Secretary General, August 12, 1968 (ibid.); Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, August 26, 1968 (ibid., Part F).

[141] See e.g. Brockway to the Swedish Ambassador, May 30, 1969 (Churchill College Archives FEBR 219b); Brockway to the Ambassador for Switzerland, May 30, 1969 (ibid.); Brockway to the Italian Ambassador, May 30, 1969 (ibid.).

[142] See UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A to H.

[143] See various petitions in UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part G.

[144] ACKBA to General U Thant. November 21, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part G). There are more petitions of campaigns organized by the organization in the files, see ibid., Part F and G.

[145] See UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part E, for instance Telegram to United Nations, August 3, 1968 (ibid.). See also Letter to the United Nations, August 2, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part E) and a number of other letters in the file, Part E and F; Letter to the United Nations, August 14, 1968 (UNOG Archives UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part F).

political.[146] New York served as the hub of Biafra protest in the United States. In October 1968, American Biafra activists set up the Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information in New York to collect information about the conflict, to issue a news bulletin and information packets, and to coordinate the cooperation between the polymorphous and loosely tied network of Biafra activists in the United States.[147] The UN headquarters were in New York as well, overlooking the East River at Manhattan's Turtle Bay neighborhood. Activists did not only address the "world government" in petitions, but also through rallies which started or ended at the site. The Biafra "lifeline" on August 8, the first big rally in the city, a silent march which commenced at Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza opposite the UN building, was attended by 2,400 protesters at its peak, according to press estimates.[148] Prior to the vigil, ACKBA had sent a telegram to U Thant urging the UN General Secretary to act immediately, as long as "there is someone left to save."[149] In the ensuing months, Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza remained one of the principal venues of Biafra protest rallies and vigils in New York.[150]

The geography of the pro-Biafran networks in West Germany was more diverse. With its political capital moved to the provincial town of Bonn, the Federal Republic lacked a clear political center; Berlin could not serve as a hot spot in the model of London or New York. A number of bigger events were organized in Hamburg by the *Aktion Biafa-Hilfe*.[151] Sit-ins were held at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich and at other universities.[152] Cities with active pro-Biafran scenes also included middle-sized university towns like Münster, though the protest network was essentially scattered across the country, with numerous chapters in

[146] The term derives from Sassen, *Global City*. Yet Sassen emphasizes financial and economic structures much more than I do here.

[147] Brad Lynch, "Memorandum to Rumrill-Hoyt Staff," December 18, 1968 (SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, Collection: DG 168, Box 1).

[148] Jonathan Schell, "The Talk of the Town: Demonstration," *The New Yorker*, August 17, 1968, 22; Will Lissner, "Marchers at the U.N. Urge Action to Save Starving Biafrans," *New York Times*, August 9, 1968, 2.

[149] ACKBA to U Thant, August 8, 1968 (UN ARMS, S-303–0005–02), 1.

[150] Wiseberg, "International Politics of Relief," 232.

[151] Günter Grass, "Völkermord vor aller Augen: Ein Appell an die Bundesregierung," *Die Zeit* October 11, 1968, 5; "Biafra – Todesurteil für ein Volk: Kundgebung"(GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–71).

[152] Dr. Ziegler, "Demonstrationsveranstaltungen zum 'Biafra-Nigeria Konflikt' der 'Humanistischen Studentenunion' (HSU) am 18. Juli 1968 in München," July 9, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741).

provincial towns.[153] The German government in Bonn, however, and the offices of parliamentarians throughout the country were flooded with petitions.[154] That the second largest share of UN petitions came from Germany, after the United States, was also to a large degree the result of coordinated petition campaigns, initiated by the churches.

The situation was somewhat different in France. Whereas Paris was clearly the main base of pro-Biafran activists, there were few public demonstrations of support of the humanitarian operation in the form of protest rallies. There were also relatively few petitions sent from France.[155] This may have been due to a certain protest fatigue after the divisive events of May directly preceding the discovery of "Biafra." More decisively, the French government and the Biafra lobbyists simply did not disagree about the matter: Paris never took the step of official recognition, but the de Gaulle government was the main foreign power supporting Biafra and repeatedly approved of the Biafrans' right to self-determination in declarations and statements.[156]

In June 1968, the Nigerian High Commissioner in London, Brigadier Babafemi Ogundipe wrote to Oxfam's General Secretary Kirkley that his "government views with the gravest concern" Oxfam's "Biafra Emergency Appeal," as the naming of the appeal "will add credence to the fiction that a State of 'Biafra' exists [. . .]." "Your advertisement [. . .] would appear to be supporting the propaganda of the rebels who have tried to convince the world that they are fighting for what they call self-determination for the Ibos [. . .]."[157] In his response, Kirkley explains that Oxfam

[153] "Liste von Gruppen und Persönlichkeiten in der Bundesrepublik, die sich für Biafra einsetzen,"ca. September 1968 (GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–71).

[154] See e.g., Aktionskomitee Biafra, "Resolution," July 15, 1968 (PA AA B 34/747); Aktionskomitee Biafra Münster und Bonn,"An die Mitglieder,"September 26, 1968 (ACDP 01–158 Nachlass Fritz Burgbacher, 025/3); Letter to Rainer Barzel, July 17, 1968 (ACDP 08–006 AKV, 013/2); Letter to CDU-Fraktion des Deutschen Bundestags, June 14, 1968 (ACDP 08–006 AKV, 013/2).

[155] See, as one of few examples, the untitled letter to the UN, August 5, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part F).

[156] "La France et le problème biafrais," *La France et le Biafra*, ed. Ministère des affaires etrangères (Paris, 1969), 7–14. See also: JM/HV, "Note: La France et la crise nigéro-biafraise," August 6, 1968 (Centre des *Archives diplomatiques La Courneuve*: Afrique – Levant, Nigeria 1966–70, 14).

[157] B. O. Ogundipe, Letter to Leslie Kirkley, June 28, 1968 (OXA, DIR/2/3/2/32), 1, 3.

never take[s] political sides, and our one and only concern is to help those in the greatest need. [...] An Appeal for the needs of those living in the secessionist "State," which has come to be known as Biafra, is being made by us because, at the moment, the population is known to be in the gravest and most urgent need. Such an Appeal on purely humanitarian grounds, as all our advertisements make clear, does not involve us in political judgments on the rights and wrongs of this tragic situation.[158]

A bifurcated understanding of "Biafra" is apparent in this exchange of letters: for the representative of the Nigerian Federal government, "Biafra" is a political concept, a secessionist state; for Oxfam's general secretary, "Biafra" is a site of human tragedy, a hotspot on the humanitarian's mental map. And this was how most contemporaries understood the conflict, at least in the West, when in summer 1968 people across the globe, particular in Western Europe and North America, began to care about the "distant suffering" of the Igbos of Biafra.[159] In their interplay, the media reports and the campaigns by activists and humanitarian organizations of these months created "Biafra" as a concept that became recognizable to many contemporaries. However, this new "Biafra" was decidedly at odds with the "Biafra" that had emerged in Third World international politics: a secessionist state seeking self-determination.

That the humanitarian crisis in Biafra moved into the focus of international media did not only bother Federal Nigerian officials. It also ran against the intentions of Biafra's propagandists, who had not intended to emphasize the human suffering within its borders. Hoping to gain international recognition, Biafran propaganda presented an image of the newly founded republic as a functioning state. Through their efforts to internationalize the issue, the Biafrans lost control of the story, and the journalists that began to stream into the war zone did not always report what the secessionist regime hoped they would. Hence, even if the activists presented it as such, humanitarian advocacy on behalf of Biafra could never be entirely de-politicized. With the images of the starving Biafran Babies, "Biafra," as a widely recognized concept, saw the light of the day. But, brought into the world through the transnational channels of humanitarian concern and human rights advocacy – and not the international channels of intergovernmental politics and diplomacy – the infant deviated from its parents' expectations. Purged of most political overtones, this "Biafra" ran the risk of appealing to political emotions

[158] H. Leslie Kirkley, Letter to the High Commissioner, July 5, 1968 (OXA, DIR/2/3/2/32), 1.
[159] Boltanski, *Distant Suffering*.

instead of political reasoning. It was therefore in doubt that the making of “Biafra” as humanitarian crisis would work to the advantage of the creators of the original political concept “Biafra.” Who, in the end, thinks a people symbolized by starving infants to be capable of creating a state?

5 “Biafran Babies”

Humanitarian Visions of Postcolonial Disaster

In early 1969, the Comité d‘action pour le Biafra organized a photographic exhibition in the Théâtre de la Ville, a massive Haussmannien building at Place du Châtelet in central Paris. The exhibition displayed works that the photographer and Comité member Alexandre Sosnowsky, his colleague Pierre Gaveau and the *France Soir* photojournalist Yves-Guy Bergès had brought back from Biafra. The filmmaker Hervé Bromberger, who coordinated the Comité’s PR with Sosnowsky, wrote about his “memories” of the exhibition in a bulletin released by the group, evoking stark imagery: “Two cadavers of children, arms crossed, twins in death. A couple of vultures devouring the bodies which life has abandoned at the side of the road.” In the absence of sound, the film director described a mother’s “cries of despair.” Filling other voids left by the photographs, Bromberger speculated about the feelings of the depicted individuals. He wrote about a mother cradling a child

> who was no doubt once a happy child. As happy as this one could have been, devoured by flies, he gives himself up, on the steps of a staircase, to his wounds and to death. As happy as she could have been, this [mother] whose bones crack her fragile skin, has taken a fetal position to cry her last tears.

The activist-cum-filmmaker imagined the fulfilled lives the depicted could have led, only to realize that these were over before they had even begun. These images instilled in Bromberger a sense of a future lost – pictures of human beings about to die.[1]

The photographs aroused feelings of guilt and shame among the visitors to the exhibition, as Bromberger writes: “we all feel responsible and guilty, we who do nothing, or so little.” This nightmarish experience was not over after the visit to the exhibition. The atrocious images returned as traumatic memories: “The images are there, ruthless. We can close our eyes, but the photography of hideous destruction remains.”[2]

[1] Hervé Bromberger, “Images d‘un génocide,” *Biafra: Bulletin du comité d‘action pour le Biafra* 1, April 1969, 9; “Communiqué de Presse,” ibid., 13–14.

[2] Bromberger, “Images,” 9–10.

Bromberger's account was written for a pro-Biafran publication, and may have been formed by the author's political beliefs. However, other contemporaries used similar language in describing their reactions to these images, which "haunted" them.[3] These photographs can be seen as a part of a representational regime that had developed from the late eighteenth century. Thomas Laqueur has shown how the humanitarian narratives that emerged in novels and newspapers of the time worked to foster bonds of empathy between those who suffer and those who read about the others' pain. Asking "how details about the suffering bodies of others engender compassion and how that compassion comes to be understood as a moral imperative to undertake ameliorative action," he traces the inception of humanitarian sentiment and action via narrative structures. Laqueur emphasizes the role of the body in humanitarian campaigns. Humanitarian narratives focus on the body as the locus of the others' pain, but also use it as the link connecting those who suffer with those who help or intend to do so.[4]

Similar mechanisms were at play in the visual representations of the humanitarian crisis in Biafra. As implied by Bromberger's account, these photographs evoked a fate that could be altered by fellow human beings; the audiences witnessing the suffering of Biafra's children from a distance could and should act to prevent the death of innocents. To convey these messages, images were used as a medium of empathy. The bonds of shared humanity linked the viewers and the subjects of the photographic gaze. The photographs focused in on bodily details, on marks of suffering left on the victims' bodies. The photographs gave Biafra's human agony a face: that of their children, the "Biafran Babies," and, to a lesser degree, that of their mothers. According to some commentators, the visual representations of Biafra set "a visual standard for all of the images of famine that followed."[5] And indeed, the humanitarian crisis in Biafra created the foremost icon of suffering in a postcolonial world: the suffering African child. In the late twentieth century, children have become *the* paramount icon of humanitarian distress. And Biafra was a crucial moment in that process.[6]

To unlock the cultural meanings of the Biafran campaign – and the grounds for the concern it provoked internationally – the icon of the suffering child should not be interpreted in isolation. The child is one figure in what Laqueur has called humanitarian narratives' triad of evil,

[3] See, e.g., Pottle, ed., *Daring to Hope*, 348–53.
[4] Laqueur, "Bodies, Details," 176. See also Laqueur, "Mourning."
[5] Zelizer, *About to Die*, 163. See also Benthall, *Disasters* and Campbell, "Iconography."
[6] Warner, *Managing Monsters*, 36. See also Wark, "Fresh Maimed Babies."

victim and benefactor.[7] In representations of Biafra, this triad was that of famine (more than war), children / their mothers, and Western humanitarians. As I will argue, this triad was part of a construction meant to invite Western audiences to empathize with the suffering Biafrans, but the emotional bonds that these narratives fostered actually worked rather differently. The idea of "witnessing" was central to this representational regime.[8] The emotional reactions of the "witnesses" to the suffering – primarily Western journalists and missionaries – of the Biafran children are repeatedly depicted. Through these references, templates of emotions were created that outlined proper emotional reactions to the event. Western observers were thus represented as sentimental subjects. The objects of compassion, however, were often depicted as stoic, even apathetic, jaded sufferers of their fate. In effect, bonds of empathy with the "innocent" Biafran children were fostered, but at the same time subverted. Emotional communities were created that united Western observers in the field and at home: together, both became empathic *witnesses* to the suffering of others. The Biafran people in the photographs became the passive, voiceless objects of a Western humanitarian gaze.[9]

In this chapter, I will analyze the iconography of humanitarian crisis in Biafra to understand what it was about these images that apparently imbued them with such an emotional force: Why did contemporaries highlight the images – much more than the texts – as having had an impact on them? What was the particular evocative force of what was depicted? I proceed in four steps. First, I analyze the prevalent understandings of the media that primarily presented the crisis – photography and television – to show how this worked to turn Biafra into a "visual experience."[10] Both media were considered to transmit reality without distortions. The presence of Westerners – journalists – in the Biafran enclave and the complex production chains of these accounts were ignored. Second, I study the iconographic figuration of the starving Biafran child to open up the mechanics of how these representations aimed to foster bonds of empathy. Third, I extend the framework by embedding the icon of the "Biafran Babies" in its interplay with other figures peopling Biafra's visual landscape. Fourth, I analyze the particular meanings Biafra acquired. Here, the interplay between textual accounts and images is crucial: through the texts, these representations were inscribed into different cultural systems of reference in Western

[7] Laqueur, "Bodies, Details," 177.
[8] See ibid.; Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*, ch. 8; Givoni, "Beyond."
[9] Sliwinski, *Human Rights*. On the notion of emotional communities see Groebner, "Zeige" and Rosenwein, "Worrying."
[10] I borrow this term from Hoffmann, "Gazing."

societies. In the process, Biafrans, portrayed as hard working Christians, became representatives of an enclave of global Western civilization amidst postcolonial decay and savagery. In effect, the humanitarian narratives were only to a small degree an exercise in "empathizing with the Other." In most representations, the Biafrans were turned into people "like us," despite their skin color.[11]

Reality Effects: Biafra as Visual Experience

In the summer of 1968, people across the globe – particularly in Western Europe and North America – were confronted with the "distant suffering" of fellow human beings.[12] Contemporaries began to associate the word "Biafra" with "dreadful, gruesome images of famishing children" to which they wished to turn a blind eye – but could not.[13] According to the German weekly *Der Spiegel* and various other media, these images horrified contemporaries, stirring them to action: "People who only months ago thought that Biafra would be a new washing powder, donate and demonstrate for the Igbo Republic, some even risk their lives."[14] Journalists and activists believed in the power of images, and thus relied heavily on photography. As a medium, photography is often described as being bound to what it represents. A photograph is, in Susan Sontag's words, "not only an image (as a painting is an image), an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stencilled off the real, like a footprint or death mask."[15] It is, as Roland Barthes summarizes this understanding, "as if the photograph always carries its referent with itself [. . .]."[16] These assumptions, widespread as they are, channel our reading of photographic images in a particular manner: they are often considered to forthrightly *present*, rather than *represent* reality.[17] Humanitarian campaigners make use of this quality attributed to photography: atrocities can thus be made visible. The sheer representational force of photography, its seemingly inherent claim to truth is used to evoke the "realness" of such representations. The absence of human rights is evoked by picturing their transgression.[18]

That this understanding of photography conditioned the visual regime of Biafra representations was apparent in an ad campaign run in the *New*

[11] For a similar case see Twomey, "Framing Atrocity," 258.
[12] Boltanski, *Distant Suffering*. [13] See also Wienbruch, "Geleitwort," 5.
[14] "Nur beten," Spiegel, August 19, 1968, 71. See for instance also Knappstein to German Foreign Ministry, August 14, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741).
[15] Sontag, *Photography*, 154. [16] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 5–6.
[17] See Thomas, "Evidence of Sight." [18] Linfield, *Cruel Radiance*, esp. ch. 2.

York Times, the *Chicago Tribune* and a number of other US newspapers in August 1968. The newly created American Jewish Emergency Effort for Biafran Relief, an umbrella under which the efforts of 21 American-Jewish organizations were united, used the photograph of a Biafran child (Figure 5.1). Its caption confronted the viewer with the seemingly rhetorical question: "Have you ever seen millions of children starving to death?" The text then provided the answer itself: "Now you have." The text continues: "Cruel conjecture? No. Tragic reality."[19] Emphasizing its "truth claim," the text evokes the photograph as a window on reality, a non-adulterating, transparent medium through which the suffering in Biafra can be witnessed almost first-hand.[20]

This act of visual witnessing serves as a call to action to newspaper readers who stumbled over the ad during breakfast or in the train, on their way to work: once they "saw" millions of starving children, they could not stand idly by. In effect, the designers of the ad campaign willingly blurred the boundaries between representation and reality: the former seamlessly stands for the latter. The viewer was told to have "seen millions of children starving to death" merely by looking at the photographic representation of one Biafran child. Only the text, the caption, turns the photograph into reality – at least rhetorically. By force of the photograph alone, the "reality" of "millions of children starving to death" could not have been made manifest. This contradicts the assertion of the prominent Biafra photographer Gilles Caron who, quoting his fellow photojournalist Phillippe Labro's usage of this well-known proverb, wrote that "one image is worth one hundred thousand words."[21] To the contrary, the force of words is needed to channel the possible meanings of an image, to define what exactly it is that the image is saying. The captions direct viewers toward particular readings of the photographs, readings that would not necessarily have evolved from the depicted details themselves. The *Peace News*, for instance, used one of Don McCullin's pictures on their front page, with the caption

[19] The American Jewish Emergency Effort for Biafran Relief, "Have You Ever Seen Millions Of Children Starving to Death? Now You Have," August 1968 (SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 3); *New York Times*, August 8, 1968, 12; *Chicago Tribune*, August 22, 1968, A10; "A Year Later: Summary of the American Jewish Emergency Effort for Biafran Relief, July 1968–July 1969, August 8, 1969, www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/659A.PDF (accessed February 22, 2013); Morris B. Abram to Participants in American Jewish Emergency Effort for Biafran Relief, September 26, 1968, www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/650.PDF (accessed February 22, 2013).

[20] Gunning, "What's the Point," 24.

[21] *Mort du Biafra*, 141. See also Ugochukwu, *Biafra*, 41–3.

Have you ever seen millions
of children starving to death?

Now you have.

This picture was taken a week ago. Chances are this child of Biafra is already dead of starvation. Millions more seem doomed to follow.

Cruel conjecture? No. Tragic reality.

Innocent victims of a world they never made, the children of Biafra will die of the starvation that is moving inexorably across Biafra.

If nothing is done, millions will die within a few months.

Thou shalt not stand idly by the blood of thy neighbor.

The American Jewish Emergency Effort for Biafran Relief, comprising the major Jewish religious, communal, relief and philanthropic bodies, has been organized to help save these millions of lives. It is cooperating with Catholic Relief Services, Church World Service and the United States Committee for UNICEF, which have distribution centers that get food and medicine through to the sick and starving.

The amount of help that wins the race with death is up to each of us. The more money available, the greater, the quicker the effort. Ships, trucks, helicopters – a massive sea and air lift of food and medicine–are possible. But only with your help.

Please send a check.

Do it today. Don't wait for death.

SIGNATORIES *

MORRIS B. ABRAM, President, American Jewish Committee
JORDAN BAND, President, National Community Relations Advisory Council
LOUIS BROIDO,Chairman, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
RABBI MAURICE N. EISENDRATH, President, Union of American Hebrew Congregations
DR. NELSON GLUECK, President, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
DR. WILLIAM HABER, President, American ORT Federation
RABBI JOSEPH KARASICK, President, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America
RABBI ARTHUR J. LELYVELD, President, American Jewish Congress
RABBI BERNARD MANDELBAUM, President, Jewish Theological Seminary of America
DR. MAX NUSSBAUM, Chairman, American Section-World Jewish Congress
DR. JOACHIM PRINZ, Chairman, Governing Council-World Jewish Congress
HENRY N. RAPAPORT, President, United Synagogue of America
RABBI JACOB PHILIP RUDIN, President, Synagogue Council of America
SAMUEL SAMUELS, National Commander, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.
NATHAN SAPERSTEIN, President, National Council of Young Israel
RABBI ZEV SEGAL, President, Rabbinical Council of America
MRS. MICHAEL SHAPIRO, President, B'nai B'rith Women
RABBI RALPH SIMON, President, Rabbinical Assembly
MRS. LEONARD H. WEINER, National President, National Council of Jewish Women
DR. WILLIAM WEXLER, President, B'nai B'rith
CHARLES S. ZIMMERMAN, President, Jewish Labor Committee

*Organizations are listed only for purposes of identification.

Make out your tax-deductible check to any of the organizations listed below (earmark "For Biafran Relief"):

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
B'NAI B'RITH FOUNDATION
JEWISH LABOR COMMITTEE
RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA
SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA
UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF AMERICA

or to one of the cooperating agencies listed in the text.

Send to:
Biafran Relief
P.O. Box 2802
Grand Central Station
New York, N.Y. 10017

The American Jewish Emergency Effort for Biafran Relief

This ad is made possible through the contributions of concerned individuals.

Figure 5.1 The American Jewish Emergency Effort for Biafran Relief, newspaper advertisement "Have you ever seen millions of children starving to death? Now you have," 1968. SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria / Biafra Information Records, 1968–1970, DG 168, Box 3.

specifying "BIAFRA – The British Government supports this war and you, the public, could stop it," calling the reader to action.[22]

Whether the effect was produced by images, texts, or their interplay, media reports left a lasting imprint on the minds of many contemporaries, who described them as nightmarish, inconceivably horrific – and yet so real. It was a "ghostly tragedy [which was] being enacted on our TV screens," as Oxfam General Secretary Kirkley wrote.[23] Lady Violet Bonham Carter was sure that the apparition of these "ghosts" was utterly real. In an emergency debate in the House of Lords, the grand dame of British liberalism declared that "Thanks to the miracle of television we see history happening before our eyes." In view of the "poignant tragedy of Biafra's starving children" staged nightly on TV screens, nobody had an alibi: "We see these things happening."[24] Other commentators argued similarly. Novelist Günter Grass explained that the "Völkermord" in Biafra was happening publicly as an everyday spectacle: "after dinner we watch how people starve and die in Biafra."[25] The representational force of TV and photographs – images seen as exact replicas – lent a ghastly "reality effect" to the reports, and enhanced their emotional appeal: they were so nightmarish *because* they were so real.[26]

For most contemporaries, the media created "Biafra." Even on the journalists and aid workers who went to Biafra, the effect of photographs was profound. In late November 1968, Oxfam's Bruno Gans, wrote back to one of his colleagues in the United Kingdom, noticeably trying to describe the situation without the agitation that had surrounded most assessments in the previous months. What he had seen in the town of the secessionist capital Umuahia "has not suggested an extreme state of affairs. One sees no fat people, but neither does one see starvation in the streets." However, in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, "things are different." The worst cases have their "skin stretched over ribs, enormous heads, pot bellies, wasted buttocks and sticks for arms and legs." The children "virtually all look like Oxfam posters [...]."[27] This reference hints at the ambiguous relationship between the suffering in the

22 "Labour's War," *Peace News*, September 26, 1969, 1. See further Solnit, "Words Can Kill"; Rutschky,"Foto."

23 H. Leslie Kirkley, Letter to the Editor of *The Times*, August 4, 1968 (OXA, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 2), 2.

24 Pottle, ed., *Daring to Hope*, 348. *Hansard Lords*, August 27, 1968, column 700, hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1968/aug/27/nigeria (accessed May 14, 2013).

25 Günter Grass, "Völkermord vor aller Augen: Ein Appell an die Bundesregierung," *Die Zeit*, October 11, 1968, 5. See also Hans Gresmann, "Mord ohne Gericht," *Die Zeit*, August 9, 1968, 1.

26 Barthes, "Reality Effect," 141–8.

27 Bruno Gans, Letter to Carter, November 23, 1968 (OXA COM 3/1/1: Confidential Papers on Nigeria/Biafra 1968–70), 1; Oxfam, Internal Evaluation Nigeria, ca. 1972

conflict zone and their representations abroad. The Oxfam staffer was apparently aware of the biased nature of his organization's representations of the conflict: the situation in Umuahia town is not as dramatic as he had feared; it does not match the visual landscape of humanitarian disaster as they are represented in the media. However, the worst cases "look like Oxfam posters," turning the actual children in the enclave into a *tableau vivant* re-enacting their visual figuration in the humanitarian campaign.

People like Gans who worked in Biafra were confronted with a situation that was much more complex than the humanitarian narratives and imagery conveyed. Yet the claim to represent the truth about the conflict was deeply inscribed into the logic of this representational regime. When, in mid-1968, Western audiences were confronted with a conflict in a world region about which most of them knew next to nothing, most contemporaries had to rely on the voices of different "experts" – journalists, humanitarian workers, medics, politicians, academics, and intellectuals. Many of the pro-Biafran accounts in particular thus built on a representational strategy that may be called "presenting the evidence"; going back in particular to social documentary photography and juridical discourse, this regime of "showing" aims at enabling the audience to "witness" the event, perhaps even to "feel" it. Despite the purportedly "pure" character of these representations of humanitarian crisis, however, these textual and visual accounts were enmeshed in webs of intertextuality, which were partly woven to control the enormous outflow of their possible meanings, but which also undermined their representational status.[28] The publications put out by pro-Biafran activists were often mash-ups of diverse texts and images, collages stemming from different sources. Although Western journalists and photographers had already poured into the enclave, many of the images used by activists can also be traced back to Biafran propaganda publications, which were also circulated internationally through Biafra PR agencies, expatriates, missionaries and other sympathizers. Especially images of the massacres of 1966 re-surfaced repeatedly, and, to some degree, these atrocity photographs complemented the dominant famine imagery.[29] In many cases, activist publications also included complete newspaper articles or quoted

(OXA: Nigeria Civil War Box 2210, File Review of Oxfam Aid, July 1967–August 1970).

[28] See Iser, *Das Fiktive*, and Foucault, *L'ordre du discours*.

[29] Some of the images run in *Nigerian Pogrom* were thus for instance reused in different German activists' publications. Ministry of Information Eastern Nigeria, *Nigerian Pogrom*, between 20 and 21; Bundesarchiv Bildarchiv Plak 006–030–045; Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben*, on the cover and facing 128.

them at length.[30] Activists also frequently re-used press photographs and texts,[31] and quoted media reports as objective sources for their claims, while at the same time lambasting press and TV reports to counter-claims they considered false. These reports thus became entangled in intertextual relationships intended to underline the validity of the author's position.[32] Along similar lines, texts defined as "eye witness reports" feature significantly in this body of texts.[33] By defining the "field" – the zone of war and humanitarian crisis – as an exclusive space of experience, journalists, activists, and others who had visited Biafra presented themselves in the role of "witnesses" after their return. Their accounts are vested with power by ascribing the position of a privileged speaker to the authors.

Yet this label was often used rather generously. In some instances, activists republished reports of press correspondents and labeled them as eyewitness reports.[34] Yet a published newspaper article is necessarily a collaborative work, even if the authorship is ascribed to a single author. First, when the journalists were dispatched into Biafra they relied heavily on a number of sources of information. They prepared their journeys with visits to the library, talks to other media representatives, diplomats, and academics. Once they arrived in the conflict area, they tried to gather information by talking to people of different social strata, and by reading local newspapers and listening to local radio. Radio Biafra, the secessionists' propaganda radio station, thus became a principal source for virtually all journalists in Biafra.[35] Accordingly, once the journalists entered the war zone they were confronted with even more representations of the conflict. These were structured by different agendas; the

[30] See for instance Chegwe, ed., *Biafra*; Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Biafra: Todesurteil*; Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben?*; Save Biafra Committee, ed., *Biafra*, London 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/249); Comité International de Lutte contre le Génocide au Biafra, ed., *Biafra: Temoignages – prizes de position*, Paris, July 1969 (BnF: 4- JO- 23148); *Le courrier du Biafra* (1969).

[31] "We Cannot Sit and Wait for a Million People to Die," *The Times*, June 25, 1968, 3.

[32] On the functioning of different forms of meta- and intertextuality see Genette, *Palimpsestes*.

[33] See, e.g., "Augenzeugenbericht einer jungen katholischen Schwester"; Pierre Benichou interview with Bernard Kouchner, "Témoignage: Un médecin accuse . . . ," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, January 19, 1970, 19–21; Comité International, ed., *Biafra*; "Editorial: Le témoignage de Monsieur Jacques Marette devant l'assemblée nationale françaize," *Biafra: Bulletin du comité d'action pour le Biafra*, November 19, 1969, Supplement to No. 5, I-VI; "Eyewitness Report from Biafra: Medicine versus Starvation,"*Medical World News*, February 28, 1969, front page. See also Lavoinne, "Médecins en guerre."

[34] Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben?*, 102–6; Chegwe, ed., *Biafra: Ein Volk stirbt*, 11–15.

[35] Ugochukwu, *Biafra*, 22–32.

Biafran press and Radio Biafra were heavily dominated by propaganda, official and unofficial alike.[36] It could justifiably be argued that this could have led some journalists, especially journalists who had no substantial previous knowledge about the region, to uncritically adopt some of the positions of the secessionists – or the Federal camp if their assignment was in Lagos.[37] The process continued once their reports had reached the editorial desks at home: newspaper editors exert a strong influence over the final *gestalt* of a published text. The services of news agencies are often utilized to corroborate and expand on the texts presented by correspondents. The influence of public relations agencies also cannot be discounted. Both sides enlisted the services of public relations professionals. Initially, the press releases and other material put out by Biafra's agency Markpress made a big impact. Phrases used in their releases can be identified in various newspapers, which sometimes adopted them word for word.[38] Furthermore, editors often revised texts to match the clichéd expectations about Africa among the readership at home. At the beginning of the war, Lloyd Garrison, *New York Times* correspondent in Nigeria, complained to the editors that laden terms like "tribesmen" had been inserted into his articles about the crisis, evoking images of "'savages dancing around the fire: a representation of Nigerian society which is not only be disparaging, but also simply false," as he pointed out.[39] Certainly, in many other cases this multilayered process of transmission, control and revision enhanced the quality of texts, eliminating errors. However, this collaborative work is hidden behind the author. By defining these narratives as valid and "pure" accounts of individual experiences in the field, audiences were invited to understand these representations as channels enabling them to "witness" the humanitarian crisis.[40]

Other experts also worked to testify the validity of different texts. Intellectuals frequently served on Biafra committees' advisory boards, and published open letters in the press.[41] Medics and other academics also frequently appeared as "experts" in humanitarian narratives about Biafra. In some publications, they are introduced with their full titles:

[36] For a preliminary take, see Anthony, "'Resourceful and Progressive," 41–61.
[37] Akinyemi, "British Press"; E. A. Bryant, "Confidential Minutes, Lagos January 27, 1969" (UK NA FCO 65/446).
[38] For an analysis of the reportage of the *FAZ* see Zieser, "Propagandastrategie."
[39] Allimadi, *Hearts of Darkness*, 74–5.
[40] On the "author function" see Foucault, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?"
[41] Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, Max Frisch and. Günter Grass, "An die Adresse der Regierungen," *Die Zeit*, August 23, 1968, 3; On intellectuals, see Bourdieu, *Les règles*, 185–9.

the "Prof.," "Dr." or "PhD," proof of their reputation as detached producers of knowledge.[42] In such texts, the "experts" and the humanitarian "benefactors" were presented as disinterested, impartial Western witnesses. Humanitarian workers assumed this role also in their own interventions when they were interviewed in the press, on TV and radio, or wrote articles for newspapers with which they agreed and letters to the editors of those with which they disagreed.[43]

However, the act of witnessing – namely the fact that the journalist merely watches the events, with all the ambiguities this implies – is rendered almost invisible in these reports. A photograph that the French photographer Gilles Caron took during his second trip to Biafra exposes the ambivalences inherent in these acts. In the picture, Caron's Gamma colleague Raymond Depardon is shown filming a dying Biafran child for a documentary of the humanitarian crisis (Figure 5.2).

Depardon films the worst case of all the people present, the child in the agony of death. The other bystanders in the room are not part of the picture. This photograph was not published before the end of the conflict, perhaps because it might have raised questions that contemporary observers of the humanitarian crisis in Biafra were not willing to confront. It was included more frequently in publications about Gilles Caron's work since the 1990s.[44] By then, the ambivalences of humanitarianism had already started to plague a number of its advocates.[45] The photograph very directly shows what was rendered invisible by the humanitarian gaze at Biafra: the presence of journalists, of the messengers of international media while the catastrophe was unfolding, who became witnessing bystanders to the suffering of others. "Photographing is essentially an act of non-intervention," as Susan Sontag writes: "The person who intervenes cannot record; the person who is recording cannot intervene."[46] The American critic explains further that even though it may be

> incompatible with intervention in a physical sense [. . .], the act of photographing is more than passive observing. Like sexual voyeurism, it is a way of at least tacitly, often explicitly, encouraging whatever is going to keep on happening. To

[42] See for instance Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Biafra: Todesurteil* and idem, *Soll Biafra überleben*?

[43] "BBC Radio 4: Extract from Ten O'clock [Derek Cooper talks to Leslie Kirkley]," July 8, 1968 (OXA, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 1); H. Leslie Kirkley, Letter to the Editor of the Times, July 23, 1968 (OXA, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 1); Nicholas Stacey, "Must Biafra starve?" *Spectator*, July 12, 1968, 44–5.

[44] It was first published in "Interview with Gilles Caron.". For a later example see, e.g, Centre national, ed., *Gilles Caron*, photo no. 42.

[45] See Gaag and Nash, *Images of Africa*; Rieff, *Bed for the Night*.

[46] Sontag, *Photography*, 11.

Figure 5.2 Photographer: Gilles Caron, Raymond Depardon, Biafra, August 1968. © Gamma-Rapho.

take a picture is to have an interest in things as they are, in the status quo remaining unchanged [. . .] – including, when that is the interest, another person's pain or misfortune.[47]

Humanitarianism's representational regime allowed contemporaries to "witness" the crisis from a distance. However, the act of witnessing is not an act of intervention on its own, but it calls for acts of intervention.

"Biafran Babies": The Iconography of Suffering and Visions of Africa's Postcolonial Futures

On the cover of its July 28, 1968 issue, the German news magazine *Stern* ran a photograph of Biafran children taken by Hubert Le Campion. The camera focuses in on one child who directly returns the onlooker's gaze, his wide open eyes begging for the viewer's help. This effect was further emphasized by the captions. *Stern* used the headline: "Images accuse" (see Figure 4.4). Similarly, the cover of a *Sunday Times Magazine* pictorial supplement with Don McCullin's photographs was entitled: "The Accusing Face of Young Biafra."[48] The Swiss journalist Jean Buhler self-consciously invoked the viewer in the caption of one the photographs accompanying his text: "These looks of children which condemn us" (Figure 5.3).[49] By invoking "us," such headlines and captions created a collective of Western observers – journalists in the field and audiences at home – who are "damned" and "accused" by the images: such religiously or legally charged terms try to arouse guilt among an "emotional community" of witnesses.[50] In a gesture of self-accusation, journalists questioned the passivity of Western observers, and readers found themselves standing in the dock of a media campaign employing a language of rights.

Children became the primary icon of the suffering in Biafra. Women – predominantly mothers – also featured regularly. However, very few adult men are shown. The humanitarian lens through which the conflict was observed focused on the children's bodies as the locus of their human agony. Again and again, the wasted bodies of underfed children were exhibited. Famine and malnourishment having left their visible marks, these infantile bodies became the "original site of reality," a visual medium to communicate suffering. Through such images,

[47] Ibid., 12. See also Halttunen, "Humanitarianism"; Burman, "Innocents Abroad," 246–8 and, for a critique of such positions, Linfield, *Cruel Radiance*, 40–2.
[48] "The Accusing Face of Young Biafra," *Sunday Times*, Pictorial supplement, July 1, 1969.
[49] Buhler, *Tuez-Les Tous!*, between 46–7.
[50] Rosenwein,"Worrying about Emotions in History."

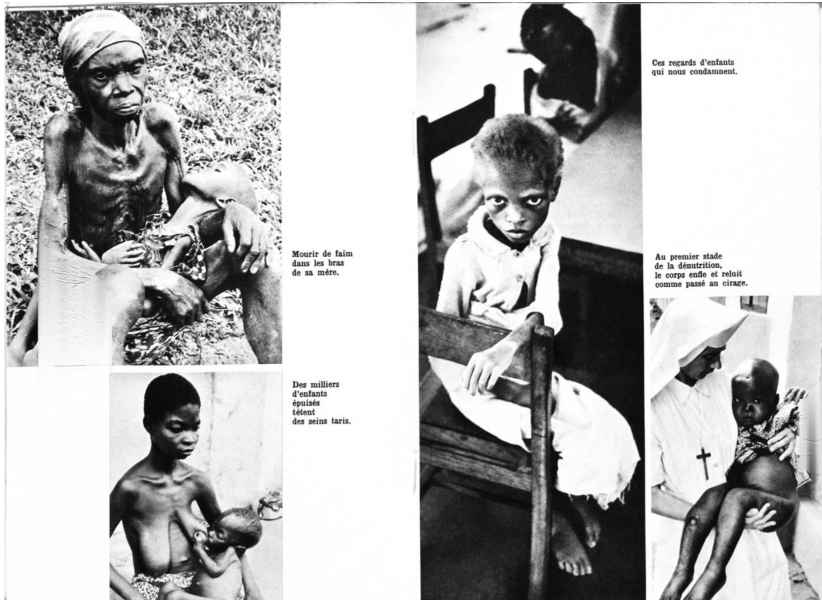


Figure 5.3 Jean Buhler, *Tuez-Les Tous! Guerre de Sécession au Biafra* (Paris, 1968), between pp. 46 and 47. © Flammarion, 1968.

the pain becomes visually legible on the depicted body.[51] Journalists and physicians also provided detailed textual descriptions of the "skeleton-children's deformed bodies."[52] In one of the most comprehensive accounts, the Swiss journalist Jean Buhler divides the process into three phases: in the first stage, joints and other body parts begin to swell, and "the skin gleams as if slathered with polish." Painful growths develop, starting to consume the flesh. Urine leaks uncontrollably. The second stage is yet more excruciating. "The whole skin is covered with grey blisters and comes off in little flakes." The now developing skin is "copper-colored. The hair turns red or white and falls out. Many small children are bald." In the third state, "[they] desire nothing, feel [. . .] nothing. They turned into living dead. [. . .]."[53] The German magazine

51 Scarry, *Body in Pain*, 131; Linfield, *Cruel Radiance*, 39.

52 "Nur beten," *Spiegel*, 19.8.1968, 71–6. See also Bruno Gans, "A Biafran Relief Mission," *The Lancet*, 29.3.1969, 660–5; Pascal Grellety-Bosviel, "Bloc-notes d'un médecin au Biafra," *La Croix* March 14, 1969, 10; Howard A. Rusk, "Starvation in Biafra: Symptoms like those of the victims in Nigerian dispute are described," *The New York Times*, September 22, 1968, 49.

53 Bühler, *Biafra: Tragödie*, 64.

Stern captioned a scene of Biafrans dying in their village in the same vein: "The last stage of hunger: gradual drifting off into death."[54]

As some scholars argue, the way aid recipients are represented in humanitarian campaigns strips them of their individuality, and the victims' own voices remain unheard.[55] The Biafrans were thus rarely represented as individuals, almost never given names,[56] or quoted. They dissolved into what Liisa Malkki calls a "sea of humanity."[57] Photographs regularly show Biafran children in tightly packed groups.[58] In the few photographs that feature male, grown-up Biafrans, these men are also shown as indistinguishable parts of vast mass of bodies, "a spectacle of 'raw,' 'bare' humanity."[59] These processes remain at work in pictures of individual victims. One caption to the image of a Biafran boy reads: "He is Ibo. He is eight years old." The boy's age and ethnic belonging suffice to evoke his tragic fate. The children in these texts exist almost solely as part of a collective subject, that of the dying Biafran "people." As readers of *Die Zeit* were told: "A people dies, it dies in front of the eyes of the world."[60]

That the children were frequently barely dressed, many of them completely naked, also served to strip them of their individuality. There is little evidence that journalists, newspaper editors, or contemporaries saw these images as potentially inappropriate.[61] In part, they may have understood that coverage of a "catastrophe" required explicit images. But such representations also recalled colonial visual regimes: depictions of nude colonized subjects had been a common element of Western viewing patterns of the colonial "Other," and may thus have been perceived as "normal."[62] But, perhaps more importantly, the children's nudity fulfilled a function: stripped of their clothes, these children – and very often their mothers – were no longer individuals, but naked humanity.

Along with the photographs showing starvation – death in progress – other images showed literal death. This evocation of Biafra as a place

[54] "Die verhungernden Kinder von Biafra," *Stern*, July 28, 1968, 12–19, here 14.

[55] See Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries"; Malkki, "Children, Humanity"; Burman, *Developments*, 151–4; Burman, "Innocents Abroad"; Campbell, "Iconography of Famine"; Moeller, "Hierarchy of Innocence"; Suski, "Children, Suffering."

[56] For one of the very few exceptions see the reports in *The Sun*, June 12, 1968, 1–3.

[57] Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries," 388.

[58] See for instance *Mort du Biafra*, 20–1.

[59] Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries," 387. See e.g. *Spiegel*, August 19, 1968 cover.

[60] Hans Gresmann, "Mord ohne Gericht," *Die Zeit*, August 9, 1968, 1.

[61] For an exception see McCullin, *Unreasonable Behaviour*, 120, which may be an autobiographical ex post construction, however.

[62] On the visual history of colonialism and anthropology, see Landau and Kaspin, eds., *Images and Empires*; Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology*; Ryan, *Picturing Empire*, esp. ch. 5.

of death, the "epitome of horror,"[63] was often conveyed through photographs of and textual references to vultures. *Time* magazine and a number of other international papers reported of "the emaciated bodies of a brother and sister" found in Ikot Ekpene, a violently contested town near the frontline. Their "eyes had been pecked out by vultures still circling overhead, waiting to attack a line of wasted bodies in a ditch outside of town."[64] According to *L'Express*, vultures "followed the war from mass grave to mass grave."[65] Another sensory sign of the omnipresent death was its stench: "In Biafra, odor precedes horror."[66] At sites like the prison in Ikot Ekpene, the "world's biggest morgue," the journalists could smell what they would see already miles before: "a sea of corpses."[67] In modern European societies, the space of life and the space of death were separated from one another, both in a visual sense and an olfactory one.[68] But in Biafra, these separations could not be upheld. This is also evoked by photographs depicting starving children alongside their dying or already dead companions.[69] The ubiquitous sight and smell of death cast Biafra outside the order of modern civilization. Here, the colonial image of Africa as a continent of death forcefully returned to the mental map of Africans' contemporaries across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic.[70]

That the innocent civilians dying were almost entirely imagined as children was crucial for the evocative nature of this vision of Biafra. No longer seen as a workforce to be leveraged, in the modern era, children have become consumers exclusively. Raising children thus has become much more cost-intensive, and most parents decide to have fewer children than previous generations did. In turn, a much larger financial and

[63] "Au Biafra, le comble de l'horreur,"*Paris Match*, August 10, 1968, 28–33. See also "A Bitter African Harvest," *Time*, July 12, 1968, 20–1.

[64] "Nigeria's civil war: hate, hunger and the will to survive," *Time*, August 23, 1968, 20–8. See also Yves-Guy Bergès, "Biafra: Les vautours, repus de cadavres, ne s' envolent même plus au passage des vivants," *France Soir*, August 22, 1968, 5 and Frederick Forsyth, "Biafra Starves," *The Illustrated London News*, July 20, 1968, 19–21.

[65] O. L., "La paix au bout de charniers," *L'Express*, May 6, 1968, 18. See also James R. Shepley, "A letter from the publisher," *Time*, August 23, 1968, 9; "Five weeks to total disaster," *The Economist*, July 2, 1968, 25 and "Ein Volk stirbt," *Spiegel*, September 2, 1968, 94–5, photo on 95.

[66] François Dupuis: "J'ai vu les Biafrais vaincre à Oguta," L*'Express*, September 23, 1968, 22. A later edition read that the region was muffled by "l'odeur imprégnante de la mort." "Biafra: La fin," *L'Express*, October 7, 1968, 24. See also the article reprinted from *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 28. April 1968 in Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben?*, 105.

[67] Raffelberg, "Leichenhaus," 116.

[68] Corbin, *Le miasme*, 105–30; Ariès, *L'homme*.

[69] See for instance AP Photograph, "Port Harcourt, Jeudi. 'Oublier . . .,'" *L'Express*, January 26, 1970, 24.

[70] On this view of Africa in colonial times see Eckert, "Verheißung," 273; Curtin, *Disease and Empire*.

emotional capital is invested in these children. Also because there were fewer of them, children were increasingly seen to be in need of special protection and rights, as they were understood to be the bearers of human future.[71] As a consequence of this reconfiguration of childhood, campaigns of charity organizations and sentimental human-interest stories in the mass media established an iconography of suffering children. Children could now be used to transmit urgent humanitarian messages: if ameliorative actions are not immediately and decisively taken, this future will be over.[72]

The figure of the child had stood as the primary icon of humanity since World War II. As a cultural icon, children are often understood to signify the future, sometimes even the future of humanity, of all the "family of man." The latter was the title of a 1955 photographic exhibition that became a global success and which, together with other projects like David Seymour's UNESCO-funded "children of Europe," epitomized the efforts of photographers to depict a unified humanity. Urging their audiences to identify with a great variety of human beings despite apparent differences, the work of photographers began to provide the "lingua franca" of the postwar search for a renewed universalism of global morality – and the figure of the child became its primary visual vehicle.[73]

The association between children and the future of mankind was particularly strong during decolonization when the long-held view that colonized peoples were stuck in the early developmental stages of humanity's infancy acquired entirely new meanings. A powerful example for this iconography is provided by an ad campaign that the British investment bank Barclay's ran in the London-based journal *West Africa* in 1962. Here, African children are allowed to dream of a future similar to that of their peers in Western Europe or North America, with fathers in new suits working in banks and mothers taking care of a household with all imaginable modern appliances (Figure 5.4). "Joseph" and the other children in the campaign personify "young Africa," and the continent's postcolonial potential for economic growth – a huge emerging market, the stuff that the dreams of investors were made of. With Barclay's help, "progress" would be brought to Africa and these children arrive in the modern age.[74]

[71] Cunningham, *Children*, 177–8; Gillis, "Birth."
[72] Malkki, "Children, Humanity"; Zelizer, *About to Die*, esp. 162–72.
[73] Hoffmann, "Gazing at Ruins," 348. That this universalism denied the "determining weight of history" had already been emphasized by Sontag, *Photography*, 33.
[74] *West Africa*, November 10, 1962, 1242. See also ibid., October 27, 1962; 1186; ibid., December 8, 1962, 1354; ibid., December 15, 1962, 1386; ibid., December 29, 1962, 1446. I thank Stephan Malinowski for pointing me to this campaign.

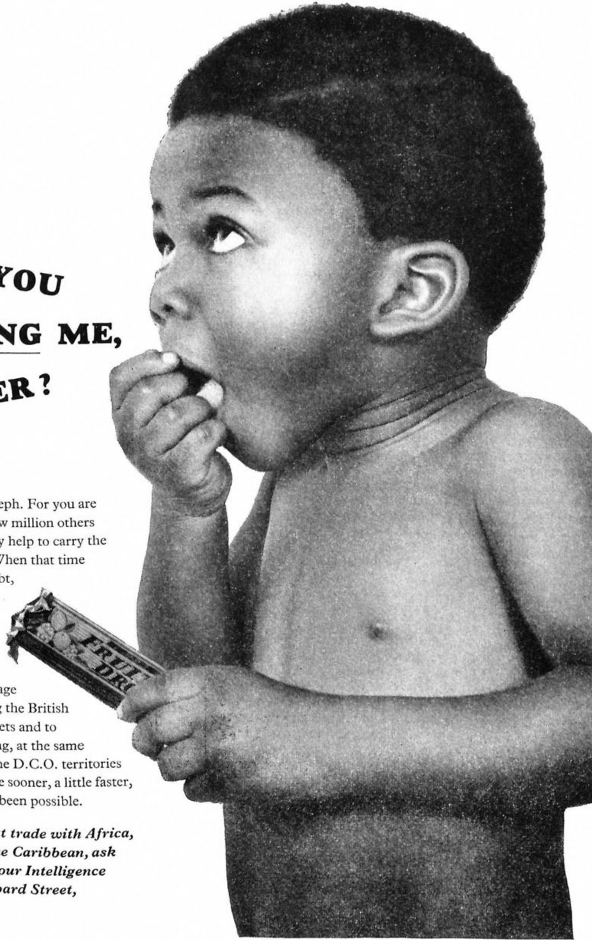


Figure 5.4 *West Africa*, November 10, 1962, 1242.

These iconographic patterns help to explain the impact that the global diffusion of images of starving African children in the summer and autumn months of 1968 had on contemporaries. Only years before, during independence, Westerners had considered Nigeria a particularly promising state of the postcolonial future, a well developing democracy on the verge of modernity. Now, the children of Biafra symbolized the dystopian turn Nigeria's – and, implicitly, the continent's – postcolonial development had taken. Rather than experiencing the promises of the civilized future, they were cast back into civilizational disorder and atavistic barbarity. Even the first media reports cast Biafra as a "Land of no Hope," a country "Where Children Wait to Die."[75] The Biafran children metonymically represented the future of a place for which there was no hope – and thus no future. The uses of a picture taken by Magnum photographer Bruno Barbey on his trip to Nigeria in 1967, printed by a number of publications around the world in summer 1968, is helpful to explore these connections. The image shows a promotional sign of the dairy company SMA nutrition which greets visitors arriving in Lagos, with a bouncy toddler joyfully holding up a spoon which he is about to sink into a can of SMA baby food: "Welcome to Nigeria. Where Babies are happy and healthy" (Figure 5.5). The bitter irony could not escape the contemporary reader. The slogan now sounded like the most "disgraceful cynicism for the famished children of Biafra": within a few years, the hale and hearty youngsters of auspicious Nigeria had become Biafran babies, doomed to die a premature death through disease and starvation.[76]

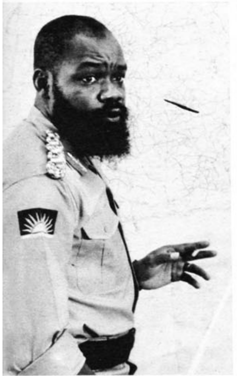
Bonds and Borders of Empathy: The Humanitarian Gaze and Emotional Communities of Witnessing

By summer 1968, a growing number of Westerners had journeyed to Biafra. But most contemporaries "witnessed" Biafra only through their TV screens and newspaper pages, mediated through the experience of observers in the field: journalists and aid workers. An analysis of the interplay of photographs and texts and of different iconographic patterns and figures which defined these representations can be helpful to understand the emotional connections – and limits – fostered through the media reports. A five-page report by the photojournalist Karl Breyer in the German weekly *Quick* featured large photographs of three of the

[75] "The Land of no Hope" and "Children Wait to Die," *The Sun*, June 12, 1968, 1–2, 3.

[76] See "Die verhungernden Kinder von Biafra," *Stern*, July 28, 1968, 18; Alfred Friendly, Jr., "The pessimists have always been right," *New York Times*, July 28, 1968, 134 and *Pogrom* 1, No. 4/5 (1970), 23.

Ein Kampf gegen zwei Feinde – Nigeria und den Hungertod



Biafra-Staatschef Ojukwu: »Lieber Massenselbstmord als kapitulieren«

»Willkommen in Nigeria, wo Babys glücklich und gesund sind«, verkündet das Reklameschild einer Fabrik für Kindernahrungsmittel in der Hauptstadt Lagos. Es klingt wie ein infamer Hohn auf die verhungernden Kinder Biafras

Hier glaubt ein ganzes Volk in seiner Existenz bedroht zu sein und vereint sich im Kampf und im Haß." Das berichteten vor fast einem Jahr die Sternreporter Claude Deffarge und Gordian Troeller aus Biafra (STERN Nr. 41/1967). Damals war der STERN die erste deutsche Zeitung, die von Biafra aus den beginnenden Krieg schilderte.

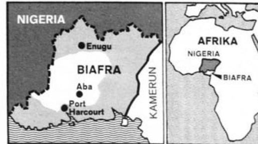
Aber auch das berichteten die Sternreporter damals: „Falls der Krieg länger dauert, dürften Zucker, Milch und Salz knapp werden."

Inzwischen hat die ganze Welt von diesem Krieg in Biafra Notiz genommen, denn nicht nur Zucker, Milch und Salz wurden knapp. Biafra hungert, Biafra verhungert. Wenn sich die gegenwärtige Situation nicht bald und sehr radikal ändert – nichts spricht im Augenblick dafür –, werden bis Ende dieses Jahres in dem kleinen Land von der Größe Bayerns fast vier Millionen Menschen verhungert sein, so schätzt der Caritas-Verband. 50 000 Biafraner sind bisher im Krieg gefallen.

Biafra ist von allen Zufahrtswegen abgeschnitten. Nigerias Truppen, ausgerüstet mit den modernsten Waffen Großbritanniens, der Sowjetunion und der ČSSR, haben fast die Hälfte der verhungernden Provinz besetzt. Biafra kann sich nur noch aus der Luft versorgen.

Für 25 000 Dollar (100 000 Mark) pro Flug landen ein paarmal in der Woche klapperige, von den europäischen Fluggesellschaften längst ausrangierte Transportmaschinen einer unternehmungslustigen Charterfirma auf den behelfsmäßig hergerichteten Pisten des Urwalds.

Sie schaffen, wenn sie nicht bei der Landung zerschellen, Waffen und Munition heran. Und auch Lebensmittel: 11 Tonnen am Tag. Dabei müßte Biafra, selbst wenn es bloß seine hungrigen Kinder versorgen wollte, 200 Tonnen am Tag haben; um jedem der dreizehn Millionen Biafraner auch nur eine bescheidene Mahlzeit am Tag zu geben, müßten es sogar 11 000 Tonnen sein. Biafra selbst produziert kaum noch Nahrungsmittel. Der fruchtbare Boden der westafrikanischen Provinz ist verödet, der grausame Kampf läßt keine Zeit zum Säen und zum Ernten.



Grau: die eroberten Gebiete Biafras

Nur eines hat sich in den letzten elf Monaten in Biafra nicht verändert, der Haß und die Entschlossenheit, sich Nigeria nie zu unterwerfen. Sieben Jahre lang hatte die künstlich geschaffene Föderation Nigeria gehalten, die beim Abzug der Kolonialmacht England aus vier verfeindeten Stämmen gebildet worden war – den Haussa, den Joruba, den Fulani und den Ibos. Dann fielen die Haussa über die Ibos her. 30 000 wurden massakriert. Der Rest flüchtete in die Stammesheimat der Ibos, nach Biafra. Biafra erklärte sich für unabhängig. So begann der Bürgerkrieg.

Den Biafranern half niemand. Die alten Charterflugzeuge, die Munition und Grießbrei nach Biafra fliegen, laden auf dem Rückflug nach Europa einheimische Rohstoffe ein. Für den Erlös wird neue Munition gekauft.

Friedensverhandlungen zwischen Biafra und Nigeria sind gescheitert. Biafra will auch keine Lebensmittel, die durch nigerianisches Gebiet kommen. Man fürchtet, die Nigerianer könnten sie vergiften. Und Nigeria lehnt eine Lebensmittel-Luftbrücke nach Biafra ab.

So kämpft Biafra gegen zwei Feinde: Nigeria und den Hungertod. Beide scheinen zu siegen.

18 stern

Figure 5.5 *Stern*, July 28, 1968, 18. Reproduced by permission of Picture Press.

principal humanitarian visions of Biafra: a missionary trying to save souls, a baby dying, and vultures lurking (Figure 5.6).[77] The three figures embody Laqueur's triad of benefactor, victim, and evil: the deformations of the bodies and the leering vultures represent the evils of death

[77] *Quick*, August 14, 1968, 12–13.

Figure 5.6 *Quick*, August 14, 1968, 10–11.

and illness; with missionaries-as-benefactors trying to save the bodies and souls of the children, the quintessentially innocent victims. The headings, captions, and the article's text further underline these interrelations. One heading calls on the audience to "help! help! help!"; the text quotes the Dutch surgeon Herman Middelkoop: the children "are all dead already, but they don't know it yet.'"[78] The Western doctor does, however. He – unlike the victims represented as an individual, introduced by name and given a voice – can see and identify a reality still invisible to the mass of African victims.[79]

The visual mise-en-scène of benefactors and victims in the *Quick* report is also characteristic in another regard: images of missionaries cradling a Biafran infant were omnipresent photographic representations of Biafra. This composition bears different traces of the pictorial staging of compassion: the gesture is well known from social documentary photographs as well as images depicting motherly care. Yet the primary point of reference is a tradition of Christian iconography: the *Pietà*, the

[78] "helft! helft! helft! Hungertod droht Millionen," *Quick*, August 14, 1968, 10–14, quotes on 10, 11, 12.
[79] For a similar examples see "Preliminary Prospectus 'Americans for Biafran Relief,'" (American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1969, Ba-Biafra, Box 86), 6.

suffering Mary holding her dying son Jesus.[80] Fittingly, this imagery is especially widespread in publications Christian organizations produced on Biafra.[81] But it featured widely in mass media reports as well.[82] Western aid workers were cast as empathic individuals, devoting their life to the care of others. The benefactors were shown in a position of motherly devotion, even Marian purity. By inscribing these photographs into Christian visual traditions, the depicted benefactors and the victims were transformed into sacralized subjects, embodiments of innocent devotion and care, suffering for the sins of others.

The benefactor in the Biafran *Pietà* was frequently white. Even though many aid workers were African, including nurses in the missionary stations and hospitals of Biafra, they rarely appeared in photographs. When African nurses were shown, their photographs were printed in small size or they are depicted as groups.[83] Biafran mothers and their children were often depicted in a *Pietà* composition, but only as a staging of a tragic fate of futile motherly love. The Biafran women were as cadaverous as their children; their bare breasts, as in an oft-reproduced photograph McCullin took in Biafra (Figure 5.7), were emaciated and surely would not produce the mother's milk their children needed (see also Figure 5.3). These images contrasted sharply with the pictures of well nourished, healthy-looking Western priests, nurses, and sisters shown in similar gestures of maternal care (Figures 5.6, 5.8, and 5.9). With the Biafran mother close to death and unable to care for her children, Westerners were shown as the saviors of the Biafran family's doomed offspring.

However, even in this composition connoting motherly love, the large portraits and cover pages belong to white male Westerners. Western women – even though they were important for the humanitarian operation – played a sub-ordinate role in these reports and visual representations. Male protagonists were commonly referred to by name. The reports left some room for accounts of their individuality and regularly quote them, often at length. This is underlined by the contrast between the public authority given to representatives of the Order of the Holy Ghost Fathers and the near-total silence in virtually all coverage of the

[80] On this iconography see Knoch, "Mediale Trauer"; Schulte, "Kollwitz' Opfer."

[81] See, e.g., Caritas Internationalis, *Intercaritas* (July–December 1968), cover and *Das Diakonische Werk* 1 (January 1969), cover and 6.

[82] See, e.g., the photographs by Ronald Burton *The Sun*, June 12, 1968, 1, Jean-Claude Sauer, *Paris Match*, August 10, 1968, 31, and the pictures in Buhler, *Tuez-Les Tous!*, between 46–7 and at the bottom right on 26 of *Mort du Biafra*.

[83] See for instance *Quick*, August 14, 1968, 12 or *Das Diakonische Werk* 1 (January 1969), 2 and 6.

Figure 5.7 "A 24-year-old mother . . . ," *Sunday Times*, June 1, 1969, pictorial supplement, 48–9, photographer: Donald McCullin. © Don McCullin / Contact Press Images / Agentur Focus.

crisis on the work of Irish nuns.[84] This reflected the gendered hierarchies of religious relief organizations, in which male missionaries occupied the leading positions and acted as their public voice both abroad and in the enclave, where they welcomed international media representatives. Non-religious humanitarian organizations were little different. For Kip Warr, member of the Oxfam field team in Biafra, the gendered distribution of roles was clear-cut. In caring for orphans, the ICRC nurse Sister Rita Carolan "behaved as their mother." He and his colleague Eric

[84] Their role is briefly acknowledged by Forsyth, *Making*, 210.

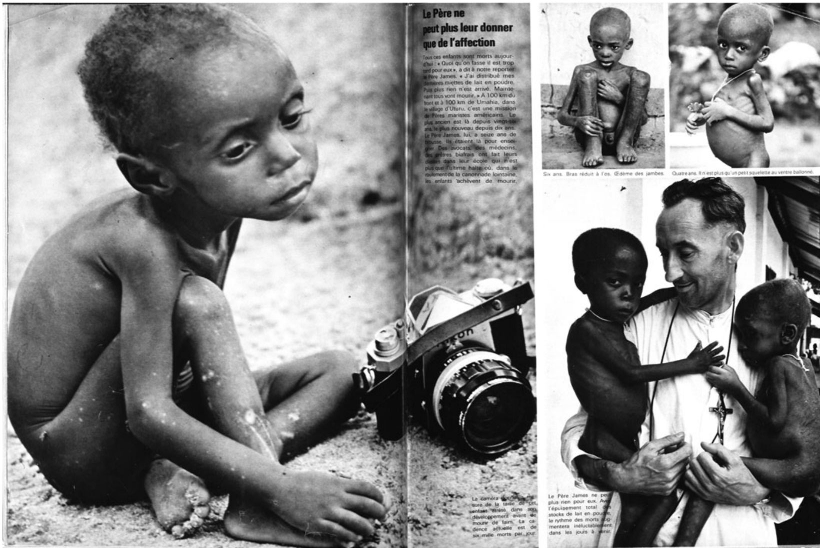


Figure 5.8 *Paris Match*, August 10, 1968, 30–1, Photographer: Jean-Claude Sauer. © Paris Match / Scoop.

Watts, however, were "the brains behind our huge successes [...]."[85] In this landscape of crisis, white men had the agency. Such configurations of masculinity were similarly characteristic of the heroic stories about the Swedish Count Gustaf von Rosen, pioneer aviator whose flight squadron repeatedly breached the blockade in highly publicized humanitarian missions.[86] In these narratives, the humanitarian crisis became the background to the performances of brave and selfless actions of Western men – the only force which could avert the disaster.[87]

The effects of Western agency in the "zone" are not free of ambivalence – not even the actions of humanitarian workers. In an article in late September 1968, the French news magazine *L'Express* describes how Edmond Kaiser of Terre des Hommes, head of the organization's aid operation in Biafra, visits a refugee camp in Oboro. In view of the starving children he would have been moved so much that he decided to

[85] Kip Warr to Kirkley, November 11, 1969 (OXA: Nigeria Civil War Box 2210, file 1: Medical Team).

[86] Lloyd Garrison, "Swede, Defying Blockade, Flies New Route to Biafra" *New York Times*, August 14, 1968, 1; Garrison, "A Legendary Swedish Aviator: Carl-Gustav von Rosen," *New York Times*, August 21, 1968, 2; Rosen, *Ghetto Biafrais*.

[87] See also Hilton, *Highly Irregular*; Huyssen, *Gefährliche Mission* and Thankmar von Münchhausen, "Letzter Flug von 'Annabelle': Ein amerikanischer Missionsarzt berichtet aus dem Kessel Biafra, *FAZ*, October 4, 1968, 6.

DAS DIAKONISCHE WERK

E 2431 E
Januar 1969
Stuttgart
1

Rettung für Biafras Kinder

Figure 5.9 *Das Diakonische Werk* 1 (January 1969), cover. Reproduced by permission of Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung.

fly the children to Libreville that same day.[88] Such fantasies of rescuing Biafran children were common in journalistic representations of the conflict – and indeed put into practice.[89] Here, the humanitarian witnesses' "proprietary interest in those whom they aid," as Laqueur describes it, is turned into an explicit demand.[90] Yet the assumptions of power underlying this apparently righteous deed were not considered. The question whether this was a "benign" form of child abduction was not raised in Western media.[91]

In a similar vein, emotional reactions of Western observers are privileged over those of the Biafrans, and become "templates of emotion" for their audiences at home.[92] In a letter published in the volume *Soll Biafra überleben?*, edited by Aktion Biafra-Hilfe members Tilman Zülch and Klaus Guercke, an unnamed young Catholic nurse narrates her experience of the 1966 massacres. She points out to her addressee: "If you could see the thousands of refugees, you would cry."[93] Connected through these bonds of compassion, the writers and their audience witness the events together as an "emotional community."[94] But in practice, the emotional regime at work also creates new differences: between those who suffer and those who empathically watch them.

These differences exist also in the responses of western aid workers and Biafrans to the suffering. A paragraph in which the Swiss journalist Jean Buhler narrated his visit to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Umuahia is insightful in this regard. Buhler wrote about Dr. Middelkoop, the surgeon in the Umuahia hospital who had become almost a celebrity in humanitarian reports about Biafra. The young Dutch doctor, on a mission "at the front line against suffering," had to choke his emotions through reason. "His eyes are streaming in tears as he shows me a young girl reduced to a skeleton, who, seized with urine flow, still possessed the dignity to be ashamed by this condition." Even Middelkoop as a representative of Western science and reason, has to fight his feelings in this situation. Buhler, in contrast, would be a "hardened witness of human misery," as he had

88 Dupuis, "J'ai vu les Biafrais," 23.
89 See e.g. John W. McCormack to Dean Rusk, August 19, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27–9 Biafra – Nigeria, Box 1881).
90 Laqueur, "Bodies, Details," 180.
91 See e.g. Yves-Guy Bergès, "Biafra: Les camps de réfugiés sont des Buchenwald pour moins de 13 ans," *France Soir*, August 25–6, 1968, 2.
92 This term is a variation on a formulation by Bösch and Borutta, "Medien und Emotionen," 13.
93 "Augenzeugenbericht einer jungen katholischen Schwester, 106. See also James R. Shepley, "A Letter from the Publisher," *Time*, August 23, 1968, 9.
94 Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions."

roamed the streets of Kolkata when three hundred people were consumed by hunger each night; as I have been to the high planes of New Guinea where I saw women infested with Kuru, the lethal laughter, who had eaten the rotting cerebral matter of their grandfathers or of a beaten enemy; as I have visited the Greek refugees of Western Macedonia in the dead of winter, who had to live in rat holes next to their villages which had been completely destroyed by the Communist terrorists.

What he witnessed in Biafra would be "barely different – but different still!" In Biafra, even he reacted emphatically: "And now my composure is gone, too . . . " he evocatively ended the paragraph.[95]. The German journalist Ruth Bowert reported very similarly that in Biafra she has "seen journalists, who have been to the Congo and Vietnam: they wanted to take photographs, but tears were running down their cheeks."[96]

The victims, by contrast, reacted stoically. *L'Express* emphasized how the Biafran children who embarked on a refugee flight organized by Terre des Hommes did not cry.[97] They calmly accept their fate in a state of quietness that oscillates between fatalistic hopelessness and dignified composure. One of the aid workers, Mme Bourdens, was on board to tend to the children. "She takes into her arms a three-year old girl who tells her in perfect English, 'Thank you, ma'am, thank you for everything you do for us.'"[98] In the rare moments when journalists let Biafran children speak, their words were simply: "thank you." These passages illuminate the emotional bonds present in humanitarian texts about Biafra. Whereas Western witnesses, aid workers and – to a lesser degree – journalists, had strong reactions, the African victims simply endured their fate. In colonial discourse, emotions were frequently understood as the Other to Western reason.[99] In humanitarian representations of Biafra, these attributions were more ambiguous, at times even inverted. This becomes explicit in Buhler's account:

One often thinks that the Africans would be boisterous, wildly gesticulating southerners, who freely give vent to their emotions. Certainly they vividly react to external influences, and sudden surges of emotion can flood their eyes with tears, even if they had laughed only a second before. However, their deeper soul is bound to wise rules. Their spirit seems constituted by proverbs. An age-old tradition teaches them to cultivate restraint and dignity.[100]

[95] Bühler, *Biafra*, 60–61; see also Ruth Bowert, "Biafra: Massenmord und kein Ende. Ein Appell an die Heimat," *Rheinischer Merkur*, August 9, 1968, 24.
[96] Ruth Bowert, "Biafra: Massenmord und kein Ende. Ein Appell an die Heimat," *Rheinischer Merkur*, August 9, 1968, 24.
[97] Dupuis, "J'ai vu les Biafrais," 23. Bühler, *Biafra*, 60–1.
[98] Dupuis, "J'ai vu les Biafrais," 23.
[99] Bösch and Borutta, "Medien und Emotionen," 18.
[100] Bühler, *Biafra*, 37.

Buhler writes about Africans in general here. But he often explains these characteristics as particularly "Igbo."[101]

These oppositions are characteristic of the sentimental narratives about Biafra: the victims stoically endured their plight in a situation in which grown white men have to cry. These representations of public male emotions simultaneously called conventional masculinity into question and worked toward reaffirming it. The war correspondents gave – whatever spare – room to descriptions of their emotional reactions to the scenes they witnessed, while still presenting themselves as hardened men, inured to human suffering. Yet the emotional reactions of Western medical personal and aid workers are often described at length, regardless of whether they are male or female. Through the depictions of white Westerners as emotional subjects, readers at home were invited to emotionally experience the humanitarian crisis in Biafra through the eyes of these witnesses. In this "politics of pity," the subjects with the power to change the future for the better are the Western witnesses – those in the field in Biafra as well as those at home.[102] Emotional communities were created that united different Western observers while excluding Biafran victims as unrecognizable subjects, parts of a sea of humanity. Bonds of empathy thus at the same time became borders of empathy. The Biafran victims were representatives of a bare, naked humanity: passive, voiceless objects of a Western humanitarian gaze.[103]

Empathizing with the Other? Biafra, Western Civilization, and Africa's Postcolonial Futures

The media reports about Biafra revolve around the figure of the starving child as an icon of universal humanity. This, however, was often undercut by constructions of difference. Biafra was cast as a place of civilizational disorder, where famine and suffering were omnipresent and the air smelled of death. But this catastrophe befell a people who were repeatedly described as being "untypical" Africans. Journalists and activists portrayed the Igbos as a rare example of African modernity. The Biafrans are recurrently described as a successfully westernized, modern, yet also devoutly Christian people. Biafra was simultaneously an enclave of Christianity and of Western modernity in a postcolonial Africa in which the forces of savagery and Islam were on the march:

[101] Ibid., 62–3. [102] Boltanski, *Distant Suffering*.
[103] For a similar position see Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries."

civilized Africa's last hope.[104] But this hope was already disappointed. The children of Biafra symbolized the stillbirth of Africa's postcolonial future.

The historian Immanuel Geiss, *Privatdozent* at Hamburg University, served as one of the German Biafra lobby's primary interpreters of the civil war. Geiss was a patron of the Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, spoke at Biafra protest events, and published avowedly pro-Biafran pieces in the mainstream press.[105] In his texts, Geiss combined anti-Muslim rhetoric with a call for democratic "Western" values.[106] Like many others at the time, Geiss integrated his account of the conflict into the paradigms of "modernization" and "civilization." The Igbos, who, despite their "village democracy," had been Nigeria's least developed ethnic group in the nineteenth century, outpaced their competitors under colonial rule. Now differences in "civilizational level" had to lead to an exacerbation of the conflict. After the Igbos' secession, the Hausa-Fulani North violently tried to subjugate Biafra to defend their "medieaval feudal despotism." The Islamic leadership thus pursued the Biafran people‘s "destruction [. . .], the least democratic and most inhumane solution" conceivable.[107]

These patterns were also characteristic for mainstream media reports. In his account, the French journalist Bergès explains the conflict through an analogy to French history: "Everything began with a Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre."[108] The conflict was inscribed into national and European religious history. The religious coloring of the conflict, going back to the accounts by Christian missionaries and Biafran propagandists, was still present: for Bergès and others, Biafra was an ongoing religious conflict between a Muslim North and a Christian South. The Hausa were characterized as an Islamic people in orientalist terms. Mounted on the minaret of the mosque of Kano, Bergès watched the procession on the day of the "biggest Muslim holiday of the year," one of their "medieval holidays."[109] Setting up the scene like a

[104] These representations echoed Biafran rhetoric, which continued to exert some influence. See e.g. Ojukwu, *Biafra, volume I: Selected Speeches*; Ojukwu, *Biafra, volume II: Random Thoughts*.

[105] Maria M. Biniek to Olaf von Wrangel, September 8, 1968 (EZA 87/1118); "Biafra – Todesurteil für ein Volk: Podiumsgespräch am Mittwoch, dem 2. Oktober, 20 Uhr, Audimax" (GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–71); Imanuel Geiss, "Ein böses Ende: Vorgeschichte eines Völkermordes," *Die Zeit*, November 15, 1968, 28.

[106] See also Geiss, "Pan-Africanism," 200.

[107] Geiss, "Der Krieg zwischen Nigeria und Biafra," 20, 21, 27, 28. See also a less partisan position in Geiss, "Nigeria: Zur Vorgeschichte."

[108] Yves-Guy Bergès, "Biafra: Tout a commencé par une Saint-Barthélemy: 30.000 Ibos massacrés," *France Soir*, August 24, 1968, 8. The trope was later echoed in *Mort du Biafra*, 66.

[109] Bergès, "Biafra: Tout a commencé," 8.

picture, he watched this exhibit of Nigerian orientalism from an external – and elevated – observer position:[110] "a human river of more than a million followers wearing cotton skullcaps and dressed in long pastel-colored robes, responding to the prayers recited by the muezzin in a deep wave, which evoked the sound of the sea."[111] This metaphor of Nigerian Muslims as a "human river" is typical of contemporary representations of Islam in Africa, which was cast as an expanding power, a "tidal wave" threatening to flood the continent after the exit of the colonial masters, almost as unstoppable as a force of nature.[112] Yet Bergès explains that this spectacle has to be used "to understand that there are more similarities between a Laplander and an Andalusian than between a Hausa and an Ibo." Bergès continues, "until the beginning of the century, Hausas and Ibos were not even aware of each another. Everything separated them: religion, language, climate (dry and desert-like in the north, hot and humid in the south)."[113] To this list, the French journalist might have added: civilization. It is a discourse of civilization, which, in the end, separates the two: whereas the Nigerian North forms part of an Arab-Muslim world, the Igbos were converted not only to Christianity, but to Western modernity.[114]

Bergès, firmly in line with dominant patterns of representation, portrays the Igbos as the Nigerians who got the better positions in trade and government. One day before, readers of *Time* magazine were told that, "Ibos had been the mandarins of the government, the army, the professions."[115] Imanuel Geiss explained that the "Igbo are presently the most dynamic and industrious people in the whole of Africa, which should not allow itself the loss of this modernizing element."[116] The roots of the conflict were frequently detected in the colonial past when the "intelligent and flexible Igbo" seized key positions in the colonial administration – thus incurring the jealousy of the conservative Hausa.[117] After independence the tensions between the Igbos and their Muslim compatriots rose to a new level.[118] Yet even after the savage

[110] This search for a "point of view" from which such scenes were represented is reminiscent of classic orientalist writings. See Mitchell, "World," 229.
[111] Bergès, "Biafra: Tout a commencé," 8.
[112] Represented quite similarly, the same procession in Kano had also featured in a photojournalistic report in *Stern* just a few years before. Städter, *Verwandelte Blicke*, 259–62; See also Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution*, xi.
[113] Bergès, "Biafra: Tout a commencé," 8.
[114] On the Biafran self-representation as "modern" and "civilized" see Anthony, "'Resourceful and Progressive Blackmen.'"
[115] "Nigeria's civil war," 21.
[116] Geiss, "Der Krieg zwischen Nigeria und Biafra," 17–28.
[117] "Letzter Akt," *Spiegel*, 1968, May 27, 1968, 129–130.
[118] See also Laura Revelli-Beaumont, "Les juifs de l'Afrique," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, February 14, 1968, Nr. 170, 14.

Muslims of the North had wreaked havoc upon the Igbos in the 1966 pogroms and the ensuing civil war, the Igbos did not succumb. Western observers frequently emphasized the Biafrans' efforts to try to keep the country running in the face of war, starvation and devastation. Max Récamier and Bernard Kouchner declared in *Le Monde*: "Biafra, despite the war, remains an organized country."[119] The Swiss journalist Jean Buhler explained that a stroll through Aba holds many surprises. Having prepared himself for a sight reminiscent of Warsaw in 1944, the journalist found a "reality which does not correspond with these imaginings" of Europeans. Even if Biafra is a place of death, disease, and disorder, the Biafrans tried their best to remain civilized. During his stay in a Biafran hotel aptly called "Progress," the journalist awoke in an orderly and welcoming surrounding. Although the country was at war, "friendly smiling secretaries" appeared at work on time and welcomed the guest at the reception in European dress.[120] Such markers of order and civility highlight the Biafrans as civilized subjects, who recognized the value of labor and religion. Buhler described following a group dressed for Sunday Mass: "Men in black or grey suits, thoroughly polished shoes, with carefully tied ties, women and girls draped in local cloths or European dresses, [...] children in nice appearance, seemingly happy and content."[121] Here, the Biafrans ceased to be mere figures of a sea of humanity. Perhaps they were still not complete individuals, but, through their dress as markers of Western values, they were vested with an identity exceeding that of bare humanity: they become modern, Westernized African men, women and children. The assumption that the Biafrans were somehow the better, more orderly and civilized was sometimes couched in racist terms. As the German journalist Günter Krabbe wrote: "it does not negro" in Biafra.[122]

However, amidst the postcolonial disaster that Nigeria had become, the life of Africa's modern family was endangered. The danger of decay was evoked by a number of reports about Biafran "ghost towns," for instance, formerly modern cities whose inhabitants had fled because of the approaching Nigerian forces.[123] These deserted cityscapes are a

[119] Max Récamier/Bernard Kouchner, "Deux Médecins Français Témoignent," *Le Monde*, November 27, 1968, 15. Kouchner repeats this statement briefly after the end of the war. "Témoignage: Un médecin accuse," 20.

[120] Buhler, *Biafra*, 21. [121] Ibid., 26.

[122] Günter Krabbe, "Kein Chaos in Biafra," *FAZ*, June 18, 1968, 14.

[123] See, e.g., "80000 Einwohner sind spurlos verschwunden," *Bild*, August 5, 1968, 5; J.-F. B., "Le 'special Wilson' relance la guerre," *L'Express*, April 14, 1969, 17; Braumann, "Am 9. Oktober 1968 während eines Biafra-Referates in Hameln: Es wird massakriert," Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben?*, 119–21.

logical result of Nigerian violence, according to the reports. As *Time* graphically depicted:

> In captured village after village, frontline troops were followed by ragtag "sweepers" from Northern Nigeria. They nailed Ibo tribesmen to the walls of their wooden huts, then sprayed them with automatic-rifle fire or set torches to their clothes. "Mop-up" soldiers raped women, sometimes lined up whole villages to be shot. The Ibos concluded that the Hausa tribesmen fully intended to use the war to systematically exterminate them.[124]

Bergès explains along similar lines: "This is the cleaning up, the voluntary destruction of the detested Ibos [...]."[125] Tracing a history of Islamic aggression back to colonial times, the "Hausas had been colonized by conquering Arabs." The evangelization of the Igbo, however, was characterized as a non-violent entrance into Western modernity: "The Ibos, for their part, had made contact with the whites through the coastal trading posts. Following the merchants, the Protestant pastors and the Catholic priests had arrived."[126] In postcolonial times, Igbos garnered the jealousy of their Hausa compatriots, who were seen as lagging behind in a postcolonial race toward modernity. The Hausa reaction was violent: "the bloody revenge" of the 1966 massacres.[127]

Bergès' account provides a key to understanding why the Biafrans were constructed as subjects worthy of Western compassion: "Biafra will die for having believed in our civilisation." The Biafrans were like "us," or at least, they want to be. They were about to "arrive" in Western modernity, to end what Johannes Fabian has called the "denial of coevalness."[128] Yet this people aspiring to Western freedom was about to die a premature death: "In a few days, if all the moral forces of the world do not mobilize under the pressure of public opinion, Biafra is going to die for having had confidence in our civilization. At the age of one year and four months, like its infants. And the coffin will be white."[129] With this powerful allegation, he ascribed the role of the savior to the West. "Our civilization" will either act or declare moral bankruptcy. These representations constructed the Biafrans – or more precisely the Igbos – as a people resembling the European audience of these images. Admittedly, they were and they would remain black. But they were devout Christians; they worked hard and knew how to behave. These young Igbos

[124] "Nigeria's civil war," *Time*, quote on 24.
[125] Bergès, "Biafra: Tout a commence," 8.
[126] Ibid. [127] Ibid. [128] Fabian, *Time and the Other*, ch. 2.
[129] Yves-Guy Bergès, "Dans quelques jours peut-être, le Biafra va mourir pour avoir cru en notre civilisation," *France Soir*, August 28, 1968, 2.

appeared as the perfect products of a successful colonial civilizing mission. They were postcolonial Africa's "perfected natives," perhaps even "black Europeans."[130]

A close reading of the contemporary representations of Biafra reveals that this was not simply an act of empathizing with humanity: these Biafrans were no postcolonial Others, but potentially Western modern men and women in Africa. Accordingly, the ground for the calls for intervention is not universal humanity, but Western civilization. In this regard, they are much nearer to the nineteenth-century "humanitarian interventions" *avant la lettre* than one might assume. In the decades before World War I, the British Empire and other Western powers intervened militarily on behalf of Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire.[131] Now, in the late 1960s, the shared values of "Christianity, commerce, and civilization" again formed the pretext for calls for intervention. As a part of the Christian West, the Biafrans needed to be saved. The colonial Africans' erstwhile civilizational instructors needed to act now – otherwise this enclave of Western Christian civilization would be erased from the African map.

Shortly after the end of the civil war, the Oxford Africanist Anthony Kirk-Greene wrote a review essay of book accounts of the conflict, in which he summarized the various positions: "There are 'Federals' and 'Biafrans.' There are hawks and doves. There are insiders and outsiders, do-gooders and interferers, the knowledgeable, the emotional and the hysterical."[132] Kirk-Greene's portrayal of the different characters who wrote about Biafra is indeed fitting. However, there is also a different, if nevertheless connected approach to order this field. These books essentially differ in the way they claim to comprehend and represent the conflict: they embody two opposing regimes of representing the Nigerian Civil War. On the one hand there were the accounts that wanted to make audiences "see" or "witness" what happened in Biafra, which depicted the civil war as a humanitarian crisis and cast Biafra as a place of death and human misery, personified by the "Biafran babies." These books, usually heavily illustrated, relied on the evocative force of atrocity photographs.[133] On the other hand there was an opposing, if much less widespread approach: efforts of authors who tried to "understand" the

[130] On the "perfected natives" see Stoler and Cooper, "Metropole and Colony," here 7.
[131] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*.
[132] Kirk-Greene, "Review," 180.
[133] See, e.g., Mok, *Biafra Journal*; Sosnowsky, ed., *Biafra: Proximité de la mort*; Waugh and Cronje, *Biafra: Britain's Shame*; Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Biafra: Todesurteil*; Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben?*

conflict, even if unsuccessfully.[134] These efforts aimed at multidimensional accounts of the historical, economic, cultural or religious contexts of the conflict. Many of them were published toward the end of the war, or in its aftermath. More pensive and, in the best meaning of the word, reflexive studies apparently took more time to write, time that their authors needed to make up their minds.[135] Kirk-Greene's verdict about the existent book accounts of the conflict was bleak: there would need to be more non-partisan accounts "if the record is not to risk further distortion at this critical period of evaluation."[136] And indeed, until that point, spring of 1970, few of the accounts that had flooded European and American markets were balanced, and few accounts were based on sound research. This was not only a question of quality, but also of the aims of the works. Most authors – especially in the pro-Biafran camp – understood their accounts as contributions to a humanitarian campaign: they wanted to provide an invisible eye through which the distant event could be turned into a visual experience; the "reality" of the conflict, which these texts and images "presented" without distortions, was expected to speak for itself.

This made further reflections unnecessary for these authors. The perceived urgency left little time and space for efforts to understand what was happening. They saw themselves in the middle of a crisis: the clock was ticking, immediate action was needed. Innocent children needed to be saved. The effect was to reduce the conflict to simple messages and propose simple solutions. The imagery of innocent victims as universalized icons of humanity depoliticizes, decontextualizes, and dehistoricizes our understanding of complex emergencies. In effect, the images that represented the conflict concealed it: the Nigerian Civil War, as a complex political conflict, vanished behind the iconography of suffering. Roland Barthes and other critics have noted how photographs do not only help to memorialize past events, but can also eclipse the actual memory.[137] Similarly, a representational regime focused on making publics "see" through the evocation of reality with the usage of photographs or television images eclipsed the complexities of the conflict. Ironically, exactly at the moment that the Nigerian Civil War had become

[134] For a philosophical rendition of such an approach, even though certainly not all the authors that I discuss here met these standards (or even wanted to try to), see Arendt, "Understanding and Politics."

[135] For one of the best examples for this category among the works reviewed by Kirk-Greene see Uwechue, *Reflections* and Renard, *Biafra: Naissance*. This body of texts was later supplemented by some balanced journalistic accounts like St. Jorre, *The Nigerian Civil War*.

[136] Kirk-Greene, "Review," 180.

[137] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*; Keenan, "Relationship."

a global media event, it vanished from view, hidden behind the iconography of humanitarian distress.

Nevertheless, this representational regime was, at least for some time, highly efficient in arousing emotions and raising awareness. This was also due to the way the conflict was inscribed into pre-existent iconographic formulas and discursive traditions. The Biafran Babies were not mere representatives of universal humanity, but of Western universalism, African acolytes of the old civilizing mission in a postcolonial world. The interplay of distance and closeness, of alterity and identity in the humanitarian campaign about Biafra was a call of duty to intervene. At the heart of this campaign was what Laqueur called the "theory of causation" of humanitarian narratives. However, there were few references to and analyses of what caused the crisis; few commentators ventured to unearth the complex political and economic roots of the crisis. This representational regime was oriented toward the future, toward the prevention of a humanitarian catastrophe. The theory of causation at play in this representational regime was thus to a large degree also a theology of salvation – of both the victims and the audience at home.

Through images and texts, the audience at home was allowed to "witness" the events and empathize with the depicted human figures involved. Party to a thus created emotional community, Westerners gazed at Biafrans; the latter were turned into spectacles of suffering. Westerners discovered that the Biafrans were worthy objects of their pity because of a shared set of values: as Westernized "perfected natives," these Biafran bodies and souls needed to be saved. Journalists and activists called on contemporaries to change the future course of this humanitarian crisis. Otherwise, Biafra as an enclave of civilization and progress within a continent moving toward postcolonial decay would perish. Yet if this fate could not be averted, the symbol of its afterlife was already in place: the face of the Biafran baby, the face of a stillborn child.

6 Auschwitz in Africa? Biafra, Holocaust Memory, and the Language of Rights

In early July 1968, Holy Ghost Fathers Anthony Byrne, Raymond Kennedy and Fintan Kilbride left their Biafran parishes and crossed the Atlantic to campaign for the interconfessional aid operation in the United States. On arrival in New York, they met with the leadership of the American Jewish Committee (AJC). The Irishmen reported on the humanitarian crisis, urging the AJC to lobby for the cause in the American Jewish community and to employ their resources for the aid operation. The missionaries spread photographs of emaciated Biafran children on the table. After the meeting, AJC Director of Interreligious Affairs, Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, noted in a memorandum that the photographs were "to Jewish eyes 1968 versions of photographs of Jewish children taken in the 1940's in such other notorious sites named Bergen-Belsen, Thereisenstadt [sic], Auschwitz." According to Tanenbaum, the Irish fathers had made this connection themselves in their effort to underline the urgency of the crisis. The rabbi noted that Father Kilbride

> continuously resorted to analogies with the events in the 1930's and 1940's. "To our eternal shame," he said in his soft, compelling Irish accent, "we sat by while millions of Jewish people and others were put to death before our very eyes. We did practically nothing then." Then his Irish fire broke out, "have we learned nothing from those days? What is happening to mankind? We know all too well what is going on with the poor, helpless people in Nigeria and Biafra. Why are we so silent?"

For the AJC staff, this felt like déjà vu:

> To the Jews gathered around the conference table, Father Kilbride's voice was like a replay of the voices of the few Jews who managed to flee from Germany and Hungary and Poland in the early 1940's and who came to Paris and London and New York to stir the world's conscience to come to the aid of their doomed brothers. In the main, their cries for succor fell on unbelieving deaf ears. Just 25 years later, it could not be allowed to happen again.

The photographs and the report by the Catholic priests had their intended effect: the crisis in Biafra became the first non-Jewish event in which the AJC engaged. Within a few weeks, 21 American Jewish organizations combined their forces and created the American Jewish Emergency Effort for Biafran Relief.[1]

In recent historical scholarship the "power of images" has become a common topos.[2] Art historian Horst Bredekamp coined the term "image acts" to emphasize the performative function of images: that they can make us think, feel or even act.[3] According to various commentators, the images of the famine in Biafra stirred them to action. In view of the tangible effects that the images' global dissemination exerted on the war's course of events, this chapter interprets these photographs as such an "image act." Yet what, exactly, was it about these pictures that produced such an impact?

As the opening episode of this chapter suggests, the particular power of these images stemmed from their association with the Holocaust.[4] The images from Biafra reminded countless contemporaries in Western Europe and the United States of the photographs taken during the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps; fears of an "African Auschwitz" abounded. These associations had also been cultivated by Biafran propaganda, which relied heavily on allegations of genocide and a language of comparisons connecting the Biafran crisis with the fate of Europe's Jews during World War II.[5]

Photographs do not stand by themselves. They become intelligible only through textual contextualization and references to other pictures, which limit the potentially boundless space of meanings. This holds true especially for images that horrify. Their shock effect is often due to associations with images we already know – and fear.[6] The reading of the remembered images does not remain untouched either: through these associations they are called to mind again, and comparisons with other pictures may cast them in a new light.

Recent work by literary theorist Michael Rothberg offers a model by which to study such entanglements. In his writings about "multidirectional memories," he connects the history of Holocaust memory to other

[1] Marc H. Tanenbaum, "Biafran Tragedy Accelerates: Christian Jewish Cooperation," *Religious News Service*, August 14, 1968 (American Jewish Committee Archives, Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1968, Biafra, Box 71), 4.

[2] See Brink, "Bildeffekte, 104–29. [3] Bredekamp, *Theorie des Bildakts*.

[4] I use the term "Holocaust" even though it was not yet in wide usage at the time.

[5] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 109–17.

[6] Groebner, "Zeige."

events. Rothberg has shown how memories of World War II, the *résistance*, and the Holocaust have been central to French discussions regarding the colonial war in Algeria – and vice versa. Such a model – which understands collective memories as open, fluid entities – allows us to see how contemporary events and different forms of memory intertwine and inform each other.[7] In the late 1960s, "the Holocaust" had not yet emerged as the symbolic core of a memory culture focused on genocidal suppression and violence. At the time, the evocation of the Nazi genocide did not have the cultural power these analogies hold today. Rather, the language of genocide comparisons during the Biafran conflict helped constitute the meanings and public understanding of both events. Such comparisons gave clearer shape and cultural resonance to two events that so far had been only vaguely contoured – the Nigerian Civil War and the Nazi mass murder of Europe's Jews.[8]

In the following, I analyze the entanglements between the Nigerian Civil War and the cultural memory of the Holocaust. I argue that the shared space of associations made both Biafra and the Holocaust visible in a distinct manner. In the process, however, parts of both phenomena also became invisible. In Western societies, the Nigerian Civil War was perceived as a humanitarian crisis threatening to culminate in genocide; that this was a complex political conflict escaped most contemporaries. The Holocaust also emerged in a particular manner. Through comparisons with Biafra, the mass murder of the European Jews was singled out as a unique event from a larger complex of National Socialist crimes. Moreover, the visual interconnection between Biafra and the Holocaust was a decisive step for the establishment of a rhetoric of Holocaust comparisons that has become essential for the perception of genocides until today.[9]

The episode cited above also refers to another function of Holocaust comparisons: calls for humanitarian action. The Irish priests evoked the Holocaust as a horror to which they – and the world that remained silent – had closed their eyes. But they also employed this memory as a rhetorical strategy. In late-twentieth-century international law, genocide and human rights have become centrally important, and are often invoked together. But at the time of their codification into international law in 1948, human rights and Lemkinian activism against genocides were competing projects. However, they dovetailed seamlessly in the Biafran campaign – like they would in post-Cold War international

[7] Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*.
[8] See Alexander et al., *Remembering the Holocaust*; Novick, *Holocaust in American Life*; Eckel and Moisel, eds., *Universalisierung*; Wieviorka, *Era*.
[9] Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*.

politics.[10] In the process of inscribing Biafra into the memory regime of genocide, new meanings were given to existing categories. For most contemporaries in the late 1960s, as will become apparent, genocide and human rights seemed to be easily compatible, even intimately connected categories. Many movements and activists simply used whatever means were at their disposal; if couching their campaigns in the terms of human rights *and* genocide seemed to help their cause, because the respective machineries of claim-making and mechanism of enforcing appeared to be available, many decided to do so.[11] In press articles, publications by activists and legal scholars, and petitions on Biafra, numerous contemporaries evoked the United Nations as an international body responsible for solving the crisis — even though many contemporaries were already skeptical about a "world government" that seemed to fall short of its rhetoric of universal rights.

The aim of this chapter is to elucidate the entangled shifts in transnational discourses about Biafra and the Holocaust that emerged once contemporaries started to think of Nazi genocide when they were confronted with the humanitarian crisis in Biafra. In a first step, I show how the visual interconnection of images from Biafra and from Nazi concentration camps turned the Biafran rhetoric of genocide into a perceived reality. The Biafrans had represented themselves as the "Jews of Africa"; with the accompanying images, these notions began to resonate internationally. In the next step, I show how champions of the Biafran cause used the notion of "genocide" and the rhetoric of rights to criticize Whitehall's policy on the war in a "politics of naming and shaming."[12] Following this, I delve into the larger conceptual history of this campaign, focusing on the interplay of the languages of rights, genocide, and self-determination, and then discuss how the Biafran crisis contributed to the emergence of a postcolonial interventionist morality. Finally, I examine the role of three groups that played key roles in the Biafran campaign and for which the legacy of the Holocaust was of particular relevance: Germans, Jews, and Christians.

The Holocaust Lens: Biafra, the Visual Memory of World War II, and the Rhetoric of Genocide Comparisons

On October 26, 1968, Rabbi A. James Rudin addressed the crowd of an interconfessional protest rally at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in

[10] Hoffmann, "Human Rights." On the postwar competition between "human rights" and "genocide" see Siegelberg, "Unofficial Men."

[11] See Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*. On activists dropping human rights from their agenda because other enforcement mechanisms were more promising see Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*.

[12] This is a variation on a term by Mamdani, "Politics of Naming."

Manhattan. In his talk, Rudin blended images of Biafra and the Nazi genocide of the Jews: "In my mind's eye the smokestacks of Auschwitz blur into the cities and the bush country of Biafra. In my wakeful and terrible visions I see the mass Jewish graves of Europe rapidly filling with starving and dying Biafrans."[13] Many contemporaries shared the impulse to metaphorically conflate the plight of the Igbos and the Jews. In a mid-July 1968 editorial in *Die Zeit*, Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, a commentator on political affairs, wondered whether there was a new "Belsen in Biafra?" Her answer was unambiguous: "One has to call things as they are – this is a case of genocide, an oft-misused term, which, however, is appropriate here."[14] What confirmed her certainty were the images of starving children: "'Many, especially the youngest, look like Belsen's worst victims,'" she quoted a *Times* reporter.[15] The rhetoric of genocide had formed a central pillar of Biafra's propaganda campaign from the beginning. Yet it was not until the summer of 1968 that the genocide charge began to resonate internationally. The associations between the contemporary fate of the Igbos and the past fate of the European Jews were facilitated by the photographs of the Biafran children, which read as visual proof of starvation, suffering – and genocide.

As a number of researchers have shown, the cultural memory of World War II has a strong visual component. The liberation of the camps by Allied forces was widely covered in the international press, which sent reporters and photojournalists to accompany the soldiers, among them notable figures like Margaret Bourke-White, who covered the liberation of Buchenwald for *Life Magazine*. Intended to highlight the horrific crimes of the defeated enemy, photographic evidence of the Nazi crimes was presented in the courtrooms at Nuremberg, in public exhibitions and in the pages of the press. The photographs were used as pedagogical instruments, especially in Germany, where former Nazis were made to confront the crimes of their former government, to "make them see."[16] This historical moment was eclipsed by the Cold War when West Germany became an indispensable ally in the global confrontation of ideological blocs. Although it would be misleading to suggest discussion of mass crimes was deliberately silenced in the postwar years, the mass murder of the European Jews remained peripheral in public representations of wartime experiences. The voices of camp survivors did

[13] Tanenbaum, "Biafran Tragedy," 4.
[14] Here she quotes Madaule, "Pour le Biafra," *Le Monde*, June 30, 1968, 1, 10, here 1.
[15] Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, "Belsen in Biafra?" *Die Zeit*, July 12, 1968, 1. The reference is to: "One Man who will Die Waiting for Aid to Biafra," *The Times*, July 4, 1968, 8.
[16] Barnouw, *Germany 1945*, ch. 1.

not receive ample public space; the images widely disappeared from view.[17]

The photographs of the camps returned to public view starting in the late 1950s, redistributed through different publications, exhibitions and media,[18] even as they inscribed them into a new memory regime. At the time of their first publication, these images were mostly labeled "atrocity photographs."[19] By the 1960s, these pictures came to connote something different: the systematic killing of the Jews of Europe.[20] The media coverage of the 1961 Eichmann trial, the Auschwitz trials in Frankfurt between 1963 and 1965, and public controversies engendered by a number of book publications helped to make the annihilation of the European Jews legible as genocide.[21] The public memory of the Holocaust was not yet fully formed in the late 1960s, but by 1968 it already provided contemporaries with the means to render the Biafran conflict legible.

The Biafran crisis shared a set of similarities with representations of the Holocaust. In their apathy, the Biafran children resemble the figure of the "Mussulman" in German concentration camps: "people of a determined fatalism," as Eugen Kogon wrote.[22] Similarly, Holocaust victims were also represented as archetypical figures rather than individuals in contemporary accounts – as nameless "inmates" doomed to die in the "univers concentrationnaire." Again, victims were not portrayed as individuals, but as groups.[23] These tropes – of apathetic victims represented as part of a collective rather than as individuals – are common features in humanitarian narratives and, at least in part, existed prior to the Holocaust. Lemkin's conceptualization of "genocide" was partly built on existing understandings of the Ottoman mass murder of Armenians during World War I, to which the Biafran secessionists had also occasionally alluded in their campaign.[24] However, the references to the

[17] On testimony and its silencing in the immediate postwar period, see Wieviorka, *Era*. On the disappearance of the images, see Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust*, ch. 7. On early postwar memory in general see: Bessel and Schumann, eds., *Life after Death*; Judt, *Postwar*, 803–31; Lagrou, *Legacy*; Lebow et al., *Politics of Memory*,

[18] Knoch, *Tat als Bild*.

[19] As an empirical example see "Atrocities: Capture of the German Concentration Camps Piles up Evidence of Barbarism that reaches the Low Point of Human Degradation," *Life*, May 7, 1945, 32–7 and further Twomey, "Framing Atrocity."

[20] The mass killings of the Romany people, gay men or lesbians were seldom discussed at the time.

[21] The literature on Holocaust memory is vast, to say the least. See here esp. Douglas, *Memory of Judgment*; Moyn, *Holocaust Controversy*; Novick, *Holocaust in American Life*; Shandler, *America Watches*; Wieviorka, *Era*.

[22] Kogon, *SS-Staat*, 380.

[23] Rousset, *L'univers concentrationnaire*; see also Brink, *Ikonen*, 161–4, 170–3.

[24] Schabas, *Genocide in International Law*, 25; Ministry of Information Eastern Nigeria, *Nigerian Pogrom*; Biafra Students Association in the Americas (Massachusetts Branch),

Armenian genocide were seldom taken up in texts by Biafra's international sympathizers, almost solely by US-Armenian activists.[25] For most contemporaries the photographs from Biafra evoked images taken during the liberation of the camps in 1945 – and seldom of other humanitarian crises or genocides.

Yet there were differences between the Holocaust and Biafra. There were no photographs of heaps of corpses like those found in Bergen-Belsen. This time, mass death still seemed preventable. The estimates of victim counts were regularly used to emphasize the need for immediate action. An ad that the American Committee to Keep Biafra Alive ran in the New York-based *Jewish Press*, exclaimed: "Dear God, not again." Predicting that the figure would rise to six million, a Biafran death toll to match that of the Holocaust (Figure 6.1).[26]

The photographs of individual infants' bodies also invoked visual parallels with Nazi mass murder. In a volume edited by the Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, an image of a dead child was reprinted that resembled the photographs of heaps of bodies in Bergen-Belsen so closely that it could have been taken in a Nazi concentration camp (Figure 6.2). According to the caption this was one of the 8,000 victims of the "KZ Ikot Ekpene." This alleged concentration camp was the prison in the city of the same name where, after it was captured by Federal Nigerian troops, thousands were reportedly slaughtered. But mostly, the photos conveyed the news about pending mass death that looked like a genocide of the past – yet one that could still be prevented through humanitarian means.[27]

In other texts, the Biafran refugee camps were described as "Dachaus or Mauthausens of famine" or as a "Buchenwald for children."[28] A member of the Comité d'action pour le Biafra, former Gaullist minister Jacques Marette, explained to the French national assembly:

Donation appeal, August 10, 1967 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 12 Biafra, Box 1871).

[25] See Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, August 30, 1968 (UNOG UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part F); International Witnesses against Genocide, "Genocide in Biafra: Fifty Years Ago – the Armenians, Twenty-five Years Ago – The Jews, Now – The Ibo," August 1968 (WCCA, 42.3.007, WCC General Secretariat, Nigeria/Biafra, 3).

[26] ACKBA, "6 Million" (SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 10). See, e.g., also Marion Gräfin Dönhoff et al., "An die Adresse der Regierungen," *Die Zeit.*, August 23, 1968, 3 or John D. Campbell, Letter to N. Gaydon, January 29, 1969 (UK NA FCO 26/300), 1.

[27] See, e.g., Heinrich Tenhumberg to the members of the budget committee of the German Bundestag, June 20, 1968 (Political Archives of the German Foreign Office Berlin: B 34/747).

[28] Buhler, *Tuez-Les*, 114; Raymond Offroy, "Editorial," *Biafra: Bulletin du comité d'action pour le Biafra*, April 1969, No. 1, 1.

Figure 6.1 American Committee to Keep Biafra Alive, Newspaper Advertisement "6 Million." SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria–Biafra Information Records, Clearing House, DG 168, Box 10.

Im KZ Ikot Ekpene starben 8000 Ibibios Der Fernsehberichterstatter Klaus Stephan hat in seinen Berichten im ARD auch diesen Massenmord, wie zahlreiche andere von der nigerianischen Armee, an den kleineren Völkern Biafras begangene Greuel unterschlagen. Photo: Alex Klemkens

Figure 6.2 Tilman Zülch and Klaus Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben? Dokumente – Berichte – Analysen – Kommentare* (Berlin, 1969), between pp. 128 and 129, photographer: Alex Kempkens, Ikot Ekpene, Biafra, August 1968. Reproduced by permission of Alex Kempkens.

"Biafra – that is the camp of Belsen at its liberation."[29] Auberon Waugh, member of the "Britain-Biafra Association," also deemed that comparison appropriate, since "the method of destruction is much the same," even if "the numbers involving Biafra are much greater."[30] Auschwitz, the most well-known site of mass annihilation, was repeatedly referred to; yet comparisons were also made with the concentration camps Dachau, Buchenwald, and Bergen-Belsen. These camps had been liberated by US and British troops, and photos of them had circulated in Western media since 1945. Auschwitz and the other extermination centers in the east were liberated by Soviet forces, and photographs taken there did not reach Western media outlets in greater numbers. The iconography of the Nazi camps, at least in the West, was thus defined by the concentration camps and not the extermination centers.[31] Oddly, the visual narratives of genocide that emerged during the Biafran crisis evoked the memory of the Holocaust through images that depict Nazi crimes, but not necessarily Nazi genocide.

The connections between Biafra and the Holocaust were partly the product of deliberate representation strategies. To some degree, the frames of references for the Biafran humanitarian campaign had already been established by the secessionists' campaign for self-determination, in which the latter presented themselves as the "Jews of Africa," aspiring to create their own Israel. When Western publics became a resonance chamber for parts of Biafran rhetoric in mid-1968, the trope of the "Jews of Africa" – alongside wider references to the Holocaust – became a central point of reference in media reports and activist publications.[32] In this narrative, representations of the Igbos used an odd mixture of analogies that westernized them but were also, in part, stereotypical – one could

[29] "Le témoignage de Monsieur Jacques Marette devant l'assemblée nationale française," *Biafra: Bulletin du comité d'action pour le Biafra*, Supplement to No. 5, I–VI.

[30] Waugh, *Britain and Biafra*, 20. There is a great number of similar examples. See e.g. Cau, "camp de concentration"; Paul Connett, "Statement for Immediate Release," 14.11.1968 (SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 10).

[31] See e.g. Schoenberner, *Stern*. See also Brink, *Ikonen*, 161–4, 170–3; Sackett, "Pictures," and for a diverging opinion Knoch, *Tat als Bild*, 699–721.

[32] One of the earliest examples was Laura Revelli-Beaumont, "Les juifs de l'Afrique," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, February 14, 1968, 14. There are endless possible examples after that. See for instance "Nigeria's Civil War: Hate, Hunger and the Will to Survive," *Time*, August 23, 1968, 20–8; Llewelyn Gryffyth, "Letter to the Editor: Your article . . . ," *Time*, August 30, 1968, 8; "Un exemple pour l'Afrique," *L'Express*, July 29, 1968, 19; Randolph Braumann, "Am 9. Oktober 1968 während eines Biafra-Referates in Hameln: Es wird massakriert," Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben?*, 119–21; Nicolas Martin, "Le Defi Biafrais," *Notre Republique*, November 15, 1968, 8; Richard West, "Biafra: The Last Hope for African Independence?," *Sunday Times*, June 1, 1969, Pictorial supplement, 41.

argue anti-Semitic – representations of Jews. William Norris, *The Times* of London's foreign correspondent, explained that the "Ibo [...] are fond of comparing themselves to the Israelis. The comparison is apt, for perhaps in more ways than they would acknowledge these are the Jews of West Africa." The reasons why the Igbos resemble the Jews are, to say the least, ambiguous in Norris's account:

> The Ibo are an intelligent, often brilliant people. They are also clannish and nepotistic to a high degree, and in the past they spread through Nigeria to take – often deservedly – the cream of the jobs and the bulk of the commerce. Individually, they present a curious mixture of extreme courtesy and brash arrogance, and it is all these things, combined with an exceptional capacity for mendacity and self-deception, which have brought them to their present pass.

"These factors," he continued, "may explain why the Ibo are disliked by many Nigerians, and by the more primitive northerners in particular."[33] Despite the pro-Biafran stance of publications using these analogies, this trope was not entirely free of ambivalences. In this line of thinking, it seems in some texts as if the Igbos, and by extension the Jews as well, were at least partly responsible for the violence they were confronted with.

However, most of the Holocaust comparisons were intended to alert the global community about the plight of the Biafran population. Biafran propagandists and their sympathizers around the globe used such analogies to secure the "right" interpretation of the "facts." Andreas Olie Chegwe, a Biafran student at Mainz University, self-published a collection of documents on the conflict. In his commentaries, Chegwe repeatedly drew on the cultural memory of the Holocaust. He explained that the images from Biafra "speak for themselves": "They tell us so clearly and precisely about the more than three years of bitter misery and cruelty that adding one further word to it is hardly necessary." Still, he added more than one word: "Dear reader, you see an 'Anne Frank' show in Biafra," and continued: "a people dies while the world looks on. [...] That is our tragic destiny – IGBOS, the Jews of Africa."[34]

The Politics of Naming and Shaming: Whitehall and the Biafra Lobby

The perception of Biafra as an African Auschwitz had particularly strong implications in the United Kingdom. In a country that had been among

[33] William Norris, "Strong Hopes now for Peace in Nigeria," *The Times*, April 29, 1968, 9

[34] Chegwe, ed., *Biafra: Tragödie eines Volkes, Ein Volk stirbt und die Welt sieht zu*, Wiesbaden, no date [ca. 1969], commentaries on the pictures between 48 and 49.

the victorious powers during World War II, the cultural memory of the defeat of the Nazi dictatorship by Western democracies had become embedded in national political consciousness. Britain's successful war had become enshrined in the myth of British identity in an age of imperial decline. Even though the Holocaust was not at the core of this memory regime, the allegations touched a nerve: did Britain provide the weapons for the extermination of the "Jews of Africa"?[35] Igbo expats had imported the languages of genocide and human rights to the postcolonial metropole in the early stages of the war.[36] Later on, Harold Wilson's Labour government came under heavy fire from critics in the Biafra lobby, in the press, and in the two houses of the English parliament, who accused Whitehall of complicity in genocide. In a number of publications, Auberon Waugh argued that the "mass starvation to death of innocent civilians" was "the most hideous crime against humanity in which England has ever been involved," a betrayal of the country's Christian, liberal and humanitarian traditions.[37] He refused to apologize "for introducing Belsen" – the concentration camp liberated by British troops and hence a symbol of Nazi genocide and victorious British pride – "since the numbers involving Biafra are much greater, and the method of destruction is much the same, except that Belsen was more of an accident."[38] Waugh viciously attacked journalists who had come to the defense of the government's position and argued in favor of arms shipments to Lagos, comparing such policies to "Churchill supplying gas chambers to Nazi Germany'." "If we were to stop arms shipments to Nigeria, says the Government, she would obtain them from other sources. Possibly so – but if Hitler had invited foreign tenders for the construction of his gas-ovens would Britain have applied, using the same excuse?"[39] The staunchly pro-Biafran journalist Frederick Forsyth was equally harsh. He wrote, Biafran territory would be "in effect" exactly the kind of "eastern resettlement area" into which the European Jews had been relocated to by force. The only difference would be that the Igbo, unlike the Jews,

[35] On British post-imperial fears of decline, see Smith, *Britain and 1940*; Rose, "'New Jerusalem'"; Webster, *Englishness*. As introductions to postwar Britain see Addison, *No Turning Back*; Harrison, *Seeking a Role*; Morgan, *Britain Since 1945*.

[36] "Statement on British Arms Supplies," 151.

[37] Waugh, *Britain and Biafra*, 7. See also "Revised Transcript, Night Ride Wednesday 6th November 1968: Broadcast live on Radio 1 & 2 at 0020 approximately November 6, 1968" (UK NA, PREM 13/1949).

[38] Waugh, *Britain and Biafra*, 20. On Belsen in British memory see Kushner, "Memory of Belsen."

[39] "Another More Murderous Harvest," 729. This echoed a passage in Norris's article in *The Times* one month before. Norris, "Strong Hopes" *The Times*, April 29, 1968, 9 was reissued in German translation in Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben?*, 144, and referred to in Huxley, "Sacred Cow," 962.

"imported arms and started to defend themselves, to the most manifest outrage of their persecutors."[40] For Forsyth, the Jews of Africa seemed to him to have the fighting spirit the Jews of Europe had apparently lacked.[41]

The British government was confronted with similar criticism internationally.[42] Mainstream newspapers like the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* resorted to Holocaust analogies to condemn the arms trade to Federal Nigeria.[43] Critique also came from the successor state of the Third Reich. During a Bonn visit, a bag filled with red liquid – supposedly animal blood – was thrown at the car carrying Prime Minister Wilson.[44] When Minister of Technology Tony Benn gave a talk at the Übersee Club in Hamburg, members of the Aktion Biafrahilfe held a hunger strike in front of the building and handed over a manifesto stating that this "policy of Your government is only comparable with that of the Nazi Government. [. . .] Your visit in Hamburg is an unbearable provocation!"[45]

The vitriol imbedded in Holocaust analogies was a key component of the international critique of Whitehall.[46] As a part of these "politics of naming and shaming," the Biafra lobby tried to lend force to their allegations by reference to international law. Forsyth was also convinced that Federal Nigerian officials could be brought to justice under international law. The charge of genocide was so grave, he wrote, that "the world authority vested by the signatories of the Convention in the United Nations" could not wait "for a post factum inquiry [. . .]. If the Convention is to rate as anything other than a useless piece of paper, a reasonable

40 Forsyth, *Biafra Story*, 219–20.

41 On the perceived lack of active Jewish resistance in French Holocaust memory, see Moyn, *Holocaust Controversy*.

42 B. R. Curson, "Internal Report: Nigeria and Information Work in Europe," March 12, 1969 (UK NA FCO 26/300). For examples for different newspaper articles criticising British policy see for instance also Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben?* 137–49. Petitions and complaints were also directly sent to British embassies. As one of countless examples see for instance Heinrich Tenhumberg to Sir Roger William Jackling, July 12, 1968 (EZA 87/1118).

43 Hans Heinrich Herwarth von Bitterfeld, "Fernschreiben aus Rom Nr. 758," August 14, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741).

44 "Hurl 'Bloody' Bags During Wilson Visit," *Chicago Tribune*, February 13, 1969, A11; Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben?* photographs between 152–3.

45 "Manifest der Aktion Biafrahilfe, ESG, die Hungerstreikenden" (UK NA FCO 26/299); Benn to Mr. Spiff, January 2, 1969 (UK NA FCO 26/299); Benn, *Office without Power*, 215.

46 See for instance, for the Swiss example: "Biafra: 'Eine Schande,'" *Der Schweizerische Beobachter*, January 15, 1969, 6–8.; Arengo-Jones to Nigel Gaydon, January 17, 1969 (UK NA FCO 26/299).

suspicion of genocide must suffice to bring investigation."[47] The Biafra lobby operated with terms like "genocide," "human rights," and "crimes against humanity" to evoke the legal power of these concepts; the first two were codified in international legal conventions, the latter had been used in the Nuremberg trials against Nazi war criminals. Since the postwar period, there had been some first steps to turn these categories into *jus cogens*; the pro-Biafran lobby evoked them as that exactly: binding international law.[48]

Waugh also participated in a discussion about "Biafra's Rights" on the pages of *The Times*, initiated by a letter by the human rights theorist Maurice Cranston. According to the London School of Economics professor, the "Government's apparent willingness to send more arms to help Nigeria suppress Biafra is a shameful violation both of morality and of law." Cranston refered to the right to self-determination for all peoples declared in two covenants to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1966: "To deny the Biafrans the right of self-determination is a breach of the United Nations Covenants." Moreover, 1968 was the UN's "'Human Rights Year' and our Government has spent some of the taxpayer's money advertising the fact, and in the process making known the 'legally binding obligations' which the United Kingdom has undertaken."[49] Cranston's support for Biafra's right to self-determination was somewhat unusual for the Biafra lobby; employed less by international supporters than by Biafran officials. In the next day's issue, another letter to the editor was published under the heading "Biafra's Rights" and signed by Graham Greene, V. S. Naipaul, Muriel Spark, and Auberon Waugh. The writers also included an appeal for Biafran self-determination in their letter. But this one had a different sound to it: "May we now appeal to the English Government to recognize that it has made a mistake, that Biafra's suffering, if nothing else, has earned her the right to exist [. . .]." The writers claim that most Europeans would support Biafra, and that Whitehall was the last upholder of a policy which "has become a crime and an international scandal."[50]

[47] Forsyth, *Biafra Story*, 220–1.

[48] On the postwar moment of international law, the expectations it raised, and its limitations in practice see Pendas, "World Law"; Schabas, *Genocide in International Law*.

[49] Maurice Cranston, "Letter to the Editor: Biafra's Rights," *The Times*, November 12, 1968, 9.

[50] Graham Greene et al., "Letter to the Editor: Biafra's Rights," *The Times*, November 13, 1968, 11. See also Auberon Waugh, "Letter to the Editor: Biafra's Rights," *The Times*, November 18, 1968, 9. The debate was continued in the following days, see John Tilney, "Letter to the Editor: Right to Secede," *The Times*, November 15, 1968, 13; Bernard Crick, "Letter to the Editor: Biafra's Rights," *The Times*, November 23, 1968, 9.

Criticism of Whitehall's Nigeria policy was formulated with recourse to the language of rights within the Labour party as well. At the Labour Party Conference on October 1, 1968, Prime Minister Harold Wilson proclaimed Labour to be "the party of human rights. The only party of human rights that will be speaking from this platform this month. Human rights: this has been the central theme of this Government's actions from the day we took office." This remark was primarily aimed at the Tories, who – after Enoch Powell's "Rivers of Blood" speech in April of the same year – Wilson wanted to represent as a party of racist suppressors. However, politicians using such language risk being confronted with the "boomerang effect" of human rights.[51] In the *Tribune's* first outspokenly critical article on the British position on Biafra, penned by Britain-Biafra Association member Joan Mellors, the Labour newspaper reprinted this exclamation under the heading "What about their Human Rights, Mr. Wilson?" accompanied by images of starving Biafran children. The article explained that because "the belief in human rights never found expression within our Government's policy towards the Nigeria-Biafra conflict," many in the Party felt "disillusioned."[52] A month later, the pro-Biafran *Spectator* piled on the critique: "human rights mean nothing [to Wilson], it seems, when it comes to Biafra [. . .]. For in its policy towards Nigeria, the British Government is engaged as principal accomplice in the biggest suppression of human rights – and of human life – in the non-Communist world today." As long as Britain provides Lagos with arms, "let us have no more hypocrisy from Mr Wilson about his devotion to human rights. Some of us believe in them."[53]

In early 1969, the UN's anti-genocide convention was ratified by the United Kingdom in the form of the British Genocide Act. In texts published afterwards, Biafra activists refer to the Act to characterize the government's conduct as criminal.[54] The moral power of the legal terms with which the Biafra lobby operated stemmed from their association with post-World War II visions of a new international order: a more just order, an international utopia to which Britain had contributed greatly, as many pro-Biafran voices contended. This only increased their disappointment "about our own Belsen – Biafra," since their compatriots had even less excuse than the Germans, as activists like Peter Cadogan felt:

[51] Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*. 24.
[52] Joan Mellors, "What about Their Human Rights, Mr. Wilson?" *Tribune*, October 18, 1968, 6.
[53] "Biafra and Human Rights," *Spectator*, November 15, 1968, 685–6. The text was afterwards reprinted in Biafran propaganda: Ministry of Information, Republic of Biafra, ed., *Genocide Breaks up Nations*, 5–6.
[54] See, e.g. Waugh, *Britain and Biafra*, 8; Waugh and Cronje, *Biafra*, 108.

"At least we are free to speak, to meet and to print as the people of Nazi Germany were not." The ignorance thus seems "partly wilful."[55] But, in light of what in the eyes of many appeared as the moral bankruptcy of the British Labour government under Wilson, the former world power had sealed its fate of decline. For Waugh and Suzanne Cronje, also a journalist and member of the Britain-Biafra Association, "this extraordinarily disgusting episode in British foreign policy must mean the end of the road for Britain as a country fit for world power."[56]

The Morality of Interventionism in a Postcolonial World

In Germany, one of the political heavyweights joining in the pro-Biafran campaign was Bundestag President Eugen Gerstenmaier. A member of the conservative opposition to Nazi rule, the Protestant theologian was one of the CDU's main foreign policy experts and acted as the president of the Deutsche Afrika-Gesellschaft, the founding of which he had also initiated.[57] Gerstenmaier espoused the humanitarian campaign on behalf of the Biafrans, but was highly skeptical about "the rallying cries of self-determination and sovereignty," toxic ideas in the political environment of postcolonial Africa, where state borders go back to colonial demarcations cutting across "the old spheres of tribal life." The wishful dream that the borders of states and tribes concur is "an utopia; because if each [tribe] is given a state, most of these hundreds of tribal states would be unviable."[58] The United Nations played a leading role in this tragedy. As Gerstenmaier asserted, Lagos' policy line contradicted the UN Charter and the anti-genocide convention. The world body did not act as laudably as the sweet music that the rhetoric of their documents sounds: "golden words on paper. But: who implements them? The United Nations are apparently unable to do so."[59] For Gerstenmaier, U Thant's silence was a "sublime exposition of the disability and interior disempowerment of the United Nations."[60]

[55] Peter Cadogan, "Introduction," *Biafra*, ed. by Save Biafra Committee, London: 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/249), 1.

[56] Waugh and Cronje, *Biafra*, 116.

[57] For a biography see Gniss, *Politiker*.

[58] Eugen Gerstenmaier, "Biafra – am Ende des vierten Akts: Die Vereinten Nationen haben im afrikanischen Stammeskrieg versagt," *Christ und Welt*, September 27, 1968, 3.

[59] Eugen Gerstenmaier, "Biafra – Ursachen und Rettungsversuche: Vortrag von Bundestagspräsident D. Dr. Gerstenmaier vor der Volkshochschule Schwäbisch Hall, September 14, 1968" (ACDP 01–210 Nachlass Gerstenmaier, 083). He also called for the creation of an international observer team in letters to the Foreign Minister. Eugen Gerstenmaier to Willy Brandt, September 25, 1968 (PA AA B 34/742).

[60] Eugen Gerstenmaier, " Ende," 3.

Bishop Heinrich Tenhumberg, head of the Catholic Church's liaison office with the Bonn government, explained that the "principle of non-intervention is outdated in our time when the protection of fundamental human rights is at stake." "Civilized states" cannot remain passive in a world after Auschwitz given that modern communication technology automatically transformed internal conflicts into international crises.[61] An internal memorandum of the Arbeitskreis für Menschenrechte urged its members to advocate a more intensive discussion of the questions raised by the conflict as this "should in the long run lead to the erosion of the partly outdated principle of non-intervention in effective international law."[62] Lamenting the insufficient reaction of the international community, the "world government" was the main political institution at which criticism was leveled, besides Whitehall. In the pages of the mainstream press and activist publications, pleas for reforms of the UN system were voiced through appeals to postwar international legal ideas. According to *Der Spiegel*, the United Nations has "defined what is happening in Biafra as criminally liable. The Nazi genocide of the Jews prompted the world organization in 1946 [sic!] to declare genocide an international crime." Yet the organization would lack the instruments to enforce this norm in practice. Without an international court that could open a trial, the Anti-Genocide Convention remains a fiasco – "the genocide allegations against Nigeria would have to be judged by a Nigerian court."[63] In view of Biafra, the lessons to be drawn from the Holocaust would be the creation of international norms to prevent similar crimes in the present and the future.

Clergy, humanitarian activists, and journalists discussed the legal restrictions on intervention in the civil war. The humanitarian crisis in Biafra provoked a diffusion of legal terminology into discussions in the popular realm; the borders between scholarly legal discourse and moral outcry were blurred. In October 1968, the *New York Times* published a letter to the editor written by Yale Law professor Arthur Leff, who explained that the matter at hand was rather simple: "Sovereignty is nice, I suppose, if games like that amuse you." However, what was at stake were not abstract principles, but babies: "They have no countries

[61] Heinrich Tenhumberg, "Massenmord trotz Völkerrecht?" 229. See also his letters to the Bonn Government, esp. Heinrich Tenhumberg to Willy Brandt," June 25, 1968 (PA AA B 34/747) and to the members of the budget committee of the German Bundestag, June 20, 1968 (ibid.), 1.

[62] "Menschenrechte (Vertraulicher Bericht): Anlage an den Brief an die Mitglieder des Arbeitskreises für Menschenrechte," 1968 (ibid.), 8. See also Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken, "Entschließung zur Hilfe in Nigeria-Biafra," November 12, 1968 (ibid.); Becher, "Völkermord heute!"

[63] "Nur beten," *Spiegel*, August 19, 1968, 72.

but their mothers, no cause but their lives and no salvation but food and love." Thus he proposed straightforward solutions to be initiated by the US government. For Leff, the issue should not be turned into a complicated, abstract matter: "Forget all the blather about international law, sovereignty and self-determination, all the abstract garbage: babies are starving to death."[64]

What renders Leff's plea especially interesting is his professional background: he was a law professor at Yale. On September 29, 1968, the United Nations revised a petition in which Leff's Yale colleagues Michael Reisman and Myres S. McDougal called for a "humanitarian intervention to protect the Ibos." They ended their text with a powerful portrait of a contemporary "world haunted by the continuing expectation of violence" that urgently needed "a vision of the unity of mankind." Otherwise

> we will continue to witness the bleeding raw material demanding humanitarian intervention. We have waited too long and have already lost our innocence; if we cannot perfect, as a minimum, a system of humanitarian intervention, we have lost our humanity. If we sit by while the Ibos suffer genocide, we have forfeited our right to regain it.[65]

Like Leff, Reisman, McDougal and a number of other Yale and Ohio State law school professors had also already sent a letter to the editors of the *New York Times*, in which they urged for UN intervention.[66] In their rhetoric, as well as their aims, these appeals leave the realm of international law and enter a sphere of *Moralpolitik*.[67] Reisman and McDougal had prepared the petition for the American Committee to Keep Biafra Alive.[68] The borders between international law and humanitarian activism were, to a degree, mutually permeable.

The New York area in particular emerged as a centre of joint ventures between legal practitioners, legal scholars and humanitarian activists; partly because it is the location of the UN's headquarters. The Biafran government themselves participated in these efforts. Through their New York representation, the self-proclaimed Biafran Mission to the United Nations, the secessionists contracted the lawyer Maxwell Cohen as their

[64] Arthur Allen Leff, "Letter to the Editor: Food for Biafrans," *New York Times*, October 4, 1968, 46.
[65] Reisman and McDougal, "Humanitarian Intervention," 194, 195.
[66] Howard Fink et al., "U.N. Aid to Biafra," *New York Times*, August 28, 1968, 46.
[67] Hoffmann, ed., *Moralpolitik*.
[68] ACKBA, "For Immediate Release," September 1968 (SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 10).

legal advisor in their relations with the UN and the US government.[69] The Jewish-American lawyer's main task was to find ways to employ the Genocide Convention as a concrete means for claim making. He advised Biafran representatives on the Convention in the secessionists' renewed efforts to go through UN channels.[70]

To advance these efforts, Cohen corresponded and collaborated with a number of lawyers and activists, especially those within Jewish-American circles and Biafran expatriates. Maxwell Cohen was also on the board of directors of Americans for Biafran Relief.[71] The Jewish-American lawyer was part of a network of pro-Biafran legal activism that stretched into the spheres of humanitarianism, diplomacy, scholarship, and journalism.[72] These networks were united by a common cause and a shared rhetoric. In a letter circulated to members of Congress, Paul Connett, the English head of ACKBA, suggestively addressed the politicians: "We are sure that you, as a congressman concerned with human rights, will see that Biafra is a test-case for humanity." Connett argued that a system ensuring "that minority groups will not be eradicated or subjugated" must be established immediately.[73] For activist groups like ACKBA or the Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, the creation of an international system securing the rights of minorities *and* individual human rights was their policy goal. In this program, the ideas of genocide and human rights dovetailed almost seamlessly.[74]

In mid-1968, the mailboxes of the UN headquarters in New York and the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva were flooded with petitions. The rhetoric of pro-Biafran activists and the media resonated vibrantly in these writings from "ordinary" people trying to use the UN

[69] Maxwell Cohen to the Government of the Republic of Biafra, November 1, 1968 (ibid., Folder 14); Nwonye Otue to Cohen, November 4, 1968 (ibid.).

[70] Cohen, "Draft for a Biafran Government Letter to U Thant," [November?] 1968 (SCRBC: Biafra War Collection (1966–70), MG 788, Box 2, Folder 9); Biafran Mission to the United Nations: Letter to U Thant, November 11, 1968 (ibid.); Cohen, Telex Communication, no date (ibid.); and his fragmentary memoirs, Maxwell Cohen, here ch. "Biafra," (ibid., Folder 11).

[71] "Americans for Biafan Relief," May 9, 1969 (American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1969, Ba-Biafra, Box 86).

[72] Cohen's files provide insights into his efforts and the larger networks of legal activism on the Biafrans' behalf in the New York area. Sol Neil Corbin to Cohen, September 30, 1968 (SCRBC: Biafra War Collection (1966–70), MG 788, Box 2, Folder 14); Michael Reisman to Maxwell Cohen, 1968 [?] (ibid.); Edward E. Grusd, "Genocide Pact is still uninvoked," *The National Jewish Monthly* (January 1969), 11 (ibid., Folder 11); Maxwell Cohen to Gabriel Onyiuke, November 12, 1968 (ibid., Folder 9)

[73] Paul Connett, Round letter to Members of Congress, September 21, 1968 (SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 10).

[74] See e.g. Aktionskomitee Biafra, "Resolution an die Bundesregierung," July 15, 1968 (PA AA B 34/747), 1.

machinery on behalf of the Biafrans, as "this civil war has become genocide. For humanitarian reasons, the world should not turn its back on the Ibos, as it did on the Jews in World War II."[75] Some of the letters' authors attached press clippings, often stating that these reports – and images – were the reasons for their outrage.[76] Many petitioners evoked postwar international law. A group of Northwestern University faculty asked, convinced that "[s]urely we cannot witness another holocaust," whether this was not the time to implement the "Anti-Genocide Bill?"[77] Other petitioners were more knowledgeable about the Genocide Convention. Some referred to specific articles of the Convention, the UN Charter, and pointed to the "UN's proclamation of the year 1968 as the Year of International Human Rights, commemorating the passing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights two decades before."[78] Striking in the petitions – and the pro-Biafran campaign at large – is the unfettered intermingling of legal categories: the petitioners freely refer to human rights, crimes against humanity and genocide without distinguishing between them in any clear manner,[79] often conflating various international legal norms, events, and political ideas associated with World War II and the immediate postwar period. Appeals that "there must be some protection under the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights" "to end the genocide" or even that the "first of the Human Rights set forth in the Conventions of the United Nations is the punishment of the crime of genocide" were common.[80]

The Biafran lobbyists themselves freely mingled various concepts that they considered promising for their ends. In that regard, their supporters around the globe were as conceptually promiscuous as the secessionists themselves. However, there was a crucial difference: where the secessionist government considered self-determination paramount, pro-Biafran lobbyists from the West questioned the validity of postcolonial

[75] Letter to UNCHR, October 20, 1967 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A). See also, as one from numerous possible examples, Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, July 8, 1968 (ibid., Part C).

[76] See e.g. Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, July 14, 1968 (ibid., Part C).

[77] Letter to the Secretary-General U Thant, July 16, 1968 (ibid., Part D).

[78] Letter to Secretary-General U Thant and the UNCHR, July 18, 1968 (ibid.); see also, e.g., Letter to the United Nations, "1968 Internationales Jahr der Menschenrechte," May 24, 1968 (ibid., NIGE Part B); Hermann Dietzfelbinger, "Appell zum Krieg in Biafra," July 2, 1968 (EZA 87/1118); Heinz Kühn, "Realistische Reformen gegen radikale Utopien," *Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst: Tagespolitik – Kommentare – Auslandsberichte*, March 11, 1969, 1–3, library.fes.de/spdpd/1969/690311.pdf (accessed February 3, 2009).

[79] See, e.g, Letter to Commission for Human Rights, April 28, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A).

[80] Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, July 18, 1968 (ibid., Part D); Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, September 12, 1968 (ibid., Part G).

sovereignty and the impregnability of state borders, calling for intervention by a power "who is big enough to show the will and determination to break through legalistic and diplomatic niceties."[81] A Frankfurt political science student, writing in English, asked whether the UNCHR "sincerely want[s] to maintain that the U.N. Charta is applicable to inter-state relations only? Is your Commission only concerned with the violation of human rights across a border?"[82] The war may be an "'internal affair,'" another petitioner wrote, but "[o]ur civilization must be able to pay more than lip service to the ideals of world community, common brotherhood, and the dignity of man."[83] In his preface to a volume on Biafra, noted German historian Golo Mann, writer and third child of Nobel Prize laureate Thomas Mann, asked why the USA did not do more about human suffering in Biafra? To leave no space for ambiguity, he decided to answer the rhetorical question himself: "Because it would have been against international law: 'intervention' in the 'internal matters' of a 'sovereign state'." Nigeria would not be a state like the USA, however, since this legal terminology would be foreign to African thinking. Intervention in African affairs would thus be appropriate.[84]

At the core of the activists' rhetorical mélange was an emergent creed that national sovereignty could not be sanctified in a world after Auschwitz: to prevent genocide, human rights were needed to protect populations from excesses of sovereign power. Biafra lobbyists and intellectuals aligned with their cause questioned the validity of national sovereignty in times of humanitarian crisis and called for the rule of international law, invoking both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights *and* the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. When the two conventions were passed in 1948, these projects had appeared incompatible: the gulf separating collective and individual rights seemed impossible to bridge for the advocates of either cause.[85] In the language that the Biafra lobby used twenty years later, genocide and human rights intertwined.

The frustration over the United Nations voiced in many media reports was also provoked by the organization's reaction to the petitions sent by Western citizens: as these individuals had to learn in the replies to their letters, the United Nations still explicitly denied itself the power to react to petitions. The unpromising prospects of the Genocide Convention were also evoked by the fate of the inventor of the idea, the Polish-Jewish

[81] Somerville, "Text of Speech at 'Save Biafra' rally Trafalgar Square 7th July, 1968," (OXA, DIR/2/3/2/32), 4.

[82] Letter to UNCHR, August 19, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part F).

[83] Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, July 18, 1968 (ibid., Part D).

[84] Mann, "Geleitwort," 9.

[85] Cooper, *Lemkin*, ch. 14; Siegelberg, "Unofficial Men."

international lawyer Raphael Lemkin. In 1959, Lemkin died of a heart attack in New York, still frustrated by the lack of a political impact his invention had made.[86] Like the man, Lemkin's idea did not fare well in the political climate of the Cold War. The United States in particular feared that "genocide" might be used to criticize the treatment of African-Americans.[87] However, some of his associates and sympathizers tried to carry the torch after Lemkin's death. One of them was Maxwell Cohen, Biafra's legal advisor, and Lemkin's close friend.[88] Cohen considered the Genocide Convention "the most humane and moral treaty in world history," at least until there was a "treaty branding 'war' as a crime."[89] Cohen tried to promote the Genocide convention as a means to further the cause of minorities in sub-Saharan African states like the Southern Sudanese, or the black population in apartheid South Africa.[90] But the United Nations did not provide a mechanism for political claim-making for ethnic minorities in postcolonial states, so his efforts were largely in vain. The Biafran government discontinued Cohen's services in January 1969, after only a few months of service.[91]

Germans, Jews, and Christians: The Particularisms of Universal Holocaust Memory

When Rabbi A. Rudin linked Biafra and the Holocaust in the above-cited address at an interconfessional Biafra rally in New York crowd, the Jewish cleric derived an imperative to act from the legacy of the Holocaust: "When the fires of the Nazi crematoria were finally extinguished 23 years ago, a stunned and traumatized Jewish people cried from the very depths of its being: human destruction must never happen again to any people at any time in any place."[92] In his vision, the particular fate of European Jewry and moral universalism dovetailed seamlessly: "I come as a rabbi to this place on this Jewish Sabbath for the sake of life. I come to remind us of that universal and demanding pledge: genocide must never happen

[86] Cooper, *Lemkin*, ch. 17.
[87] Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*, esp. ch. 5.
[88] Cooper, *Lemkin*, 265, 267.
[89] Maxwell Cohen to Grusd, November 19, 1968 (SCRBC: Biafra War Collection (1966–70), MG 788, Box 2, Folder 11).
[90] See various files in ibid., folder 11, for instance Maxwell Cohen to Nana N. Nahomo, November 4, 1964 (ibid., Folder 11), the fragments of his memoirs' chapter "Sudan" (ibid., Folder 13) and Herman Edelsberg to Cohen, December 15, 1970 (ibid., Folder 14).
[91] Nwonye Otue to Cohen, January 21, 1969 (SCRBC: Biafra War Collection (1966–70), MG 788, Box 2, Folder 14); Maxwell Cohen to Ojukwu, January 21, 1969 (ibid.).
[92] A. James Rudin, "Talk given at Biafra Interfaith Rally, St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, October 26, 1968," American Jewish Committee Archives, Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1968, Biafra, Box 72, Biafra Responses Folder, 1.

again to any people at any time in any place." By implication, this call was directed to everyone: "We cannot be silent, we cannot be passive."[93]

Although visual metaphors comparing Biafra to the Holocaust were frequently couched in universal terms, they had greater effect on some groups of contemporaries than others. Britons, for one, who had grown critical of their government, responded strongly. Other groups were those who, for various reasons, felt intimately connected to the legacy of the Holocaust – in particular, Germans and Jews. The Jewish-American community reacted with particular empathy to the plight of the Igbos. As a British diplomat observed, "[i]n most of the cases known to us the high level lobbyist [of the Biafran cause] has been a Jew, because [. . .] there is an identity of purpose between Jews as a suffering minority with the Ibo population."[94] Jews in the United States were not the only ones who felt obligated to speak out against the suffering of the "Jews of Africa." Networks of Jewish activists and organizations on both sides of the Atlantic were vital for the establishment and coordination of transnational Biafra protest.[95] Their Jewish heritage was part of the motivation to commit to the Biafran cause for many activists and politicians in Israel and Western Europe like Bernard Kouchner, whose grandfather was killed in Auschwitz.[96]

Numerous non-Jewish contemporaries reacted similarly. During the unfolding of the Holocaust, Germans and others could at least claim that they did not know. Now, this situation had changed entirely. Because of the images nobody could say: "'I did not know' [. . .] We see no Ibo propaganda; we see the facts [. . .]."[97] The idea that the world was watching the death of a people, which was so present in the media's and activists' coverage of Biafra, attained further resonance as the audiences were convinced that what they witnessed was genocide.

A particular burden rested on the shoulders of the descendants of Hitler's Germany. The Catholic journalist Ruth Bowert advised her compatriots: "Do not leave the people [in Biafra] alone, [. . .] ask

93 Rudin, "Talk given at Biafra Interfaith Rally," 1.

94 British Embassy, Washington, DC, "Memorandum on 'Biafran' Propaganda Effort in the U.S.A.," March 1969 (UK NA, FCO 26/300), p. 1.

95 On Israeli sympathy for Biafrans, see Givoni, "Des victimes."

96 Givoni, "Des victimes"; "Twin Circle Headline: Aid to Biafra" (SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria – Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 5). There was also strong Pro-Biafran opinion in the Israeli press. J. Freres to Department of State, July 20, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1876).

97 *Hansard Lords*, August 27, 1968, column 700, hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1968/aug/27/nigeria (accessed March 9, 2013). See also Günter Grass, "Völkermord vor aller Augen: Ein Appell an die Bundesregierung," *Die Zeit*, October 11, 1968, 5; Jacques Siclier, "A la télévision: Un peuple en train de mourir de faim," *Le Monde*, August 15, 1968, 4.

yourself whether the right to life is a right for all: protest! Say never again that you did not know."[98] Günter Grass felt it was a particular responsibility of his fellow countrymen to react:

> As Germans, we should know what we say when we use the word "genocide." This biggest of all crimes weighs heavily on the past of our people. Not moralizing condescension, but the knowledge of Auschwitz, Treblinka and Belsen obligates us to speak out publicly against the culprits and accessories of the genocide in Biafra . . . [S]ilence – we had to learn that as well – turns into complicity.[99]

Many West German commentators agreed that "after Auschwitz, to which Biafra had been rightfully likened," the Federal Republic of Germany bore "a special responsibility."[100]

As early as spring 1968, Germany had become a centre of petitioning activities on behalf of Biafra. The Aktionsgemeinschaft Biafra-Nigeria-Petition asked in a letter to the OAU, the United Nations, the Apostolic Nuncio in Germany, representatives of the Protestant and Catholic Churches, of Jewry and Islam in Germany, and to the leaders of the four Bundestag parties "how long will you accept that human rights are being trampled on?"[101] In letters to various political bodies, German activists and other concerned contemporaries expressed their outrage about what is happening "in front of the eyes of the world public [. . .]: that for the second time in our century an entire people is being destroyed," as Catholic youth exclaimed in a petition to the Bundestag. "Don't wait for the final solution of the Biafra question."[102] Similar references were used in many of the letters sent to the United Nations from Germany.[103] British diplomats in Germany were soon convinced that they knew why the protests were particularly caustic in the Federal Republic. The reason "may well be because of the 'guilt complex' of so many Germans about Hitler's treatment of the Jews," as a British diplomat to Germany noted in view of letters received in the embassy in Bonn, in which enraged German citizens suggested that the British government, given that their arms enabled the "'genocide of 14 million

[98] Ruth Bowert, "Biafra: Massenmord und kein Ende. Ein Appell an die Heimat," *Rheinischer Merkur*, August 9, 1968, 24.

[99] Grass, "Völkermord," 5.

[100] J. Rudolph and H. Menzel, "Information für die Teilnehmer der Podiumsdiskussion 'Biafra – Testfall für eine neue Politik,' Heidelberg, January 27, 1969" (EZA 87/1119).

[101] Biafra-Nigeria-Petition (EZA 87/1118); Hans-Josef Heyer to Bishop Dietzfelbinger, Aachen, September 5, 1968 (ibid.).

[102] Katholisches Jugendamt Duisburg to the Delegates of the German Bundestag, September 12, 1968 (ACDP 01–158 Nachlass Fritz Burgbacher, 025/3).

[103] Aktionskreis Biafra, Letter to the United Nations, April 22, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A); Letter to the United Nations, April 20, 1968 (ibid.); Letter to the Secretary General of the UN, September 1, 1968 (ibid., part G).

Ibos,'" would be "worse than Hitler, who only killed 6,000,000 Jews!"[104] Roger Jackling, British ambassador to West Germany, wondered: "Who can say in what proportion Schadenfreude at the discomfiture of a rival Colonial power and the subconscious wish to hang on others the albatross of Rassenmord that bears so heavily on German necks, contributed to the intensity of emotional involvement in this country?"[105]

In Germany, a sense of responsibility because of the country's past intertwined with a Christian sense of concern for Biafra. When, in 1968, news of the threat of genocide in a faraway region of Africa arrived in German parishes, many were compelled to raise their voices. Christians sent countless petitions to the United Nations "in the conviction, that it is impossible to remain silent without incurring guilt. [...]."[106] Students at the Protestant Missionsakademie Hamburg urged the World Council of Churches to put the Biafran conflict high on the agenda of its assembly in Uppsala in July 1968. They felt compelled to do so "especially as Germans, because of the bitter experience of our people that the Church has failed, when it could not prevent the extermination of six million people [...]."[107] The notion of "Schweigen," of remaining silent, was a recurrent theme in these writings. Numerous Church bodies and religious groups felt that they could not keep silent in the face of genocide.[108] Some directed their calls at the global public, protesting what they considered a "wall of silence, which the world press erected in front of these events."[109]

This notion has to be viewed against the background of the political and social conflicts within Western societies – in particular, Germany – at the time, and the role that the churches and Holocaust memory played in their unfolding. The 1960s had witnessed intensified discussions about the role – especially the shortcomings – of the churches in the establishment of National Socialist power and the unfolding of

[104] John D. Campbell, Letter to N. Gaydon, January 29, 1969 (UK NA FCO 26/300), 1.

[105] Roger Jackling, Letter to John Peck, February 10, 1969 (UK NA FCO 26/300), 2.

[106] Kolping and action 365, Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, no date (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part B); Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, July 8, 1968 (ibid., Part C); see also Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, August 5, 1968 (ibid., Part E).

[107] Johannes Hummel (Missionsakademie der Universität Hamburg) to WCC General Assembly at Uppsala, July 10, 1968 (WCCA, 42.3.007 WCC General Secretariat, Nigeria/Biafra, 4).

[108] For some of the first examples, see Letter to the President of the United Nations General Assembly, April 24, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A); Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, May 9, 1968 (ibid., Part B) and Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, May 30, 1968 (ibid., Part B).

[109] Bund der deutschen Katholischen Jugend, Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, June 21, 1968 (ibid.).

the Holocaust. These had been sparked by Rolf Hochhuth's 1963 play *Der Stellvertreter* ("The Deputy"), which castigated Pope Pius XII for not speaking out against the mass murder of European Jewry.[110] This literary indictment provoked a public uproar that would reverberate for years.[111] Prior to the play's debut, many devout Catholics assumed that the pope had helped to save Jewish lives.[112] The play ignited a heated international debate among parishioners and public intellectuals,[113] which took on a particularly virulent character in Germany. The title of a book with the debate's key texts asked: "Was the Pope Allowed to Remain Silent"?[114] This phrase put the play's allegations into a nutshell. Even more than the English word "silence," the German "Schweigen" conveys the sense of *not* speaking, of the failure to speak out. As an effect, the role of the churches in the establishment of National Socialist power and the unfolding of the Holocaust was increasingly seen in a negative light – in Germany, as well as internationally.[115]

For many Christians in Germany, Biafra soon turned into a *Stellvertreter* of Auschwitz. Maybe the churches had burdened themselves with guilt during World War II. But this failure to act was not to be repeated, as numerous clergy and Christian lay people wanted to show. However, the advocacy against the threat of genocide in the present did not necessarily imply a confession of guilt in the past. One group of petitioners wrote that they were overcome with "burning anxiety" by reports from Biafra, a direct reference to the title and introductory sentence of Pius XI's encyclical from1937, in which the Pope – the direct predecessor of Hochhuth's villain – had critiqued Nazism's suppression of the churches and of individual rights in general. This intertextuality inscribed the protest note in a tradition of Catholic advocacy for peace, freedom and human rights – an idea that was well contained in the anti-totalitarianism of the "Christian West," which needed to be defended against the attacks from Hochhuth and others.[116]

In his memorandum on Biafra, Rabbi Tanenbaum concluded that "'[t]hou shall not stand idly by the blood of thy brother' has become virtually the eleventh commandment in contemporary Judaism." He

[110] Rolf Hochhuth, *Der Stellvertreter: Ein christliches Trauerspiel*, Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt 1967 [1963].
[111] Ruff, "Auseinandersetzungen"; Whitfield, "Deputy."
[112] See Golda Meir, "Editorial," *America*, March 7, 1964, reprinted in Bentley, ed., *Storm*, 39–41.
[113] See the articles in Bentley, ed., *Storm*.
[114] Raddatz, ed., *Summa iniuria*.
[115] Phayer, *Catholic Church*; idem, *Pius XII*.
[116] Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, May 2, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part B). Part B of the file is packed with petitions from Germans, many of which are indicative of these entanglements. On Pius XI, see Bouthillon, *naissance*.

considered remaining silent in such a situation incompatible with the Jewish system of values in a time after Auschwitz: "Silence, indifference, spectatorship to human suffering are the cardinal sins in the Jewish value system today."[117] However, this is not only a particular Jewish commandment. The Rabbi's rhetoric is also tied to a vision of Judeo-Christian civilization. At the end of his address in front of the crowd at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Rabbi Rubin recited Bible verses, which he read together with the interfaith congregation to remind the audience – using the same rhetoric as his fellow Rabbi Tanenbaum – that thou shalt not "stand idly by the blood of thy neighbour."[118] The latter verse, taken from the Book of Leviticus in the Torah and the Old Testament, had been repeatedly summoned by Jewish-American pro-Biafran campaigners.[119] Through such inter-communal endeavors as the collaborative recital of verses, a community of Judeo-Christian humanitarians was created; across the divides created by a long history of anti-Semitism, this group was bound by its religiosity and by Western civilization. At the core of the Biafran Holocaust comparisons – and in general of Holocaust memory culture as it has emerged since then – was the creed against remaining silent in view of the suffering of others. This belief system was couched in universal terms, but is firmly entrenched in particular systems of thought and evocations of a shared civilization.

The media and protest event "Biafra" happened during a time when the perception of National Socialism was changing slowly, but decisively. In the first ten years after the end of the war, the Holocaust played only a marginal role in dominant understandings of Nazism; the mass murder of the European Jews remained peripheral in, though not entirely absent from, representations of National Socialism and the war. The voices of camp survivors did not receive ample public hearing.[120] In the 1960s, Nazi mass crimes were increasingly discussed in Western publics. Intellectuals and protesters associated with the New Left likened French politics in Algeria and American involvement in Vietnam to Nazi terror.[121] However, these analogies were part of distinct intellectual traditions of anti-fascism: this rhetoric did not universalize the Holocaust,

[117] Tanenbaum, "Biafran Tragedy," 4.
[118] Rudin, "Talk given at Biafra Interfaith Rally," 1.
[119] See e g. The American Jewish Emergency Effort for Biafran Relief, "Have you ever seen millions of children starving to death? Now you have." c. 1968 (SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 3).
[120] See Bessel and Schumann, eds., *Life after Death*; Judt, *Postwar*; Lagrou, *Legacy*.
[121] Kalter, *Discovery*, ch. 4; Mausbach, "Wende."

it compared threats posed by imperialist powers.[122] More decisively, media coverage devoted to the Eichmann trial and the Six Day War, for instance, helped to make the annihilation of the European Jews legible as genocide. A new rhetoric of genocide comparisons evolved during the war between Israel and Egypt: with the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser deemed a "new Hitler," some feared a "second Holocaust."[123]

This space of resonance had already been opened up when, in the summer months of 1968, newspaper readers and TV viewers in the West were confronted with images of starving children in a West African civil war. They were reminded of the genocide of the Jews in World War II or, more likely, of the *photographs* that were taken during the Allied liberation of the camps that appeared in newspapers and magazines in the immediate postwar period and have returned into public view since the late 1950s. Thus contemporaries had a reservoir of imagery of Nazi victims at their disposal to make sense of the pictures from Biafra. Although most of the photographs from 1945 were taken in concentration camps – and not in the death factories – they were nevertheless increasingly understood to "show" the genocide of the Jews.[124]

In representations of Biafra, both complexes – the Nigerian civil war and the crimes of Nazi Germany – were interpreted as genocide and thus given rhetorical equivalence. The "Jews of Africa" were no Jews, but (mostly) Christians – the connecting line was drawn on a purely metaphorical basis. Biafra was interpreted using models that derived from the evolving cultural memory of National Socialism. Conversely, Biafra also influenced historical and public perceptions of Nazi rule. The African civil war contributed to the consolidation of a pattern of memorialization and helped to establish a new understanding of National Socialism. The murder of European Jews ceased to be merely one entry on a long list of Nazi crimes and became "the Holocaust": the historical and symbolic *core* of a new understanding of National Socialist rule and World War II. Biafra thus represented an important step in this process of cultural and historical reinterpretation.

In the 23 years before Biafra, a number of legal and moral concepts had been attached to the photographs of the liberation of the camps: they were understood as atrocity photographs, as showing crimes against humanity, violations of human rights and now increasingly as

[122] See Rabinbach, *Begriffe*; Fermaglich, *American Dreams*. Here I differ with Molden, "Vietnam," who misses that references to the Holocaust during the Vietnam War played a subordinate role in an anti-imperialist frame of reference.

[123] Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust*, 115–27.

[124] See Knoch, *Tat;* Brink, *Ikonen* and Zelizer, *Remembering*. On the changing perceptions of the camps since 1945, see Moyn, "Aftermath."

genocide. Even if a paradigm change in the understanding of Nazi evil slowly became manifest, these associations did not disappear immediately. When the images of the Biafran Babies were understood in terms of the photographs of the camps, it triggered associations with a set of political ideas and legal norms that, for most contemporaries, formed part of a rather foggy universalistic rhetoric. That these different concepts could be mingled so seamlessly testifies to the historical changes in the understanding of such concepts. At times, human rights and genocide seemed incompatible, at other times – or for other historical actors – they did not. The terms in which the Biafran campaign was couched did share a lot: as international legal concepts that were morally, emotionally and partly also religiously laden, they were useful for a "politics of naming and shaming." Building on such rhetorical devices, journalists and activists formulated assertions, claims and allegations. Here it is important to situate the political ideas used by historical actors within their specific "horizons of expectation" (Reinhart Koselleck). Possible enforcement mechanisms play a key role: when enforcement is politically available and thought to be promising, historical actors respond accordingly.

In the view of many Western observers, the lost Jews from the Nazi death camps returned in the guise of the Biafrans. A number of groups felt a particular responsibility to act: Germans and Jews, but also Christian lay people and clerics, representatives of one of the many institutions that had not done enough to prevent the deaths of millions – or had even worked toward it. The friction between universal rhetoric and particular responsibilities is deeply engrained in the memory of the Holocaust as an archetypical, but universal evil. However, the assumption that the Holocaust was a "singular" event that cannot – and should not – be compared to any other event had not yet emerged.[125] Strikingly, American Jews were quite at ease with comparing the horrific fate of their own people in the Nazi camps and death centers to the fate of the Biafrans.

Comparisons to the Holocaust were part of a campaign that was an imperative to action, a plea to intervene in a "[r]ace against time to save starving Biafra."[126] Addressed at the international communities' powers that be, these appeals gave birth to an interventionist agenda that effectively questioned postcolonial sovereignty. In the aftermath of the September 1966 massacres, parts of the Eastern Region's intelligentsia and political caste tied together the key elements of what became the

[125] On this notion see Marchart, "Umkämpfte Gegenwart."
[126] Matthew Rosa, "Race against Time to Save Starving Biafra," *The Observer*, July 7, 1968, 2.

conceptual bricolage of the Biafran campaign: the rhetoric of genocide, the idea of the Igbos as the "Jews of Africa" and the right to self-determination. These ideas coalesced in the vision of the creation of an African Israel. This utopia of self-determination was relegated to the background when Biafra emerged as a genocidal dystopia, a postcolonial African tragedy enacted on the world stage. Whether Biafra would attain its right to self-determination was simply not on the top of the list of concerns: now was the time to save the lives of starving children. The West African re-apparition of Auschwitz was observed from different vantage points. Whether the creation of a new state, of a right to self-determination, was the best answer to the mass death of innocents, or whether the better solution was a humanitarian intervention – in whatever form – were two replies to the same problem. In many ways, they were intimately connected. But, in a postcolonial world, they represented entirely different agendas.

7 Distant Suffering and Close Concerns

Biafra and the Third World in the Global Sixties

When news of Biafra reached international publics, social protest was already rampant across the globe. "1968" has become shorthand for left-wing activism, youth protests, countercultural contestation and workers' mobilization. Just before Biafra's emergence as a global humanitarian event, leftist protests culminated in the "événements du May," as they are known in French. The occupation of the Sorbonne and the battle for the *Quartier Latin* produced some of the most iconic images of the movement. However, the protests were global in scale and nature. They were particularly intense in Western Europe and North America, but protests also emerged on the other side of the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe and in non-Western locations like Cordoba, Dakar, Mexico City, or Rio de Janeiro.[1] Their global dimension went beyond mere synchronicities. It cannot be understood without reference to the most sweeping transformation of global order in the twentieth century: decolonization. In the late 1960s, only remnants of France's and Britain's vast colonial empires had survived. The last European power clinging to its overseas possessions was *Estado Novo* Portugal.[2] Decolonization not only redrew the map of the world, it also transformed global political imaginaries by fundamentally delegitimizing colonial empire as a viable form of state organization.[3] During the years of "1968," solidarity with anticolonial liberation movements was one of the core issues driving leftist protesters in the West. The Vietnam War is a case in point here: the protesters censured Washington for behaving imperialistically

[1] For recent international perspectives on "1968" see esp. "AHR Forum: The International 1968, Part I," and "AHR Forum: The International 1968, Part II,"; Christiansen and Scarlett, ed., *Third World*; Davis et al., eds., *Changing the World*; Fink et al., eds., *1968*; Horn, *Spirit of '68*; Klimke, *Other Alliance*; Schildt and Siegfried, eds., *Marx and Coca-Cola*.

[2] As introductions to the history of decolonization see Ageron, *décolonisation*; Betts, *Decolonization*; Darwin, *End*; Hyam, *Declining Empire*; Rothermund, *Dehli*; Shipway, *Decolonization*.

[3] These processes were of course the product of a longer history. See esp. Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing*.

in a world that had developed international norms that shut out imperial rule.[4]

The emergence of the New Left was intimately intertwined with the emergence of another collective political subject: the Third World. A term coined in 1952 by the French demographer and economic historian Alfred Sauvy, this concept was developed in analogy to revolutionary France. Sauvy portrayed the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa as a global *tiers état*.[5] As Christoph Kalter has shown, the anticolonial struggles in the Third World became sources of inspiration for the nascent New Left in the West: they wanted to revolutionize society at home just like the anticolonial liberation movements had revolutionized global society. Guerrilla fighters succeeded Western peasants and workers as the prime revolutionary subject. Now, the new masters to learn from were Mao Tse Tung, Ho Chi Minh, or Che Guevara, anti-imperial leaders who seemed to show paths toward fulfilling dreams of revolution.[6]

In the middle of 1968, "Biafra" was the next Third World issue that burst onto the political scene. For the Labour government in Britain, the fight of the secessionist "rebels" against British-supported Federal Nigeria threatened to become what Vietnam had been for a series of American administrations. Students, agitated by what was happening in a faraway Third World place, collaborated with visiting students from Biafra in organizing "Biafra committees," echoing the names of leftist student groups formed across the decade. Protesters organized teach-ins, rallies or went on hunger strike.[7] Resounding New Left protest strategies, the activists relied on the shock value of stark visual imagery and the language of genocide.[8] Accordingly, a cursory look at the movement seems to indicate that it was part of the protest wave crashing over the globe at

4 Poiger, "Imperialism."

5 As an introduction to the term see Wolf-Phillips, "Third World" and Tomlinson, "What was."

6 Kalter, *Discovery*. See also Arthur, *Unfinished Projects*; Juchler, *Studentenbewegungen*; Seibert, *Vergessene Proteste*; Slobodian, *Foreign Front*; Young, *Soul Power*.

7 For examples of teach-ins see Chukwuma Osuji to Fenner Brockway, [January?] 1969 (Churchill College Archives FEBR 219a); Dr. Ziegler, "Demonstrationsveranstaltungen zum 'Biafra-Nigeria Konflikt' der 'Humanistischen Studentenunion' (HSU) am 18. Juli 1968 in München," July 9, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741). For hunger strikes see "Manifest der Aktion Biafrahilfe, ESG, die Hungerstreikenden" (UK NA FCO 26/299); "Hungerstreik weist auf die Not in Biafra hin," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, December 12, 1968, 3; Rahner, "Hungern." On the history of hunger strikes in the period see Streng, "'Hungerstreik.'"

8 On the visual and rhetorical strategies of the New Left see Slobodian, *Foreign Front*, ch. 5.

the time. As it seems, Biafra was one more, if often forgotten, *événement* of 1968.[9]

However, is this an accurate portrayal? In order to test it, it is necessary to consider why the conflict occupied a prominent place within the "complex of aspirations and concerns" of the groups and individuals who decided to engage actively on behalf of the Biafrans.[10] As I will show, the protesters' empathy with the Biafrans' "distant suffering" was directly connected to very close concerns.[11] The emergence of the Biafra lobby needs to be closely situated within the history of protest in the period. It is important to be precise about who exactly began to protest on behalf of Biafra. The civil war never became a cause of the New Left, and many pro-Biafran activists actually criticized the radical students for their indifference toward the "African Auschwitz." The telos of "revolution" was absent from the thinking of pro-Biafran activists, who called instead for the realization of ideals expressed in a depoliticized language of humanitarianism and human rights. Yet, this activism was nevertheless political: on the pro-Biafran front, moderate leftists, and conservatives entered coalitions that developed a new Third Worldism that affirmed of Western values – a stark contrast to the anti-bourgeois demeanor of the student radicals. Biafra activism can hence only be understood within the context of the fundamental politicization of Western societies across the decade – and thus within the processes connected with "1968." But, as Biafra was, at least partly, a reaction *against* this radical protest, it transcends traditional narratives about "1968."

Western European and North American societies in the late 1960s were not only defined by the aftermath of World War II, but also by the end of empire and its afterlives.[12] This context was crucial in explaining the reactions of of groups and individuals who were deeply connected with their country's imperial pasts: Britons, for example, who had lived in colonial Nigeria before they had to move back to the metropole during decolonization or, in West Germany, expellees from Imperial Germany's eastern provinces with whom Biafra's rhetoric of self-determination resonated particularly strongly. Yet Biafra also raised questions about the global – some would argue, imperial – ambitions of the United States and

[9] On the often faulty association of different parts of the New Left with the Biafra campaign see Hein, *Westdeutschen*, 140; Whiteman, "Passionate Whites,"; West, "Biafra and the Left," 644; Wiseberg, "International Politics" 274; St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*, 360.

[10] Brown, *Moral Capital*, 25.

[11] The term is Luc Boltanski's, who, however, did not delve deeply into the "close concerns" of humanitarian activists. Boltanski, *Distant Suffering*.

[12] See the excellent Bailkin, *Afterlife*.

France in a postcolonial world. In both cases, appeals for a humanitarian campaign on behalf of Biafra were evoked as "righteous" causes that the countries needed to defend in view of the special "missions" ascribed to them. The national contexts were important in defining the shape the Biafran lobbyist scenes took in different countries; but so too did the countries' transnational and global connections. Accordingly, I pursue what may be called a comparative transnational analysis that moves from country to country. Loosely oriented on the chronology of the emergence of pro-Biafran scenes in the different countries, I start with the United Kingdom, and then move to Germany, the United States, and finally France.

Island Positions and Worldly Connections: Biafra in Post-Imperial Britain

After Biafra became a subject of concern during the summer months of 1968, a number of public figures in the United Kingdom vocally spoke out against Whitehall's involvement. Some, like the satirist John Wells, pictured the Biafra crisis as a "British Vietnam": a Third World conflict provoking a public outcry over the actions of the government.[13] John Lennon renounced his honors as a Member of the British Empire "in protest against Britain's involvement in the Nigeria-Biafra thing, against our support of America in Vietnam, and against 'Cold Turkey' slipping down the charts," as he wrote in letters to the Queen and the Prime Minister.[14] The revolutionary socialist activist Peter Sedgwick was also part of the pro-Biafran ranks, but lamented the left's "appalling silence" on Biafra.[15] Tariq Ali, the British-Pakistani figurehead of the movement, explained in an interview in the 1980s that, "the left in Britain had no position on Biafra."[16] The first article in the *New Left Review* to even mention Biafra appeared in 1972, two and a half years after the war was over.[17]

Biafra could have been – as the leftist journalist Richard West wrote in an article published in the conservative *Spectator*, which had become Biafra's mouthpiece on Fleet Street – "a natural left-wing cause. It is a small nation fighting for independence against an empire. It holds old-fashioned left-wing beliefs like freedom and justice."[18] However, for

13 Sanderson, *History*, 193–4.
14 "John Lennon protests–and returns his MBE," *The Guardian*, November 26, 1969, 20.
15 Peter Sedgwick, "The appalling silence," *Socialist Worker*, July 10, 1969, 2.
16 Wiener, *Come Together*, 107.
17 Emmanuel, Arghiri, "White-Settler Colonialism," *New Left Review* (May–June 1972), 35–57. On the British New Left see Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism*.
18 Richard West, "Biafra and the Left," *Spectator*, May 16, 1969, 644. The text was also reissued as a pamphlet by the Britain-Biafra Association. See UK NA FCO 65/250.

the British left, choosing a side was difficult in a conflict between two African states in which the most visibly involved foreign power were the Labour government and the Kremlin, both supporting Federal Nigeria. The OAU's condemnation of secession, and the support Biafra had garnered from Lisbon and Pretoria, made a case for the Federal side.[19] There were further factors impeding leftist identification with Biafra. Before the civil war, Marxist thought in Nigeria was mostly promoted by Igbo nationalists. But Ojukwu and his leadership made no effort to present themselves as heralds of African socialism; rather, many leftists felt that the secessionists sought to destroy a sovereign African nation, the product of an anticolonial revolution. If one of the warring parties was portrayed as a neocolonial marionette in an imperialist plot in which Western powers pulled the strings, it was usually Biafra.[20] For West, it was widely due to misunderstandings of the conflict that the British left took the side of "the international oil consortiums, the British cocoa and soap companies." Biafra, he wrote, was "a country run by Africans rather than by Europeans, [. . .] a genuinely independent state."[21] West represented the secessionist state as the true incarnation of African postcolonial sovereignty, inverting the portrayal of Biafra as a marionette of Western capital.[22] Yet this perspective did not appeal to many of his leftist peers.

In view of the mixed signals they received from the left, Whitehall officials were confused: what kind of a protest was it that confronted them? In an internal memorandum, an FCO official described the Save Biafra Committee, later renamed the Save Biafra Campaign (SBC) "as a 'militant organization with Trotskyist links.'"[23] This characterization is relatively accurate. Peter Cadogan, a peace activist influenced by Trotskyism, founded the SBC; Cadogan, perhaps "the most expelled socialist in England," repeatedly broke ranks with the leftist mainstream.[24] Cadogan remained faithful to his dissenting habits, breaking off from

[19] Wiseberg, "International Politics," 204–5.

[20] See esp. Bob Fitch and Mary Oppenheimer, "Biafra: Let Them Eat Oil," *The Black Dwarf*, September 22, 1968, 7. For another account from the British left focusing on oil see Daphne Vernon, "The Oil Companies and the Nigerian War," *Tribune*, August 2, 1968, 12 and also the criticism of this position in Sedgwick, "Appalling Silence."

[21] West, "Biafra and the left," 644.

[22] See here also Richard West, "Biafra: The Last Hope for African Independence?," *Sunday Times*, June 1, 1969 (Pictorial supplement).

[23] "The Biafra Lobby," June 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/250), 3.

[24] John Rowley, "Peter Cadogan: Peace Campaigner and Political Activist described as 'the Most Expelled Socialist in England,'" *The Independent*, December 6, 2007, www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/peter-cadogan-peace-campaigner-and-political-activist-described-as-the-most-expelled-socialist-in-england-763263.html (accessed April 6, 2013).

the Britain-Biafra Association (BBA) and forming the SBC after a disagreement about the form their advocacy should take. The BBA used more traditional forms of political lobbying, but some of its members wanted to take the protest to the streets. The latter group re-aligned in the SBC under Cadogan's leadership.[25]

A sideline to the story of the SBC indicates how contested Biafra was on the left. Cadogan was also a member of the Committee of 100, a grass-roots organization that grew out of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). Founded in 1960 under the presidency of leftist philosopher Bertrand Russell, the Committee became the CND's action wing, coordinating mass civil disobedience campaigns against the nuclear arms race. After its decentralization into local chapters the following year, the Committee got involved in a variety of other issues, lost its focus, went into steep decline, and was dissolved in October 1968.[26] One of the bones of contention was Biafra. Cadogan pushed for a peremptory pro-Biafran course with which the other members could not agree.[27] Entrenched structures of protest unavailable to them, pro-Biafran leftists like Cadogan established new single-issue organizations.[28]

Further evidence for the Biafra lobby's position on the margins of the mainstream of protest can be found in the case of the Committee for Peace in Nigeria (CPN), which operated under the auspices of the Movement for Colonial Freedom (MCF). Its leaders were former Colonial Secretary and trade union leader James Griffiths and Labour leader Lord Fenner Brockway, a seasoned anticolonial and peace activist.[29] The CPN represented the established channels of leftist political activism in Britain, and had direct access to the higher echelons of policy-making, including the Prime Minister. Despite pro-Biafran leanings among parts of its membership, the group assumed a neutral position.[30] It criticized Whitehall's policies, but took a nuanced line throughout, promoting a total arms ban to both sides and the opening of peace talks.[31] Established

25 Save Biafra Committee to the Head of the British Delegation to the Commonwealth Conference, January 14, 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/249); Fafowora, *Pressure Groups*, 128.

26 Burkett, "Re-defining British Morality"; Taylor, *Against the Bomb*, ch. 5.

27 "Peace Group Lonely Even At Its Wake," *Los Angeles Times*, September 15, 1968, G7; Taylor, *Against the Bomb*, 271–2.

28 Wiseberg, "International Politics," 204–5. Ajibola, *Foreign Policy*, 142; Roger Moody, "Biafra: Call for Direct Action," *Peace News*, October 24, 1969, 1, 4.

29 On the MCF see Howe, *Anticolonialism*, ch. 6.

30 A. J. Collins, "Note for Mr. Moberly on Britain-Biafra Association," November 19, 1968 (UK NA FCO 65/249), 1; Ajibola, *Foreign Policy*, 138–9, 148–50; Fafowora, *Pressure Groups*, 131–7.

31 The Socialist International's position was similar. See "Entschließung zu Nigeria-Biafra, 1968" (AdsD, Willy-Brandt-Archiv A 11.4, 31).

leaders of leftist protest like Brockway were wary of the interventionist overtones of the pro-Biafran campaign, which could be seen as promoting neocolonial interference. In a letter he wrote to Gowon, Brockway emphasized that the group wanted to help work toward a settlement, but did "not wish to intervene in the terms of a settlement which must be yours. We are not colonialists."[32] Moreover, the MCF could also not be associated with a cause endorsed by Portugal as well; support for anticolonial movements in the territories of the last colonial empire was one of the MCF's main objectives. Government representatives were aware of these dilemmas.[33] Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart reminded cabinet members with Biafran sympathies that "[w]e should never forget that the main supporters of Biafra were those enemies of African advance: South Africa, Portugal, Rhodesia – and France," he added sardonically.[34] Governmental officials like British High Commissioner to Nigeria Sir David Hunt opined that everything would have been easy for the left if Whitehall had come out in support of Biafra, because then they could have taken "the side of Lagos, Russia, the 'Peoples' Democracies' (less Albania and China) and the Afro-Asians."[35]

Opposition to Labour policies in Nigeria within leftist ranks need to be seen in context with the growing discontent with Wilson's administration per se at the time. Brockway, for instance, not only attacked the government for supporting the wars in Nigeria and Vietnam, but also "for having betrayed its socialism."[36] In 1964, Wilson had been elected on a wave of optimistic support for his reform agenda. Over the next two years, this enthusiasm began to crumble. The Sterling crisis of 1966–67 dealt the most serious blow. In July 1966, the government refused to devalue the British currency, but was forced to do so the following year, in late 1967.[37] Foreign relations also posed serious problems. In Rhodesia, Wilson, who had intended to continue decolonization, was confronted with a white supremacist regime bent on preventing black majority rule. After the Labour government's refusal to grant it, Ian Smith's apartheid regime unilaterally declared independence from Britain in late 1965.[38] The failure to forestall this move provoked a serious backlash among a British left already infuriated about Wilson's endorsement of America's escalating war in Vietnam. When, in late 1967, Wilson asked the Cabinet to reconsider the sale of arms to South Africa in spite of three UN Security Council resolutions banning the arms trade to the pariah

[32] Fenner Brockway to Gowon, October 3, 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/208).
[33] Hunt, *Memoirs*, 272–3. [34] Castle, *Castle Diaries 1964–1970*, 733.
[35] Hunt, *Memoirs*, 272–3. [36] Benn, *Office without Power*, 116.
[37] O'Hara and Parr, "Introduction"; Thorpe, *History*, ch. 8.
[38] Coggins, "Wilson."

state, this did not assuage the animosities either, resulting in the alienation of the party's radical fringe, and garnering criticism from across the left.[39]

These various political clashes on the left need to be borne in mind to understand the composition of the pro-Biafran camp in Parliament. The stronghold of pro-Biafran opinion in the House of Commons was formed by a number of backbenchers, especially Tories, and Labour dissenters. But pro-Biafran advocates were found across the whole political spectrum: they included members from the Labour left, like Frank Allaun, to representatives of the Tories' right wing, for example Sir Gerald Nabarro.[40] Contrary to their parliamentary rivals, the Liberals were almost undivided in support of Biafra.[41] The author of an internal memorandum of the FCO observed that "the main Labour opposition comprised Members who entered the House at the 1964 Election, or after [...]."[42] Younger than any of its predecessors, many in this cohort were inspired by the optimism that Wilson's campaign had engendered. Now, these sentiments had turned to frustration.[43] The increasingly critical view of the Wilson government in Parliament united pro-Biafrans across the political spectrum.

British pro-Biafran sentiments also came from a direct result of the postcolonial age: an influx of former civil servants and many other Britons from the colonies to the metropole, who maintained emotional connections to the colonies, to the place they had lived and worked, where many of them or their children had been born. Many still entertained personal and professional relationships, friendships or business interests with the former colonies. Britons still chose to work or live in the former colonies, either returning to where they or family members had lived, or venturing to settle in new places. And still others visited as tourists, also facilitated by new possibilities for travel.[44] This context is important to understanding the actors on the British lobbyist scene, many of whom had personal ties to postcolonial Nigeria, including former civil servants which had left the colony when the administration had been "Nigerianized." Some of them sided with Biafra, some with Nigeria – others, like many in the CPN, remained neutral. Often the side these former colonialists took was determined by where exactly they

[39] See Vickers, *Labour Party and the World, vol. 2*, ch. 3; Young, *Labour Governments 1964–1970, Volume 2*, 7.
[40] On bipartisan support for Biafra, see Reid/Pelling, *Short History*, 127–8.
[41] Ajibola, *Foreign Policy*, 164–72; Fafowora, *Pressure Groups*, ch. 9.
[42] "The Biafra Lobby," June 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/250), 1.
[43] Peter Dorey, "Social Background."
[44] Bailkin, *Afterlife*; Buettner, "Coffee and Bananas"; Buettner, *Empire Families*, ch. 5; Harper and Constantine, *Migration*, chs. 11–12.

had lived and worked. Pro-Biafran sentiments among Britons who had lived and worked in Eastern Nigeria were channeled into the creation of the Friends of Biafra Association in London already in February 1968. The group had roughly a hundred members, most of whom had personal ties to Eastern Nigeria.[45] Pro-Nigerian groups were characterized by similar ties, as former civil servants who had worked in the Northern Region or in the colonial administration in Lagos tended to support the federation.[46]

Personal ties to the former Eastern Region and Biafra also played key roles for the Britain-Biafra Association (BBA), which was created in December 1967 and soon became most prolific Biafra lobby committee in the United Kingdom. The BBA's membership was drawn "from people who have worked in Nigeria – administrative officers, doctors, teachers, missionaries, relatives and friends of Biafrans [. . .]," as well as Biafrans. BBA members explained their sense of attachment to the regions in which they had lived: "it is true that one's opinion of what has taken place in Nigeria is usually influenced by one's geographical position." But the group emphasized that it also counted "amongst our more ardent supporters, British people who have worked in other parts of the Federation."[47] These members, however, often had close attachments to the Igbo diaspora, like Margot Parish, who had lived in Lagos, where she had worked as a secretary for "The West African Pilot," the Igbo-owned anticolonial newspaper and publishing house.[48]

Even so, direct connections to Biafra – and to the intellectual and political circles that had developed into the secessionists' main sources of support – were characteristic of many members of the BBA. Some of them had worked in the Eastern Region as teachers; others had worked for the regional government as PR agents.[49] Particularly close ties linked the organization to the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, for example through BBA Chairman Owen Davies, who had acted as the university's dean of science. Other BBA members were also associated

[45] Fafowora, *Pressure Groups*, 118–9; Wiseberg, "International Politics," 200, 206–8.

[46] David Russell to Sir Miles Clifford, December 6, 1968 (RHL, MSS.Brit.Emp.s.517.6, United Nigeria Group), "Minutes of the Nigeria Group Inaugural Meeting," London, March 6, 1969 (ibid.); "People who Attended the Nigerian Group Inaugural Meeting on March 6, 1969 (ibid.); "United Nigeria Group," March 12, 1969 (ibid.); Davis, *Interpreters*, 88–96; Niven, *War of Nigerian Unity 1967–1970*; Niven, "Modern Nigeria."

[47] Britain-Biafra Association, "Memorandum," February 6, 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/249), 1.

[48] Margot Parish, "Impressions of Biafra," *Labour Monthly*, June 1968, 269–72; "Ojukwu's Interview with Britain-Biafra Association Delegates."

[49] Knapp, *Aspects of the Biafran Affair*; Fafowora, *Pressure Groups*, 125–6.

with the university which developed into the intellectual spine of Biafran secessionism.[50] Other ties were very personal, as in the case of Biafrans who lived in Britain but still had family in the crisis area or Britons who had married Biafrans.[51] These ties become visually evident also on the photographs of BBA rally crowds apparently composed of expat Biafrans and their spouses and friends (see Figure 7.1). To a large degree, the group's support was based on familial bonds between Britons and Biafrans – intimate marital ties created under the British Empire that ultimately predisposed many BBA members to sympathize with Biafra.[52]

Partly through Frederick Forsyth, one their most prominent members, the BBA also entertained close connections to the Biafran leadership.[53] Forsyth became a close confidant of Ojukwu, and affectionately called the Biafran leader "Odgers," according to British diplomats.[54] Auberon Waugh only went to visit Biafra after he had already become a devoted supporter of the secessionists. In his lack of personal ties, Waugh was an exception among BBA members.[55] In an internal memorandum, FCO staff speculated about the reasons why Waugh had become a devoted advocate of the cause, surmising that the Catholic conservative's anti-communism drove him to support the secessionists. In this view of the conflict, the Federal side was imagined as "the revolutionary Communist inspired one." Biafra, in contrast, "stands for anti revolutionary forces." This line remained "puzzling" to the Whitehall staffer since it was "so far as I know, based on no facts at all except the Russian support for the Federal side." Yet he had no other explanation why Waugh and the *Spectator*, but also "such oddly assorted people" as the Dutch Princess Irene and Ivorian President Houphouët-Boigny, "should take the line they do."[56]

[50] Hanbury, *Biafra: A Challenge*; "The Biafra Lobby," June 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/250), 4; A. J. Collins, "Note for Mr. Moberly on Britain-Biafra Association," November 19, 1968 (UK NA FCO 65/249); Fafowora, *Pressure Groups*, 124–5; St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*, 100, 112. For a fictional portrayal of the intellectual circles of pre-war Nsukka see Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

[51] Britain-Biafra Association, "Memorandum," February 6, 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/249), 1; Ajibola, *Foreign Policy*, 137; Fafowora, *Pressure Groups*, 120.

[52] See the photographs in RHL MSS.Afr.s.2399, Box 2, Britain-Biafra Association.

[53] See, e.g., Britain-Biafra Association, ed., "Address by Lt. Col. Ojukwu to an International Press Conference, July 18th 1968," London 1968 (RHL, MSS.Afr.S. 2399, Box 1, Britain-Biafra Association); idem, ed., *Introducing Biafra*, London 1968 (ibid.); idem, ed., "Statements by Victims of the Nigerian Pogrom 1966," London 1968 (ibid.).

[54] Hugh J. Arbuthnott, "Confidential Report by the British High Commission in Lagos," August 23, 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/446).

[55] Ajibola, *Foreign Policy*, 141.

[56] John Wilson to W. R. Haydon, "Memorandum: Our Public Line on Nigeria," October 21, 1968 (UK NA, FCO 65/441), 2.

Figure 7.1 A Britain-Biafra Association Protest Rally, photographer unknown. RHL MSS.Afr.s.2399 Box 2, Britain-Biafra Association. © Bodleian Libraries, Oxford 2012.

Anti-communism was certainly a factor for Waugh and other conservatives.[57] However, another piece is missing that is necessary to complete this puzzle: Catholicism. Waugh, Princess Irene and Houphouët-Boigny were all devout Catholics.[58] They were part of a pro-Biafran transnational network of Catholics initiated by the activities of the Irish Holy Ghost Fathers.[59] Yet in view of their minority status in predominantly Protestant Britain, the Catholic presence in the

[57] Wiseberg, "International Politics," 205–6.

[58] On Houphouët-Boigny's Catholicism as one of the reason for his pro-Biafran stance see Saideman, *Ties that Divide*, 80–2.

[59] For a contemporary commentator see Mary Holland, "Catholics and Black Babies," *The Observer*, January 18, 1970, 4.

pro-Biafran movement is striking. Other pro-Biafran Catholics included Graham Greene and Muriel Spark, two of the writers who, alongside Waugh's late father Evelyn, are considered to rank among twentieth century Britain's major Roman Catholic novelists.[60] They also included a number of politicians like William Aldritt, Simon and Peter Mahon in the Labour Party, and the Tories Hugh Fraser, Hugh Rossi, and Norman St. John Stevas.[61] The editor of the largely pro-Biafran London *Times*, the Roman Catholic William Rees-Mogg, was closely associated with lobbyist circles.[62] Catholic organizations also provided British media representatives with the opportunity to meet missionaries in Biafra.[63] As a result, pro-Biafran opinion in the press often asserted that Whitehall's policy line betrayed "Christian Britain's" humanitarian ideals. Supporters of the Biafran cause were also found in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Britain. Prime examples are John Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster, and his auxiliary bishop Christopher Butler.[64] Catholics were not the only Christians in the Biafra lobby; Protestant devotees of Christian socialism were also active members of the lobby, such as the BBA member, and pacifist Methodist Minister Lord Donald Soper (The Rev. Baron Soper).[65] But both the Church of England and the Church of Scotland withdrew their earlier support for Biafra in late 1968. The Provost of the Anglican Church in Lagos traveled to the United Kingdom and convinced Protestant church leaders that the conflict was not a religious one, effectively dissolving Anglican opposition to British policy. The Anglican Church instead provided humanitarian aid to both sides. There were cautious voices among Catholics and Anglicans.[66] Yet the vast majority of the "religious crusaders" in the British Biafra lobby were Roman Catholics.[67]

[60] Graham Greene et al., "Letter to the Editor: Biafra's Rights," *The Times*, November 13, 1968, 11.

[61] "The Biafra Lobby," June 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/250), Annex A.

[62] E. A. Bryant, "Confidential Minutes," Lagos January 27, 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/446). Ajibola, *Foreign Policy*, 105; Akinyemi, "British Press."; see also *Hansard Lords*, January 26, 1970, columns 1030–1, hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1970/jan/26/nigeria-relief-plans (accessed April 9, 2013).

[63] The Catholic peace movement NGO Pax Christi for instance arranged such interviews for the BBC programme "24 Hours." Ajibola, *Foreign Policy*, 156.

[64] Ajibola, *Foreign Policy*, 134–5; B. C. Butler, "Nigeria/Biafra," February 12, 1969 (Churchill College Archives NBKR 4/41); *Hansard Lords*, December 12, 1968, column 670, hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1968/dec/12/nigeria-biafran-war-and-relief-needs#S5LV0298P0_19681212_HOL_256 (accessed April 9, 2013).

[65] A. J. Collins, "Note for Mr. Moberly on Britain-Biafra Association," November 19, 1968 (UK NA FCO 65/249), 1.

[66] Baden Hickman, "Bells toll appeal for the starving," *The Guardian*, December 19, 1969, 4; Chadwick, *Ramsey*, 250–5.

[67] Ajibola, *Foreign Policy*, 140–1.

Catholic pro-Biafran advocacy was connected, at least in part, to the relatively widespread support for Biafra from conservatives. Certainly not the entire Tory Party came out in support of the secessionists – front-benchers were particularly reserved. But conservative support for Biafra was tangible. On the American television show *Firing Line*, hosted by the Catholic conservative public intellectual William F. Buckley, Jr., Waugh explained that, in his experience, "educated civilized [...] people" tended to side with the Biafrans,[68] language that echoed Biafran representations of themselves as educated "civilized" Africans. Furthermore, this is an indicator of the shared values that helped conservative British democrats sympathize with the Biafrans. Activist groups like the BBA, in line with mass media representations of the Biafrans, highlighted the Eastern Region's "long tradition of democracy based on the village community [...]." British support for Nigeria was tantamount to support for "the destruction of an able, dynamic and industrious people."[69]

The members of Cadogan's SBC also came to champion the Biafran cause for diverse reasons, and in that sense – in spite of the split and their seemingly diametrically opposed political outlooks – the organization was not entirely different from the BBA.[70] The SBC also drew in members of the Biafra Unions, the student organizations founded by Igbos at British universities, and the Friends of Biafra Association – and thus also had direct personal and professional ties to Biafra.[71] The second major figure in the organization after Cadogan – its treasurer, Hannah Baneth – represented a different set of transnational ties. A German-born Jewish woman who had lived and worked in England for two decades, Baneth nevertheless considered herself "a citizen of Israel." "As a child in Hamburg she had suffered all the indignities of being a Jew under Hitler [...]"; as an adult, she wanted to help stop what she perceived as genocide.[72] Like Baneth, a number of prominent Jews in British politics, including the Tory MP Edward Boyle, the Labour backbencher Frank Allaun and political activists like the pacifist Myrtle Solomon, had

68 Transcript "Firing Line – Program #167: Biafra and British Foreign Policy," September 22, 1969 (Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Library and Archives), 21–22, hoohila.stanford.edu/firingline/programView2.php?programID=188 (accessed April 7, 2013).

69 Britain-Biafra Association, "Memorandum," February 6, 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/249).

70 This also applies to the group's policy goals. See Save Biafra Committee, "Freedom and Peace for Biafra," 1969 (ibid.); idem, "Biafra," London 1969 (ibid.).

71 Save Biafra Committee to the Head of the British Delegation to the Commonwealth Conference, January 14, 1969 (ibid.); idem, "Freedom and Peace for Biafra," 1969 (ibid.); idem, "Biafra," London 1969 (ibid.); Fafowora, *Pressure Groups*, 128.

72 Hilton, *Highly Irregular*, 14–5.

all endorsed the Biafran cause.[73] The SBC also cooperated closely with Christian humanitarians who wanted to stay aloof of politics.[74] Accordingly, the radical leftist ties of the SBC should not be overestimated as the root cause of the activists' devotion to the Biafran campaign.

There were a myriad of ways people became involved in the Biafra campaign. The pro-Biafran scene in Britain was characterized by the cooperation of different groups and individuals, across the political spectrum and including Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and Atheists.[75] Personal ties were probably the most powerful driving force of the British lobby groups, besides opposition to the Wilson government. For Christians as well as a number of individuals with personal relations to Nigeria's former Eastern Region, the worldly connections fostered by colonial rule still defined their lives in post-imperial Britain. These connections led many individuals to advocate the Biafran cause and, ultimately, turn Whitehall's support of Federal Nigeria into an island position that would be hard to uphold.

Performing Western Civilization: Biafra in Post-Imperial Germany

In March 1968, churches and parish halls across Germany were emblazoned with a poster showing a mutilated African man with one eye ripped out. The headline lamented the "deadly silence over the genocide in Nigeria and South Sudan." The photograph was taken from the Biafran propaganda publication *Pogrom* and incorporated into a collage that surrounded the man with a globe covered with crosses.[76] "Double the deaths of Vietnam," the subtitle read. The text asks further "what will you do?" The smaller print directly addressed the onlooker, urging to send protest letters to the UN and the Bonn government (Figure 7.2). The echo was loud. The Biafra-Sudan poster campaign generated the first peak of a tidal wave of concern about the Nigerian Civil War in Germany. Petitions began to flow into the mailboxes of the UN and the Bonn Government in spring 1968, with more letters reaching the United Nations from Germany then from any other country.[77] Executed by the ecumenical lay organization action 365 and the

[73] Fafowora, *Pressure Groups*, 194; "Minutes of Meeting of Coordinating Committee for Action on Nigeria/Biafra," September 30, 1969 (Churchill College Archives FEBR 219b).
[74] Hilton, *Highly Irregular*, 8.
[75] See e.g. "Minutes of Meeting of Coordinating Committee for Action on Nigeria/Biafra," September 30, 1969 (Churchill College Archives FEBR 219b).
[76] Ministry of Information of Eastern Nigeria, *Nigerian Pogrom*, between 20 and 21.
[77] See Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, June 1968, UNCHR (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part B). See Part A and B of the same file.

Figure 7.2 Action 365, Poster "Kampagne gegen Völkermorde in Afrika." Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Digitales Bildarchiv, Plak 006-030-045.

Gesellschaft für Afrikafragen, the campaign went back to efforts of the Christian churches, pointing to some of the main dimensions of concern about Biafra in West Germany: Christian networks of advocacy, the language of genocide, and references to the Vietnam War.[78]

The German Catholic Church had started lobbying the government through its liaison office with Bonn, the Katholisches Büro, in the first months of the war. The Katholisches Büro founded a lobby network, the Arbeitskreis für Menschenrechte, to that end. The Arbeitskreis comprised politicians, senior officials, and journalists, and was open to participation by representatives from a large spectrum of political and religious affiliations. Its core, however, was built by Catholic conservatives associated with the Church and the CDU/CSU parties.[79] Acting in the name of the German bishops' conference, the Arbeitskreis wrote to Foreign Minister Willy Brandt that the churches had received information that Biafra's civilian population, especially of the "tribe of the Igbo, which comprises many Christians," was threatened by "acts of retribution."[80] In an answer sent on Brandt's behalf, Under-Secretary of State Rolf Otto Lahr argued that the war needs to be ascribed to "tribal antagonisms"; talk of a religious conflict would thus be incorrect – an assessment that the ministry would later repeat.[81] This explanation, however, did not satisfy the Arbeitskreis. For them, the tribal and religious dimensions were inextricably linked. Echoing the rhetoric of Biafran propagandists, the Catholic journalist Harald Pawlowski traced the origins of the conflict back to an Islamic resurgence emanating from the Arab world. According to Pawlowski, these *jihadists* were supported by Moscow, forming an unholy alliance with the Christian West's "godless" Cold War antagonist.[82] Lahr's letter was also circulated to representatives of the other Christian confession. Speaking on the same radio show as Pawlowski, Berlin's Protestant bishop Kurt Scharf quoted parts of the letter, criticizing Bonn for downplaying the conflict's religious dimension.[83]

[78] "Biafra-Bericht," August 10, 1968 (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 II), 22.

[79] Ibid., 9–10.

[80] Becher to Willy Brandt, August 8, 1967 (ibid., 10–331/40–010 I).

[81] Lahr to Becher, August 22, 1968 (ibid.), 1–2; Harald Graf von Posadowsky-Wehner to Becker [sic], Katholisches Büro Bonn, 20.11.1967 (ibid.), 1–2.

[82] "Manuskript zur Sendung 'Aus gegebenem Anlaß – in christlicher Sicht' im Norddeutschen Rundfunk, 26.09.1967, 19.35–19.45 Uhr" (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 I), 4–5. Information of the Arbeitskreis was drawn from Biafran propaganda, in particular: Ministry of Information Eastern Nigeria, *Nigerian Pogrom*.

[83] "Manuskript zur Sendung 'Aus gegebenem Anlaß – in christlicher Sicht' im Norddeutschen Rundfunk, October 17, 1967, 19.35–19.45 Uhr" (ibid.).

The Arbeitskreis also initiated more large-scale forms of protest, bringing the issue to the Bundestag through its affiliated CDU/CSU delegates such as Fritz Baier, Herbert Czaja, Hermann Kopf, or Heinrich Windelen.[84] It also collaborated with journalists like Ruth Bowert of the *Rheinischer Merkur*,[85] and coordinated its efforts with action 365 and the Gesellschaft für Afrikafragen. The Arbeitskreis saw action 365, a lay movement founded by the Silesian-born Jesuit itinerant preacher Johannes Leppich, as an access point to a large number of proactive Christian laity through its local chapters; connections with Gesellschaft für Afrikafragen, they hoped, would provide knowledge about African affairs.[86] The campaign built on previously existing structures, which, to a large degree, had been created to advance the cause of Christians in Southern Sudan.[87] To mobilize public opinion more effectively, the Arbeitskreis began to de-emphasize the "persecution of Christians," as the representation of the civil war as a religiously motivated conflict was losing credibility.[88] The German Evangelical Church ultimately acknowledged that descriptions of the conflict as a "religious war" were incorrect.[89] However, the public efforts of the Arbeitskreis began to reverberate as the humanitarian situation in Biafra began to worsen. As a result of the Arbeitskreis's work, a stream of petitions started to reach the United Nations and Bonn in the spring of 1968. An FO staffer noted in an internal memorandum that the government and parliament were "being flooded with petitions very similar in wording," which he ascribed to German Church organization. The staffer lamented that "the criticism levelled against the state is now no longer confined to leftist circles, but increasingly comes from conservative quarters as well."[90]

[84] Others were Heinrich Aigner, Hermann Biechele, Georg Kliesing, Werner Marx, Anna Mönikes, and Albert Leicht. "Biafra-Bericht des Biafra-Referenten im Katholischen Büro (Stand 7. August 1968)," August 10, 1968 (ibid.), 5.

[85] Becher to Helmut Schmidt, August 12, 1968 (ibid.); Becher to Joachim Fuhrmann, June 27, 1968 (ibid., 10–331/40–010 I); Becher, "Protokoll über die Sitzung des Menschenrechtsarbeitskreis am 19. Juni 1968," July 3, 1968 (ibid.); Ruth Bowert, "Fernschreiben aus Aba/Biafra," August 1, 1968 (PA AA B 34/747). See also Bowert, "Wir sind noch am Leben," *Rheinischer Merkur*, April 26, 1968, 28; Bowert, "Colonel Poroburo: 'Und deshalb kämpfe ich': Ein Frontbericht aus Biafra," ibid., June 21, 1968, 28; Bowert, "Biafra: Massenmord und kein Ende: Ein Appell an die Heimat," ibid., August 9, 1968, 24.

[86] "Biafra-Bericht," August 10, 1968 (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 II), 22; Zülch, "Plädoyer," 267.

[87] See von Fürstenberg and Ruppert, *Südsudan*.

[88] See e. g. "Hoffnung in Lagos," *Die Zeit*, March 8, 1968.

[89] Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, "Die Leiden der Christen" (EZA 2/2157), 13.

[90] "Sprechzettel für den Herrn Staatssekretär zum Gespräch mit den Vertretern der beiden Kirchen am Mittwoch, 10. Juli 1968 um 16 Uhr," July 9, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741), 4.

Still under the impression of the 1968 campus upheavals, foreign diplomats and other observers had until then interpreted Biafra as a part of the rampant leftist protests.[91] But when governmental officials dug deeper to unearth such connections, they found very little. In July 1968, students of the moderately left Humanistische Studentenunion at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universtität in Munich organized a teach-in and a subsequent protest march to the British Consulate General. Rudi Dutschke and Fritz Teufel were supposed to have been in Munich at the time, but neither of the two prominent New Left student leaders partook in the Biafra rally, as an official from the Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior noted.[92] Half a year later, the British ambassador to Germany Sir Roger Jackling noticed that the "strong and highly emotional 'Biafra' lobby" was "by no means confined to left wing cranks." The ambassador reasoned that this is probably "more than anything else [due] to the involvement of the German churches on the 'Biafran' side from quite early days in the war."[93]

In order to identify the actual socio-political backgrounds of the Biafra lobby in Germany, it is necessary to take a closer look at some of these groups. An important example is the Aktionskomitee Biafra, one of the most active groups in Germany. Emanating from the diocesan town of Münster, the Aktionskomitee was put up by young Christians and members of the conservative party's youth and student organizations.[94] Closely affiliated with both the Catholic and Lutheran churches in Germany, Aktionskomitee activists often emphasized the Christian basis of their convictions.[95]

The religious base of Biafra protest in Germany went beyond the Aktionskomitee.[96] Besides the chapters belonging to the network of the

[91] See e.g. W. D. Diamanti to State Department, "Hamburg Students Stage Peaceful Protest against Arms Shipment to Nigeria," July 5, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1876).

[92] Dr. Ziegler, "Demonstrationsveranstaltungen zum 'Biafra-Nigeria Konflikt' der 'Humanistischen Studentenunion' (HSU) am 18. Juli 1968 in München, July 9, 1968" (PA AA B 34/741).

[93] Roger Jackling, Letter to John Peck, February 10, 1969 (UK NA FCO 26/300), 1.

[94] Studentisches Aktionskomitee Biafra-Nigeria-Sudan to Willy Brandt (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 I).

[95] Aktionskomitee Biafra to Secretary-General U Thant (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part D); Aktionskomitee Biafra, "Massenvernichtung, Völkermord, Ausrottungskrieg. Biafra/Nigeria braucht Hilfe," September 1968 (ibid., Part G); Aktionskomitee Biafra Münster to the Members of the Bundestag, September 26, 1968 (ACDP 01–158 Nachlass Fritz Burgbacher, 025/3); "Hungerstreik weist auf die Not in Biafra hin," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, December 12, 1968, 3; Aktionskomitee Biafra Münster, "Pressemitteilung," August 1968 (ACDP 01–158 Nachlass Fritz Burgbacher, 025/3).

[96] "Liste von Gruppen und Persönlichkeiten in der Bundesrepublik, die sich für Biafra einsetzen," c. September 1968 (GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–71).

Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, which, from its origins in Hamburg, soon stretched across Northern Germany and also included West Berlin. According to an address list prepared by the Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, the groups and individuals advocating the Biafran cause in Germany comprised Biafran expatriate organizations, especially the Biafra Unions at German universities, and, in particular, a number of Catholic and Protestant student organizations and other youth organizations of the Christian churches, as well as various clerics and other religious individuals.[97] The case of the Aktion Biafra-Hilfe itself was somewhat different. According to available sources, the core membership of the Aktion Biafra-Hilfe did not share the markedly Christian character of groups like the Aktionskomitee. However, the committee had close contacts with the Catholic writer-activist Helmut Ruppert and with a number of religious authorities in Hamburg and Berlin in particular, including Helmut Gollwitzer, professor of Protestant Theology at the Freie Universität Berlin and Protestant pastor and former Mayor of Berlin Heinrich Albertz.[98] That Albertz, Gollwitzer and Kurt Scharf were all engaged in the Biafran cause shows connections between reformists in the Protestant church and the Biafra lobby. The three, in particular Gollwitzer, who was friends with Rudi Dutschke, were sympathetic to New Leftist students, even if they did not agree with their more radical propositions. But as representatives of the establishment in the churches (and in the case of Albertz also in politics), they acted as mediators between the protesting students and their critics. Moreover, as promoters of a participatory congregational life, they were part of the movements in the Christian churches that also fueled the emergence of the Biafra lobby.[99]

Many members of the Aktionskomitee were Christian students with conservative leanings, often with backgrounds in the Junge Union and the Ring Christlich-Demokratischer Studenten, the youth and student organizations close to the Christian Democratic Parties

[97] "Liste," c. September 1968 (GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–1971). On Biafran expatriate activities in Germany see also Biafra Union Deutschland to CDU-Faction of the German Bundestag, September 26, 1968 (ACDP 08–006 AKV, 013/2); Biafra Union Köln, "Spendenaufruf," 1968 (ACDP 01–158 Nachlass Fritz Burgbacher, 025/3); Biafra Union Köln, "Ihr Ziel heißt Völkermord! Nur biafranische Streitkräfte können Biafra schützen," 1968 (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 I); Pressereferat VLR Eick, "Vermerk. Betr.: Biafra," Bonn, May 15, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741); "Studenten aus dem Biafra-Kessel" (GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–1971).

[98] "Der Direktor der Evangelischen Akademie Hamburg Pastor Joachim Ziegenrücker über das Komitee der Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, abgedruckt *Konvent Kirchlicher Mitarbeiter* 14 Jg. Nov. 68" (ibid.); "Appell an die Bundesregierung," c. July 1968 (ibid.), "Biafra-Hilfsaktionen im Bundesgebiet, mit denen wir eng zusammenarbeiten," c. August 1968 (ibid.).

[99] Lepp, "Gollwitzer"; Zimmermann, *Kurt Scharf*, 125–69.

CDU/CSU.[100] Yet the advocacy of these pro-Biafran students was inspired and mobilized in similar ways as that of their peers on the left. The late 1960s were a period of a fundamental politicization of German society. The decade had witnessed a rise in participatory politics epitomized by the protests of revolutionary thinkers – but not limited to them. In a way, the conservative parties witnessed their own "1968," thanks to the new climate of political debate. In reaction to the 1966 elections, after which the conservative parties had for the first time to enter a coalition with another party, party members initiated a dialogue between the leadership and its mass base. The outcome of this process was not a more leftist politics, but a structural change that allowed for larger parts of the party's support base to participate in the political process.[101]

The Christian churches underwent similar transformations, which ultimately helped to turn them into hotbeds of pro-Biafran advocacy. Alongside the campaigns initiated from the higher echelons of Christian politics in the Bonn republic – as exemplified by the Arbeitskreis für Menschenrechte – Christians also organized protests from the bottom-up. In Germany in particular, they were vital in the establishment of Biafra committees. The years around 1968 witnessed intense debate among Catholics and Protestants, and not only in reaction to the challenges posed by the protests, since many Christians were at the forefront of these developments. The most prominent example was Rudi Dutschke, whose internationalist convictions stemmed from Marxist as well as Christian sources. Liberation theology provided a new nexus between revolutionary politics, concern about developments in the "Third World," and the Christian faith.[102] The impetus to work toward change was not limited to Christians on the far left. More moderate circles, aiming at reform rather than revolution, shared their sentiments and some of the means. Certain sectors of congregations, adolescents, and young adults in particular, demanded "more democracy"; in the churches as much as in politics. Moreover, the institutions themselves had already initated reform processes themselves such as the Catholich Church's Second Vatican Council.[103]

Biafra was present at a number of the iconic moments of these transformations, such as the Katholikentag in Essen in early September 1968. The festival, organized by Catholic laity, developed into a forum for the

[100] "Hilfe für Biafra," *Union in Deutschland*, October 3, 1968, 6. The Aktion Biafra-Hilfe also comprised members of the CDU and Junge Union. Aktion Biafra-Hilfe to Members of the Junge Union, August 10, 1968 (GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–71).

[101] Bösch, *Adenauer-CDU*, 408–18.

[102] Tripp, "Weltkirche vor Ort"; Weitbrecht, *Aufbruch*, 199–205.

[103] Claudia Lepp, "Konfrontation"; Großbölting, *Himmel*, 120–36.

Catholic community to air critical takes on current issues, including Biafra.[104] The Aktionskomitee Biafra organized a discussion forum,[105] and the Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken passed a resolution about the crisis.[106] Among Protestants, Biafra gained more traction as a contested issue, in large part because the WCC seemed more sympathetic to the Federal view then the Vatican. In 1969, at the Protestant *Kirchentag* in Stuttgart, Biafra protests became more intense. Protesters called for aid to Biafra through a megaphone and held up placards saying: “Blessed are those who are allowed to starve to death in Biafra. Amen.”[107] 13,000 people responded to a signature campaign calling for intensified and renewed relief efforts.[108]

Kurt Scharf, a pro-Biafra lobbyist with links to Christian reform circles, shared a background with many other Germans who had pro-Biafran leanings. Born early in the century in the eastern provinces of the Kaiserreich, he was sentimentally attached the “Lost German East” – as were many Germans with pro-Biafran sentiments.[109] Other major examples include the Silesian Carlo Bayer at Caritas Internationalis,[110] the head of the Hamburg Aktion Biafra-Hilfe Tilman Zülch,[111] and many writers and journalists such as Günter Grass, Gräfin von Dönhoff, and her colleague at the *Zeit*, Haug von Kuenheim.[112] These ties were also shared by a number of other members of the Arbeitskreis, and many of the Christian Democratic parliamentarians who most vocally raised the issue in the Bundestag, such as Walter Becher, Herbert Czaja or Heinrich Windelen, who were also active members of the expellee lobby.[113]

[104] Eitler, “Konziliare Aufbrüche”; Großbölting, *Himmel*, 110–19.

[105] The panelists included Georg Hüssler, General Secretary of German Caritas, the historian and Africanist Imanuel Geiss of Hamburg University, who was also a member of the Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, and Helmut Ruppert. Maria M. Biniek to Baron Olaf von Wrangel, September 8, 1968 (EZA 87/1118).

[106] Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken, “Entschließung zur Hilfe in Nigeria-Biafra,” November 12, 1968 (PA AA B 34/747).

[107] Rolf Zundel, “Der Gott der Alten und Junge: Die Kluft zwischen den traditionellen Christen und den Sozialrevolutionären,” *Die Zeit*, July 25, 1969, 3.

[108] Freiherr von Gemmingen to Willy Brandt, July 22, 1969 (AdsD, Willy-Brandt-Archiv A 11.10, 91); Willy Brandt to Freiherr von Gemmingen (draft), 1969 (ibid.).

[109] Zimmermann, *Kurt Scharf*; Demshuk, *Lost German East*.

[110] Heidrich, *Carlo Bayer*, 271–332.

[111] Wildenthal, *Language*, 12.

[112] “Manuskript zur Sendung ‘Aus gegebenem Anlaß – in christlicher Sicht‘ im Norddeutschen Rundfunk, 20.08.1968, 19.35–19.45 Uhr” (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 II); Haug von Kuenheim, “‘Füttert uns nicht wie Weihnachtsgänse,’” *Die Zeit*, December 27, 1968, 2; idem, “‘Wir können nicht verlieren,’” ibid., January 3, 1969, 4; idem, “Biafra im dritten Jahr: Die Kirchen-Maschinen fliegen weiter,” ibid., July 25, 1969, 7.

[113] Becher, “Biafra-Bericht des Biafra-Referenten im Katholischen Büro (Stand 7. August 1968),” August 10, 1968, (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 II), 5; Becher to Helmut Schmidt, August 12, 1968 (ibid.).

Earlier than most contemporaries, the expellee community identified Biafra as a major refugee crisis.[114]

But why did the plight of the Biafrans strike such a deep chord with many expellees? Some identified with the idea of having one's home taken. A petitioner to the United Nations suggested that the "violent expulsion of people from their homeland" (Heimat) be added to the UN's catalogue of of human rights violations.[115] After the end of World War II, German lawyers had lobbied for precisely this – a "people's right to their homeland" – largely on behalf of expellees from the former German East.[116] The terms used to describe the Biafrans' situation – like *Vertreibung*, *Völkermord*, the rights to self-determination and a homeland – struck a cord with expellees like Herbert Czaja.[117] The elected member of the Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken and later President of the Bund der Heimatvertriebenen tirelessly advocated for the expellees' cause – and also the Biafrans' – using a language that combined human rights and group rights, by mingling terms like "human rights" and those of "Volksgruppen."[118] The Biafran rhetoric, which intertwined the languages of individual human and collective rights, struck a deep chord with many expellees.

For many expellees, Biafra was a continuation of their campaigning on the civil war in Sudan. Both the Sudanese and the Biafrans were seen as Christian victims of genocide – genocide unleashed upon them by Islamic enemies. The Aktionskomite Biafra was initially dubbed Studentisches Aktionskomitee Biafra-Nigeria-Sudan, and only gradually dropped first the "Sudan" and then also "Nigeria" from its name.[119] The Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, or rather its successor organization, the Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker, took part in rallying efforts for donations to the Kriegsopfer und Flüchtlingshilfe Biafra (Ostnigeria) – Südsudan.[120] The

[114] "Vertriebene und Flüchtlinge in der ganzen Welt: Forschungsgesellschaft für das Weltflüchtlingsproblem tagte," *Das Ostpreußenblatt*, September 30, 1967, 4.

[115] Letter to the United Nations, no date (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part B).

[116] Demshuk, "What Was"; Wildenthal, "Human Rights"; Wildenthal, "Rudolf Laun."

[117] Czaja was one of the most active members of the Arbeitskreis, repeatedly raised the issue in parliament and partook in a trip of Bundestag members to Biafra. Herbert Czaja to Willy Brandt, October 23, 1967 (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 I); Czaja to Heinrich Tenhumberg, April 23, 1969 (ibid., 10–331/40–010 IV); Czaja, "Improvizationskunst in Biafra: Beobachtungen der Delegation des Bundestages" (ibid.).

[118] See Czaja, *Ausgleich mit Osteuropa*, esp. 35–45, and idem, "Menschenrechte."

[119] Studentisches Aktionskomitee Biafra-Nigeria-Sudan to Willy Brandt (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 I).

[120] Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker, "Kriegsopfer und Flüchtlingshilfe Biafra (Ostnigeria) – Südsudan," c. 1971 (GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–71).

Catholic journalist Ruth Bowert established the "Zentrale der Aktions-Komitees Biafra/Sudan e. V."[121] In contrast, connections to the Sudan played only a minimal role for Biafra activists outside of Germany.

Moreover, Biafra matched up with the geopolitical views of many Germans. After the barbarism of Nazi rule, the postimperial West Germany of the late 1960s had become a part of the West. Judging from the available evidence, many Germans with pro-Biafran leanings welcomed this change; they may have been concerned about the suffering of innocents in Vietnam, but most pro-Biafran Germans were glad to be part of America's "Irresistible Empire."[122] Biafra protest was thus firmly entrenched in the wider transformation of postwar Germany. After fascism, racial warfare, imperialism, and genocide, Germans entered a "re-civilizing process," which successfully integrated them into a Western vision of civility, civilization, and democracy. The emergent civil society, the engagement for participatory democracy, for civil and human rights were core components of this transformation.[123] The self-descriptions of a number of Biafra lobbyists underline this. In the words of its founders, the Aktion Biafra-Hilfe evolved into a "Bürgerkomitee."[124] In a letter circulated to German pro-Biafran activists, the Aktion Biafra-Hilfe declared that the example of organizations like Terre des Hommes or Amnesty International should be an encouragement to confront the "cynical opportunism" of many governments with forms of "bürgerliche Initiative."[125] Despite the criticism of governmental actions, the self-proclaimed bourgeois Biafra lobbyists differed markedly from New Leftist protesters' anti-bourgeois habitus. Most Biafran supporters approved of Western democratic political order. Civic engagement was deemed necessary to fulfil moral and democratic principles, and not to promote revolutionary change.[126] Moreover, pro-Biafran empathy was fostered within a specific group: Christians who welcomed "Western civilization." Christianity, as the faith-base of Western civilization, was crucial for the integration of the Federal Republic of Germany into the West. And now, the Biafrans were imagined as Christians *and* modern democratic subjects. The idea of using international legal norms to protect a Westernized Christian ethnic minority from genocide resonated with Germans,

[121] Becher to Helmut Schmidt, August 12, 1968 (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 II); "Rettung durch die Stockfisch-Bomber," *Spiegel*, June 16, 1969, 114–15.
[122] Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*. See also Maier, *Among Empires*, part two.
[123] Jarausch, *After Hitler*.
[124] "Über die Tätigkeit der Aktion Biafra-Hilfe," c. August 1968 (GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–71).
[125] Letter of the Komitee der Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, Hamburg, September 23, 1968 (ibid.).
[126] On the wider context see Knoch, ed., *Bürgersinn mit Weltgefühl*.

who increasingly saw themselves as "Western" democratic subjects and some of whom sought to demonstrate their successful recivilizing after the Nazi "breach of civilization."[127]

The Biafra lobby thus comprised, in the terminology of A. Dirk Moses, many "redemptive republicans" like Günter Grass, who wanted to make sure that Germans had learned the lessons of the past.[128] However, the universalist rhetoric of the Biafran campaign – and the bonds of Christian faith – also appealed to some more conservatively minded "integrative republicans" like Herbert Czaja, who wanted to rehabilitate German history from Nazism.[129] What they shared was the conviction that Germany's place must be in the West. The Biafrans, as they were widely represented, signified exactly this: the successful outcome of a civilizing mission. Thus they appealed to many Germans at the time who thought of themselves in similar categories.[130]

One such group was the expellees, Germans who had been made to leave their homes in East Prussia or Silesia after Germany's defeat. The presence of so many expellees in the pro-Biafra movement demonstrates the changing character of German society in the twentieth century. The expellees' memory was intertwined with Germany's imperial ambitions of the past, but they had nevertheless found a new home in the West after their postwar expulsion, despite their continued agitation for a "right to a homeland."[131] Germany's dreams of empire had only survived "in nostalgic photo albums of pre-War Silesia or East Prussia."[132] But for many expellees, dreaming of empire could be seamlessly combined with practicing democratic civil society in the present. Here lies one of the keys to understanding the expellees' empathic reaction to Biafra. In the view of many expellees, their *Heimat* of the past, memorized as an idyllic utopia, had, in the present, deteriorated into chaos under Polish or Czech rule. German "civilization" was gone.[133] In Silesia as much as in Nigeria, the expellees' political view on these postcolonial settings was defined by a discourse of civilization. However, this "civilization" was now – at least so it seemed – freed of its imperial underpinnings; instead,

127 Jarausch, *After Hitler*; Marchart, "Umkämpfte Gegenwart."

128 See here also the "Appell deutscher Intellektueller an die Bundesregierung," Hamburg January 11, 1970 (GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–1971) and Heinrich Böll, "Ein Wort zur Woche der Brüderlichkeit [Auszug aus der Rede zur Woche der Brüderlichkeit]," *Pogrom* 1 (1970), No. 1, 14.

129 Moses, *German Intellectuals*.

130 Gosewinkel, "Zivilgesellschaft," esp. 41 and the contributions to the special issue "Civility in History."

131 Demshuk, *Lost German East*; idem, "'Right to the Heimat.'" On Germany's Empire in the East see Conrad, *Globalisation*, ch. 3; Ther, "Deutsche Geschichte"; Thum, "Mythische Landschaften."

132 Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 400.

133 Demshuk, *Lost German East*.

it had become enmeshed with a universal rhetoric of rights and values, and, in some quarters, with Christianity. In the 1960s, growing parts of German society began to seek a settlement with Germany's eastern neighbours in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and to refrain from outright revisionist politics explicitly. The first steps toward *Entspannungspolitik* were looked upon sympathetically by many pro-Biafran expellees.[134] Even those like Czaja, who tirelessly advocated the expellees' "Volksgruppenrecht" to settle in their former homelands, warned of the dangers of working toward imperialistic expansion, instead embracing the languages of human rights and Western values to advocate the expellee's interests.[135] Performing Western civilization had become the mechanism Germans used to express that they had learned the lessons of their past. And the Biafran campaign, which used very similar themes, appealed to so many among them.

Governmental officials were thus right. There few radical leftists among pro-Biafran voices in Germany. The two publication series associated with the New Left in which the "Third World" was otherwise frequently discussed – *konkret* and *Kursbuch* – were silent on the Nigerian Civil War. The first article dealing with Biafra in *konkret* was published after the end of the war.[136] Biafra was not mentioned in *Kursbuch* until 1979.[137] The antirevolutionary leftist *Der Monat*, in contrast, did not cover the conflict extensively either, but published an interview with the pro-Biafran novelist Chinua Achebe.[138] Nevertheless, a group of authors associated with the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (SDS)[139] did publish a thoroughly argued account of the civil war, which appeared in the leftist Wagenbach press's Rotbuch series in 1969. The main text was written by students affiliated with the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, complemented by translations of essays of African authors from both sides.[140] In contrast to the parallel torrent of texts that presented the conflict in humanitarian terms, the authors tried to analyze the civil war in its political, social and economic dimensions. The roots of the conflict were planted during the colonial occupation of the territory, which created its dependence from

[134] Bitterli, *Golo Mann*, 285–301; Geiss, *Rechtsopposition*; Scharf, "Vorwort," 5–6.

[135] Czaja, *Ausgleich mit Osteuropa*, 43–4. On the wider context of these debates and the role of the Catholic Church see also Voßkamp, *Katholische Kirche*.

[136] Eskor Toyo, "Die Schreibtischmörder von Biafra: Warum Millionen Menschen verhungerten. Die Hintergründe des Biafra-Krieges," *konkret*, January 29, 1970, 40–4.

[137] Cohn-Bendit et al., "Kopfschrott." On *Kursbuch* and *konkret* see see also Kalter, "Das Eigene" and Weitbrecht, *Aufbruch*, 73–9, 102–12.

[138] "Biafra: Ein Gespräch mit Chinua Achebe," *Der Monat* 243 (December 1968), 9–13, previously published in *Transition* 36 (1968), 31–8.

[139] Socialist German Student Union.

[140] Antonello et al., *Nigeria*.

global capitalism. Due to the continuation of these structures after the end of colonialism, true independence remained impossible. Despite the resulting widening of class antagonism, the cycles of suppression were not burst by a righteous *Klassenkampf* à la Frantz Fanon.[141] Instead, the neocolonial Western powers and their indigenous feudal and bourgeois collaborators concealed the "true interests" of Nigeria's workers and peasants and channeled the righteous wrath of the common people into "tribal" warfare.

This line of argumentation, based on the *telos* of revolution, is plagued by a number of inconsistencies. On the one hand, the authors assert that the war of secession is "not an incalculable eruption of exotic forces of nature."[142] But there is also no alternative to violent conflict in their account: without civil war, class warfare would have arisen. However, as an effect of their political analysis of the conflict, the Wagenbach authors arrive at a number of conclusions that escaped most contemporaries. Describing a larger complex of political corruption that the "ruling cliques" doggedly refused to change, and by situating the conflict in the *longue durée* of colonial and postcolonial economic structures, the authors pointed to some of the major causes of the civil war.[143] In effect, the authors allocated blame to all sides involved: the leaders of Nigeria and Biafra, as well as Western capitalists and governments. Yet exactly this analysis left the New Leftists frozen, unable to come out in support for one side. In a debate driven by moral outrage, the better political analysis did not necessarily make for the better argument.

In September 1968, in the words of German SDS leader Karl Dietrich Wolff, the prestigious Peace Prize of the German Book Trade went to a "poetry-writing neocolonial marionette": the first president of formally independent Senegal, Léopold Sédar Senghor.[144] In 1948, Jean-Paul Sartre had praised the poet of the Négritude as a "black Orpheus," the herald of an "antiracist racism."[145] Over the following twenty years, however, the poet-politician had turned into an autocratic sovereign and squandered the European left's estimation.[146] The decision of the German Publishers and Booksellers Association to award Senghor with the prize met with serious criticism. The SDS orchestrated protest actions that accompanied the awards event. The student group organized the election of an alternative laureate, Guinea-Bissauan and Cape Verdean

[141] The authors repeatedly refer to Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*.
[142] Antonello et al., *Nigeria gegen Biafra?* 13.
[143] Antonello et al., *Nigeria gegen Biafra?* 42.
[144] "Diskussion: Autoritäten und Revolution," 52.
[145] Sartre, "Orphée noir," XIV.
[146] Sarr, "Mai 68"; Vaillant, *Black, French and African*.

anticolonial leader Amilcar Cabral.[147] Four days after the awards ceremony, the publishing house Luchterhand organized a discussion forum under the auspices of the Frankfurt Book Fair, in which author Günter Grass participated alongside SDS leaders and a number of philosophers and sociologists associated with the left, notably Theodor Adorno and Jürgen Habermas.[148] The discussion quickly moved from Senghor and the situation in Senegal to another African topic: Biafra. Before the Fair, Grass had written a public letter to Senghor, urging the African statesman to speak out against this "Auschwitz and Treblinka in Africa."[149] But in his statement at the forum, Günter Grass leveled harsh criticism at the SDS. While two genocides were being committed in Africa, the students protest against Senghor, the writer lamented.[150]

For the SDS and their associates the situation looked entirely different. The student leader "KD" Wolff reproached Grass for his lack of a theoretically grounded analysis of the conflict. By discussing political questions in moral terms, Grass missed the neocolonial conditions that only allow for sham independence, Wolff argued. The communist sociologist and journalist Hans Heinz Holz supported Wolff's call to identify the conflicts' underlying political and socioeconomic structrures: "one cannot ascertain a phenomenon like Biafra only through the suffering of the people there. One has to grasp who is responsible for this suffering." This would not preclude efforts to assuage the suffering. But the analysis would need to start by distinguishing the conflict's political and humanitarian dimensions.[151] Others went further. The Marxist economist Werner Hofmann, a professor of sociology at Marburg University, directly addressed Grass with his assertion that Biafra has become a diversionary tactic: "one is so wonderfully uninvolved." He then added, as the crowd applauded: "Vietnam is no longer being talked about. We should see through that. There is a method to it." Hans Jürgen Krahl, member of the national board of the SDS, agreed with Grass on one point: "so far, the SDS has contributed pathetically little to the analysis of Biafra as a problem." Nevertheless, Krahl resolutely rejected any moral pressures to participate in the "humanitarian alms collection." The Institute for Social Research PhD candidate contended that these "alms" only serve to veil "the real structure of the conflict [. . .]."[152]

[147] Henry Raymont, "German Novelist Taunts Radicals: Student Protest in Frankfurt Denounced by Grass," *New York Times*, 10.1968, 77; Vogel and Bourguignon, "Senghor."

[148] "Diskussion: Autoritäten und Revolution."

[149] "Auschwitz und Treblinka," 2.

[150] "Diskussion: Autoritäten und Revolution," 49.

[151] Ibid., 51, 52, 53.

[152] Ibid., 56, 57.

Less than a fortnight after the Frankfurt panel, Grass addressed the crowd as the keynote speaker at a rally organized by the Aktion Biafra-Hilfe in Hamburg. In his address, published in *Die Zeit* a week later, Grass still wondered how the SDS wants "to come to terms with this insanity ideologically."[153] Grass argued that the New Leftists would consider the Biafran secession a "feudalistic-militaristic military putsch" which needed to be crushed "in the name of socialism." Such a line of thinking, Grass said, was dangerous: "I am not afraid to say that this aggressive line of argument evinces the same mentality which has led to the genocide in Biafra."[154] The lack of leftist empathy for Biafra was especially worrisome as it seemed to cast a dark shadow over the future of German society as well. He did not worry that the New Left itself would take over the state and implement totalitarian rule. But the conservative bureaucrats controlling the state could use the protests as a pretext to introduce measures curtailing democratic rights and liberties. Accordingly, Grass was highly critical of the students, even though he sympathized with many of their goals. As he saw it, their rising radicalism threatened to create a situation that could destroy the fledgling West German democracy. The indifference of the SDS to the Biafran mass deaths confirmed these dangers in his eyes: German society needed humanitarian empathy and not radical politics.[155] The frequent evocation of the Nazi past in representations of Biafra is significant here. The New Left had challenged the societal establishment by confronting it with the legacies of totalitarian politics: namely, fascists still seemed to be in charge in a Federal Republic where the head of state was a former member of the NSDAP. Many on the New Left were thus convinced that their choice was either to turn their revolutionary dreams of democratic utopia into reality, or to have to succumb to a Nazi establishment.[156] However, their demands for more participation in their protests raised fears of a retreat into totalitarian rule among many Germans, especially 45ers such as Grass.[157]

Grass was not alone with his critical view of the SDS in pro-Biafran circles. Before the discussion at the Frankfurt Book Fair, a network of Biafra protesters had, like Grass, presented a petition to Senghor, calling on the Senegalese president to denounce the African

[153] Günter Grass, "Völkermord vor aller Augen: Ein Appell an die Bundesregierung," *Die Zeit*, October 11, 1968, 5; "Biafra – Todesurteil für ein Volk: Kundgebung" (GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–71).

[154] Grass, "Völkermord," 5. [155] "Diskussion: Autoritäten und Revolution," 50–1.

[156] For various perspectives on this matter see Gassert et al., *Coping with the Nazi Past* and Kundnani, *Utopia or Auschwitz*.

[157] Moses, *German Intellectuals*, 64.

"genocide."[158] Prior to this, the activists had sent a letter to German press, radio and TV to announce their actions. In the letter, they emphasized that their activities had nothing to do with the "acts of disturbance" they said the SDS was planning.[159] A few months later, a Biafra activist from Heidelberg sent a letter to Tilman Zülch, student at Hamburg University and one of the co-founders of the Hamburg Aktion Biafra-Hilfe. The Heidelberg activist, a member of the "Hochschulgesellschaft für die Erneuerung der deutschen Universität," a group countering the "radical attack" against the university, wrote that the volume *Soll Biafra überleben?*, prepared by the Hamburg group, was selling "like hot cakes" at Heidelberg University. He added that, at a recent assembly of the Heidelberg studentry, his group had dealt a serious blow to the SDS representatives "who were shocked that we did not crumble and break under their revolutionary blathering: in the same meeting, we send this SDS home with a crushing defeat [...]."[160]

Reproaches against the New Left feature regularly in texts written by German Biafran lobbyists.[161] The historian Golo Mann, member of the honorary board of the Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, opined that

> Who only dreams of the "revolution" does not care for "humanitarian aid." A war, in which English "imperialists" and Russian "communists" act in concert, in which a former colony fights for the alleged unity of its state against a tribe, which is not even "socialist" does not interest them, there is nothing to be found on this in Lenin.[162]

The advocacy of many in the German Biafra lobby was a reaction against what many moderate leftists and conservatives viewed as an excessive radicalization of the youth. A significant number of students in pro-Biafran networks rallied against the New Left's revolutionary socialism.[163] Accordingly, at least in part, the pro-Biafran campaign needs to be seen in connection with the backlash against "1968."[164]

The good relations between the Springer press group – much dreaded on the left – and the pro-Biafran campaign also point in that direction. Hans Germani, Springer's in-house writer on African affairs,

[158] Letter to Senghor, Frankfurt am Main, September 22, 1968 (GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–1971); Press release, Frankfurt am Main, September 22, 1968 (ibid.).
[159] Letter Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, September 17, 1968 (ibid.).
[160] Letter of the author of *Heidelberg hilf Biafra* to Tilman Zülch, June 6, 69 (GFBVA, Biafra allgemein 1968–1978).
[161] See e.g. Zülch, "Plädoyer," 12.
[162] Golo Mann, "Geleitwort," 10.
[163] See here also Röseman and Rösemann, *Heidelberg*. On Rösemann's wider activities see also: "Hochschulgesellschaft: Alles getan," *Der Spiegel*, September 15, 1969, 100.
[164] See Goltz, "Polarised Generation?"

featured as a speaker at rallies organized by the Aktionskomitee Biafra.[165] A staunch anti-communist and conservative critic of the decolonization of Africa, his articles in *Bild* and *Welt* were clearly pro-Biafran, but certainly not free of stereotypes about "traditional" African society.[166] Germani's articles focused on the humanitarian crisis,[167] but also emphasized the Biafrans' democratic aspirations.[168] Springer papers painted not only a favourable image of the Biafrans, but also of the Biafrans' German sympathizers. *Bild* reported about the protest rallies organized by pro-Biafran students, mostly in short articles or notifications, but without the disdain that accompanied the newspapers' coverage of protesting leftist students.[169]

In many of the petitions that Germans sent to the Bonn government or the United Nations to criticize the "silence" on Biafra, the Vietnam War was evoked as a counterpart to Biafra. Comparing the two conflicts, the attention paid to Vietnam was at least implicitly cast in a dark light: "the United Nations also remains silent about the 'African Vietnam'."[170] The comparison with Vietnam was an oft-repeated trope in pro-Biafran texts in Germany at the time. Such analogies were not only used in petitions, but also in the press and in publications issued by activists.[171] This

[165] Hohmann, "Vermerk über die Biafra-Veranstaltung am Dienstag, dem 13.8.1968, im Saal der Bahnhofsgaststätten," (ADRK, 4.8.1.1. Afrika, 11).

[166] See for instance Dr. Hans Germani, "Erst essen die Eltern: Darum sieht man nur sterbende Kinder," *Bild*, August 6, 1968, 7. On his view of decolonization and Communism see also Germani, *Weiße Söldner*.

[167] See for instance "Kinder auf der Flucht vor dem Krieg" and "Der Tod umarmt Biafra," *Bild*, August 1, 1968, 1, 10; "In Nigeria stapeln sich die Lebensmittel und in Biafra wird gehungert" and "Wenn man Patronen essen könnte," ibid., August 2, 1968, 1, 14.

[168] See e.g. Hans Germani, "Die Kampfparolen in Biafra richten sich gegen Großbritannien," *Die Welt*, July 25, 1968, 3.

[169] "Radeln für Biafra," *Bild*, August 17, 1968, 3; "Demonstration mit Autos gegen Krieg in Biafra," *Die Welt* (Berlin Edition), July 12, 1968, 10; "Studenten helften," *Bild* (Berlin Edition), July 10, 1968, 2; "Studenten sammeln," ibid., July 27, 1968; "Studentenparlament stiftet Geld für Biafra," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, November 29, 68, 3. See also Kurt Schleusner, "Strafgeld für Biafra," *Die Welt*, July 16, 1968, 2. On the Springer press and the student protesters see Hilwig, "Revolt"; Kruip, *"Welt"-"Bild,"* 217–32.

[170] Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, March 14, 1968 (ibid.). See also Letter to the President of the United Nations, June 15, 1968 (ibid., Part B) and Frauen- und Müttergemeinschaft von Karlsruhe-St. Bernhard to U Thant, May 13, 1968 (ibid., Part B).

[171] From a range of example see Tilman Zülch et al., "Hilfe für Biafra," June 28, 1968 (GFBVA, Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–71); Klaus Natorp, "Frieden für Biafra," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 27, 1968, 1; Evangelische Studentengemeinden in West-Berlin/Asta der Pädagogischen Hochschule, "Völkermord in Nigeria – Biafra," July 1968 (EZA 2/2157); Chegwe, ed., *Biafra:*, between 48 and 49; Biafra Union to Brandt, June 3, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741); Letter to Rainer Barzel, July 9, 1968 (ACDP 08–006 AKV, 013/2).

rhetoric was frequently used to criticize the left's silence on Biafra. *Der Spiegel* lamented that the West African war

> has probably already cost more human lives than Vietnam, but nowhere in the world are megaphones roaring, banners being waved or has one single tram rail been blocked. This bloodbath is apparently not attractive for emotions.[172]

Writing in *Die Zeit*, Countess Marion von Dönhoff asked what the "otherwise very active protesters from the United States to Tokyo" were doing in view of this "genocide"? She provided the answer herself: "nothing."[173]

The analogies between Biafra and Vietnam had a particular ring to them. The petitioners frequently mentioned America's war in Southeast Asia in the same breath as calls for intervention in internal African matters.[174] Whereas New Leftists envisioned "revolutionary subjects" in the Third World as role models for their efforts to bring revolutionary politics to fruition at home, many of the Biafra petitioners implicitly or explicitly demanded Western domination in global politics. In answer to student protesters and New Left intellectuals who, in spring 1968, castigated the United States as a ruthless imperialist power, pro-Biafran voices called for American or international intervention on behalf of the Biafrans. The comparisons between Biafra and Vietnam were an element of a counter-narrative to the anti-imperialist anti-Americanism of the protest movements of the time. The assertion that Biafra had already cost more human lives than the war in Vietnam was particularly widespread in Germany, yet it also circulated transnationally.[175] Unsurprisingly, this connection had particularly powerful implications in the United States.

American Missions: Biafra and US Imperialism in a Postcolonial World

In July 1968, Biafra became a topic in the race for the White House. Republican candidate Richard M. Nixon's campaign told the press that

[172] "Datum: 1. Juli 1968, Betr. Biafra," *Spiegel*, July 1, 1968, 5. See also "Letzter Akt," *Spiegel*, May 27, 1968, 129; "Lebendig begraben," *Spiegel*, July 1, 1968, 70–76. "Nur beten," *Spiegel*, August 19, 1968, 71–6.

[173] Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, "Belsen in Biafra?" *Die Zeit*, July 12, 1968, 1.

[174] Letter to the United Nations, "1968 Internationales Jahr der Menschenrechte," May 24, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part B). See for instance also Aktionskreis Biafra to United Nations, April 22, 1968 (ibid., Part A); Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, May 27, 1968 (ibid., Part B) and Letter to the President of the United Nations, June 15, 1968 (ibid., Part B).

[175] See, e.g., Jacques Madaule, "Pour le Biafra," *Le Monde*, June 30, 1968, 1, 10.

the Nigerian Civil War was turning into "one of the most tragic events in human history," with estimated deaths representing "forty times the number of American soldiers who have died in the Vietnam war." For the conservative politician, this was a call of duty for Washington: "The great humanitarian traditions of the American people dictate that its government speak out against this senseless tragedy – and act to prevent the destruction of a whole people by starvation." Knowing that the democratic office holder had shown little interest in the conflict, he called on President Johnson "to take sides against starvation. Our history cannot allow us to do otherwise."[176] Less than two months later, Nixon ratcheted up the rhetoric once more: "genocide is what is taking place right now – and starvation is the grim reaper." For Nixon, the humanitarian mission was a cornerstone of American universalism: "While America is not the world's policeman, let us at least act as the world conscience [. . .]."[177]

Such demands were not limited to the conservative end of the political spectrum. In his first speech after the assassination of his brother Robert F. Kennedy, Massachusetts Democratic Senator Edward "Ted" Kennedy raised the issue in the Senate.[178] Kennedy, who had already made a name for himself as a critic of American involvement in Vietnam, wanted the government to pull out of Southeast Asia – and to move into West Africa instead, not necessarily with troops, but with all of the humanitarian manpower Washington could muster. Speaking at a dinner organized by the International League for the Rights of Man, he asserted that if one of the warring parties were communist, Washington would not have kept its non-interventionist stance. However, the American humanitarian tradition demands an intervention, he told the audience, using words that closely echoed Nixon's. Reflecting the "'genuine humanitarian concern of the American people'," the diplomatic difficulties "'must be overcome.'"[179] Both politicians integrated their calls for intervention into traditions of American exceptionalism.[180] Despite their virtually indistinguishable rhetoric, they embody two conflicting strata of

[176] Nixon for President Committee, "News Release," July 18, 1968 (SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 5), 1–2.

[177] Idem, "News Release," September 10, 1968 (ibid.), 1–2.

[178] Peter Grose, "Kennedy Urges U.N. Action on Starving Biafrans: In First Senate Speech since Brother's Death, He Asks Early Assembly Decision," *New York Times*, September 24, 1968, 3.

[179] Sara Davidson, "Kennedy Tells LBJ, Nixon: Biafra Relief Can't Wait," *Boston Globe*, December 7, 1968. See also the press releases from the Office of Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts in SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 6.

[180] For an introduction to American exceptionalism see Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*.

American politics in the late 1960s: one of them from the Democrats' liberal wing, a moderate leftist with sympathies for the claims of the more radical protest front that had emerged over Vietnam; the other a conservative claiming to speak for the "silent majority." The two were only the most visible incarnations of a phenomenon that some contemporary observers had already noted. Journalists described the Biafra lobby as the formation of a "cross-philosophy humanitarianism" uniting a motley crew of "strange bedfellows," a melding of the left and the right.[181] A number of commentators on both sides of the lines usually dividing US politics agreed in their support for the humanitarian campaign.[182]

Among the first Americans to express their concern was a group of scholars: New School for Social Research anthropologist Stanley Diamond, Audrey Chapman Smock of Barnard College, who both had conducted research in Nigeria, and the Irish writer, former UN diplomat and Vice-Chancellor at the University of Ghana Conor Cruise O'Brien, who was now teaching at New York University.[183] The careers of these figures reflected postwar America's global orientation. After two world wars and the emergence of the Cold War, the United States had discarded its earlier isolationist principles. In Cold War America, Area Studies programs were expanding significantly, and increasingly covered regions where hearts and minds were still to be won – such as in decolonizing Africa.[184] Former British colonies like Nigeria, where language barriers were lower, were among the preferred destinations of American academics conducting research trips. Moreover, some universities in Africa were established with the financial and administrative help of American universities and foundations – like the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, founded with the assistance of Michigan State University and the US government. On the eve of independence, the intellectual circles in Nsukka had developed into a stronghold of Biafran secessionism – and they continued to entertain ties to American academia.[185] US

[181] John Chamberlain, "The Campus and Biafra," *The News and Courier*, April 21, 1969, A8; William Chapman, "'Biafra Lobby' Melds Left and Right," *The Washington Post*, January 19, 1969, 1.

[182] See e.g. Eugene McCarthy to Paul Connett, August 19, 1968 (SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 6); Benjamin H. Read, "Memorandum for Mr. Walt W. Rostow," The White House, July 26, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27–9 Biafra – Nigeria, Box 1881); *Lyons, "Africa."*

[183] Stanley Diamond, "The Biafran Possibility," *Africa Report* 13 (1968), No. 2, 16–19; Conor Cruise O'Brien, "A Condemned People," *The New York Review of Books* December 21, 1967, 14–20; idem, "Inside Biafra," *The Observer*, October 8, 1967, 9; Wiseberg, "International Politics," 228–9.

[184] Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries*; idem, "Gospel."

[185] Bunting, "Nigeria," 380; Ike, *University Development*, 12–18.

engagement in the world had effects in both directions: fellowship programs sent thousands of American students and scholars out into the world but also increasing numbers of foreigners entered American universities.[186] Thus, in the years before the civil war, Nigerians had arrived at US universities in growing numbers. Among them were many Igbos, who established Biafra Unions on overseas campuses or organized speaking tours of Biafran intellectuals like Chinua Achebe. The efforts of their Federal counterparts met with less success. The first signs of the emergence of a pro-Biafran lobby in the United States were mostly due to the activities of these students, and of faculty and other Americans who entertained personal and professional relationships with them.[187]

The Biafra lobby was not only characterized by direct ties to Nigeria's former Eastern Region, but also by the ethnic and religious backgrounds of many activists. The foreign attachments of many Americans are traditionally vital for foreign policy debates in the "transnational nation."[188] As elsewhere, religious ties were important. More radical voices like the right-wing Jesuit TV and radio presenter Daniel Lyons were soon convinced that a holy war between Catholicism and a communist-Islamic alliance was being fought on West Africa's battlefields.[189] Irish missionaries toured America to lobby for the Biafran cause, prompting considerable concern among Irish-Americans. Given the "Great Famine" and its role in stirring Irish migration to America, hunger has played a central role in Irish-American cultural memory.[190] Irish and Irish-American concern was also facilitated by the perception of Biafra's cause as a national movement for self-determination from a failed Federal construction still supported by the British government.[191] However, the causes for these identifications were complex and cut in various directions. The pro-Biafran stance of the maverick anti-imperialist Conor Cruise O'Brien was also entangled with his increasingly critical view of Irish Catholic nationalism in the context of the Irish Troubles. For O'Brien, the creed of Irish "national unity," which purported to create an inevitable, almost natural political entity, could easily become a

186 Kramer, "World."
187 Wiseberg, "International Politics," 225–6; Biafra Students Association in the Americas Inc. to Secretary-General U Thant, February 27, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A); Telegram to Secretary General U Thant, October 22, 1966 (ibid.).
188 Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation*; Smith, *Foreign Attachments*.
189 Chapman, "'Biafra Lobby'"; Staunton, "Case of Biafra," 529.
190 Gray, "Memory."
191 On the role of particular Irish sentiments for Biafran advocacy see O'Sullivan, *Ireland*, esp. 114; and Wiseberg, "Christian Churches," 326. The role of anti-British sentiments is given short shrift in the literature, but see British Embassy, Washington, D.C., "Memorandum on 'Biafran' Propaganda Effort in the U.S.A.," March 1969 (UK NA, FCO 26/300), 2.

new imperialism.[192] Despite these different positionings, what is crucial is that O'Brien's concern about issues of self-determination, unity and federalism in Ireland also impacted his – and others' – concern about the situation in Biafra.

The ethnic group in the United States that reacted most strongly to the Biafran plight despite a lack of direct ties to the crisis area was the Jewish American community. As seen in the previous chapter, Holocaust memory was a crucial motivation in Jewish American concern for Biafra. But other factors were equally important. On April 24, 1969, Sidney Liskofsky, Director of the American Jewish Committee's Division of International Organizations, read in the *New York Times* about students at a mostly black high school in Brooklyn who demonstrated against fundraising for Biafran relief.[193] Enraged about what he had read, Liskofsky sent the article to AJC leader Rabbi Tanenbaum attached to an emotional letter: "What earthly reason could there be for Negro high school students suddenly and spontaneously to decide to demonstrate in opposition to – of all things! – aid to starving children in Biafra?" Liskofsky wondered whether there could by "any explanation for a demonstration of this nature other than that they were indoctrinated or incited to do so by certain militant groups who follow the communist (Soviet or Maoist) or 'Third World' line, which preaches support for the Nigerian Federal Government against Biafra."[194]

American Jews' disappointment over the African-American reaction followed from the assumption that the latter must almost logically support the Biafrans' cause.[195] There was some pro-Biafran action by African-Americans.[196] But, taken as a whole, the community remained neutral. The moderate spectrum of the civil rights movement, as embodied by Martin Luther King, had worked toward a reconciliation of the

[192] O'Brien, "Tribe, Nation, State," (NYU Archives, Papers of the Albert Schweitzer Chair in the Humanities, Conor Cruise O'Brien Files, box 7, folder 8); O'Brien, "A People Condemned," (ibid., folder 6); idem, "Genocide and Discretion," *The Listener*, January 30, 1969, 129–31; Bourke, "Languages of Conflict and the Northern Ireland Troubles"; English and Skelly, "Ideas Matter,."

[193] "Negro Students Oppose Aid to Biafran Children," *The New York Times*, April 24, 1969, 35.

[194] Sidney Liskofsky to Tanenbaum, April 24, 1969 (American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1969, Ba-Biafra, Box 86).

[195] See for instance Gordon L. Geller to Dean Rusk, July 5, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1876).

[196] NAACP Pittsburgh Branch to Secretary-General U Thant, July 15, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part C); Nehe Nwankwo, *The Truth about Biafra and Nigeria: Questions and Answers*, New York 1969 (Library of Congress Washington D.C., Nigeria, Politics and Government: Civil War); and the clippings from the *New York Amsterdam News* in SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 10.

two sides. After King's assassination aborted his mission to Nigeria, most African-American leaders reverted to more passive neutrality. Neither the NAACP's annual convention in Atlantic City in late June 1968, nor the National Conference on Black Power held in Philadelphia two months later issued a resolution on the conflict.[197] The latter, however, explicitly declared the conflict an internal Nigerian issue, one Americans – in particular, white Americans – had no business concerning themselves with. Black Power leaders cast "white America's concern about Biafra" as "'a fictitous issue,'" which "'the powerful' were using [...] 'as one way of keeping black America divided.'"[198] Accordingly, the protesting black high school children in Brooklyn also asserted that they, as "black nationalists" were supporting Nigeria.[199] Geopolitical considerations were a factor as well. In view of Egyptian support of the Federal side, black Muslims, who had become a powerful force in the community, tended to advocate Nigerian unity.[200] Tying in with this, some in the African-American community even blamed the Nigerian Civil War on an Israeli "'plot' to take over Africa."[201]

American Jews identifying with the Biafrans, in contrast, saw "a parallel with the attempts of the Arabs to put an end to Israel," as a British diplomat in Washington observed, although American-Jewish leaders tried to play down the effect anti-Muslim sentiment had in Jewish support for Biafrans.[202] Even so, the motivations for American Jewish feelings on Biafra were not always clear. Rabbi Tanenbaum, for instance, placed much of the blame for the conflict on Muslim aggression, but asserted that this factor should not be discussed publicly in order to prevent further diplomatic problems.[203] Sentiments about the

[197] Robert Gruenberg, "Biafra Issue Seen Too Remote for U.S. Blacks," *Los Angeles Times*, October 24, 1968, 8.

[198] Ibid. The quotes are from the Black Power theorist Nathan Wright. Stokely Carmichael saw the conflict in a similar light. See Robert C. Maynard, "Carmichael Assails Black Panthers, Quits as 'Honorary Prime Minister,'" *Washington Post*, July 4, 1969, A1.

[199] "Negro Students Oppose Aid to Biafran Children," *The New York Times*, April 24, 1969, 35. See also Conor Cruise O'Brien, "Biafra Revisited," *New York Review of Books*, May 22, 1969, 22–3.

[200] John A. Davis, "Black Americans and United States Policy Toward Africa," *Journal of International Affairs* 23 (1969), No. 2, 242–3.

[201] Gruenberg, "Biafra Issue."

[202] British Embassy, Washington, D.C., "Memorandum on 'Biafran' Propaganda Effort in the U.S.A.," March 1969 (UK NA, FCO 26/300), 2. David Ariel to Rabbi Tanenbaum, August 27, 1968 (American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1968, Biafra, Box 71); To the Editor, Christian Science Monitor (American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1968, Biafra, Box 71), 1.

[203] Marc H. Tanenbaum, "Biafran Tragedy Accelerates: Christian Jewish Cooperation," *Religious News Service*, August 14, 1968 (American Jewish Committee Archives

Jewish–Arab conflict nevertheless mingled with those of the growing alienation between American Jews and African-Americans. When Biafra became a hotly debated issue in mid-1968, the strategic coalition that American Jews and African Americans had maintained for decades was already in disarray, thanks to events such as the Six-Day-War, which earned Israel an imperialist reputation, while radical blacks embraced the cause of the Third World ever more closely.[204] The close association with Israel that Biafran propaganda had fostered was thus not entirely to the secessionists' advantage. It helped to secure Jewish support, but it also alienated large parts of the left and the African-American community.

These international contexts exacerbated tensions already created by the growing socioeconomic divide between increasingly wealthy Jews and their less wealthy African American counterparts and local conflicts that took place between the groups. These tensions coalesced in New York City with the Ocean Hill-Brownsville teacher strike, which dragged on between May and November 1968 – exactly at the time that Biafra was an issue of international debate. Ocean Hill-Brownsville, which included traditionally Jewish neighbourhoods that had seen an enormous influx of mostly poor African-Americans in the preceding years, was one of the school districts where a Ford Foundation-funded decentralization project was implemented. Granting control over school management to newly created community boards of local leaders and parents, the administrative measure turned into a fiasco. The predominantly Jewish teaching staff and their old left associates in the United Federation of Teachers were pitted against local African-Americans associated with the radical left.[205] The demonstration of black students at a Brooklyn high school against relief to Biafra confirmed the disappointment many liberal Jews felt about the distance between themselves and the African American community, and also in what they perceived as a lack of concern among African Americans about the suffering of African children. The split was of structural importance for the emergence of organized Jewish American concern for Biafra. Had it not happened, Jewish American leaders would probably have taken the objectives of their strategic partners among American blacks into consideration, possibly refraining from an open embrace of the Biafran cause. But with their former

Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1968, Biafra, Box 71), 4–5. See also A. James Rudin, Talk given at Biafra Interfaith Rally, St. Patrick‘s Cathedral, New York, October 26, 1968 (American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1968, Biafra, Box 72, Biafra Responses Folder).

204 Martin, "'Nation Time!'"

205 Gurock, *Jews in Gotham*, 136–49; Podair, *Strike*; Wendell, *Brownsville*, ch. 8.

partners already alienated, Jewish American leaders felt free to take on Biafra as their own.

Another group with ties to Nigeria played perhaps the most significant part in the formation of a pro-Biafran lobby front in the United States: former Peace Corps activists. Prior to the civil war, Nigeria had been "the world capital of Peace Corps teaching."[206] The West African state was one of the countries to which the organization had sent the most delegates.[207] Moreover, there were also more babies born to volunteer couples in Nigeria than in any other country – an indicator that, for many volunteers, their country of residence had become a place to which they felt emotionally attached.[208] After the beginning of the civil war, all 139 Peace Corps Volunteers working in Nigeria's former Eastern Region were immediatedly evacuated. In effect, by mid-1968, when concern about the situation in Biafra was increasing, a large group of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) who had served in the Eastern Region were in the United States.[209] Many of them got involved in the humanitarian campaign. They organized petition campaigns to politicians, governments and the United Nations.[210] Some RPCVs returned to Nigeria to work in the field for other agencies. A group of former volunteers from the Peace Corps and from the Quaker humanitarian organization American Friends Service Committee launched the Committee for Nigeria/Biafra Relief. Working together with UN agencies and religious organizations, the Committee helped in the coordination of the relief operation to Biafra, and created a pool of relief workers available on short notice for emergency missions.[211] The Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information in New York, set up in October 1968 by two former Peace Corps volunteers in Eastern Nigeria is another case in point for the significance of RPCVs in the Biafra lobby.[212]

Arguably the most prolific pro-Biafran group in the United States was the American Committee to Keep Biafra Alive (ACKBA). Based in New York, it was established by Paul Connett, an English graduate student at

[206] David Hapgood and Meridan Bennett, "The Peace Corps in Teaching," *Peace Corps Volunteer* VII (December 1968–January 1969), No. 2, 27.
[207] Hapgood and Bennett, "Peace Corps," 25.
[208] "Married Volunteers: A Growing Subculture," *Peace Corps Volunteer* V (September 1967), No. 11, 4.
[209] "Volunteers leave Eastern Region of Nigeria," ibid., 21.
[210] See, e.g., Letter to Secretary-General U Thant (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part C); Chapman, "'Biafra Lobby.'"
[211] "RPCVs join relief effort," *Peace Corps Volunteer* VII (November 1968), No. 1, 19.
[212] Brad Lynch, "Memorandum to Rumrill-Hoyt Staff," December 18, 1968 (SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, Collection: DG 168, Box 1).

Cornell University, and a number of RPCVs in August 1968. ACKBA cooperated closely with religious organizations – Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish – in helping coordinate the humanitarian effort, and also entertained ties with Biafrans in New York and in the secessionist state.[213] ACKBA regularly defined the humanitarian operation in Biafra as an American mission. Echoing Nixonian rhetoric, they demanded that "America should lead the conscience of the world [. . .]."[214] But the background of many of the Committee's members in the Peace Corps was a major determinant of its advocacy. The PR campaign of the highly prolific group, which regularly ran ads in the national press, was organized by Young & Rubicam, a Madison Avenue PR firm that had also created advertizing campaigns for the Peace Corps.[215] In a letter to Stephen O. Frankfurt, president of Young & Rubicam, Connett wrote: "begun by returned Peace Corps Volunteers from Nigeria, [ACKBA is] committed to the third goal of the Peace Corps which is to bring back to the American people insights into our international obligations and to educate citizens to undertake purposeful action." Even though the "Committee now consists of a full spectrum of volunteers, including clergy, teachers, housewives, students, and professional people," the volunteers still keep "in mind its ultimate commitment" – the promotion of Peace Corps ideals among the American population.[216]

The Biafra protest lobby in the United States thus has to be situated against the background of the history of the Peace Corps. Created under John F. Kennedy in 1961, the organization was intended to project a benign image of the United States abroad: a world power that came to help and not to dominate.[217] Washington, a self-styled promotor of decolonization, had contributed to the end of Europe's colonial empires. But in many ways the United States had now become their successor. To thwart Soviet expansion, American governments tried to secure and enlarge their spheres of influence and to win over anticolonial leaders to the democratic-capitalist camp. Certainly,

[213] Paul Connett, Round letter to Members of Congress, September 21, 1968 (SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 10); Bertram H. Gold to Rabbi Rudin, August 16, 1968 (American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1968, Biafra, Box 71); Transcript of "Twin Circle Headline," New York, June 1, 1969 (SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 10).

[214] "Position Paper of the American Committee to Keep Biafra Alive, Inc." (SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 10), 3.

[215] Hoffman, *All You Need*, 53–4, 208–9. See the various ads in SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 10.

[216] Paul Connett to Stephen O. Frankfurt, September 13, 1968 (SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 10), 3.

[217] Hoffman, *All you Need*; Cobbs, "Decolonization"; Fischer, *Making Them*.

this precluded official colonial annexations. But America's "mission" in the world at least partly resembled the "civilizing mission" of its European predecessors.[218] In keeping with this worldview, RPCVs seldom partook in radical protests. The value system of many volunteers was defined by a belief in the American "mission" in the world; their emphasis on discipline did not fit well with radical leftist experiments in individualistic freedom. The latter, for their part, often associated Peace Corps volunteers with the "establishment."[219] Accordingly, the pro-Biafran protest of many RPCVs lacked the air of radicalism of many of the period's protest movements. The Peace Corps represents a moderate rendering of the globalism born in 1960s America.

This belief in American exceptionalism united moderate leftists drawing on JFK's early 1960s utopianism and a number of more conservative-minded Americans who also engaged in the Biafra lobby. An important example here is the journalist Fulton Lewis III, former National Field Director of Young Americans for Freedom, a group created in 1963 to rally student support for the presidential candidacy of Senator Barry Goldwater. The radical left, they believed, threatened to conquer the university campus.[220] In 1969, Lewis became one of the directors of the newly founded organization Americans for Biafran Relief.[221] At a conference on Biafra relief in Washington, the young conservative expressed his concerns about Biafra by quoting the Declaration of Independence: "as Americans we profess to believe all men to be endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." He acknowledged that within the United States some people were also denied these rights. But this should not prevent Americans acting: "when we as a people stand by idlely [sic] and watch a concerted effort to deny people, millions of people, what we believe are their God-given rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, then I think it even compounds our guilt."[222] Americans for Biafran Relief was founded in early 1969 by Young Democrats and Young Republicans. In its first prospectus, the organizers declared that

218 Louis and Robinson, "*Imperialism*," 495. 219 Fischer, *Making Them*, 189–91.

220 Andrew, *Other Side*; Hijiya, "Conservative 1960s"; Klatch, *Generation Divided*; Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*. For a general portrayal of the political divisions in 1960s America, see Isserman and Kazin, *America Divided*.

221 He visited Biafra in December 1968 together with the Republican congressman Donald Lukens, one of the group's congressional sponsors. "Americans for Biafan Relief," May 9, 1969 (American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1969, Ba-Biafra, Box 86).

222 "Prospectives: Biafra. An International Conference Sponsored by Operation Outrage Incorporated," January 11, 1969, Washington D.C. (ibid.), 28 (this page unpaginated).

"it is the prayer of all civilized people" that the conflict would come to an end.[223] The organization's creation was announced in a press conference in the Capitol in April 1969 with the personal endorsement of Ted Kennedy and the Republican Senator James B. Pearson.[224] The group aimed to "mobilize the energy of this nation's youth," by raising money at student fasts. The victims would not be the sole benefactors: "millions of young people in every part of our nation will help alleviate the suffering and starvation in Western Africa. What's more, by working together in this constructive effort, they too will feel good [...]."[225] Spencer Oliver, President of the Young Democratic Clubs of America, saw in it a "coalition of conscience" that "transcends political or national interest." Jack McDonald, Chairman of the Young Republican National Federation declared that "with so much attention concentrated on a handful of irresponsible young people in America – the rioters, the rebellers, even the revolutionaries" – Americans for Biafran Relief provided "a real opportunity to show the true spirit of this generation of America."[226]

Despite the actions of these student-organized groups, in mid-1968, William F. Buckley Jr., one of the most influential conservative public intellectuals of postwar America, lamented Americans' low level of interest in the conflict. Writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, Buckley wondered "how many readers will complete the reading of this column," which was about Biafra, "another one of those African things."[227] For Buckley, intervention was no longer a political issue, but a moral one: "the suffering of the Ibo people is on a scale unparalleled since the Communist starvations of the kulaks in the mid-30's, and somehow nothing is being done about it." He called for determined action by the US government, as the United Nations, he conteded, was doing precious little.[228] Buckley criticized the left for protesting the alleged wrongdoings of Republican politicians instead of the suffering in Biafra: "One wishes that some of

[223] "Preliminary Prospectus 'Americans for Biafran Relief,'" (ibid.), 1, 4.
[224] Americans for Biafan Relief, "For Immediate Release," (ibid.).
[225] "Preliminary Prospectus," 5, 6. See also "Questions about the Biafrans for Relief Campaign" American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1969, Ba-Biafra, Box 86).
[226] Americans for Biafan Relief, "Statements" (American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1969, Ba-Biafra, Box 86), 4; Americans for Biafan Relief, "If You Have to Kill Children...," (American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1969, Ba-Biafra, Box 86); see *The New York Times*, July 10, 1969, 21.
[227] William F. Buckley Jr., "Where Is Rescue for Biafra? – Where's Biafra?" *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 1968, A5. Reprinted as: "Where's Biafra – and Who Cares?" *Boston Globe*, August 17, 1968, 7.
[228] Buckley, "Where Is Rescue."

those dogged signature-collectors [. . .] would use their precious time to organize relief missions for Biafra."[229]

A number of Buckley's associates also called for US intervention in Biafra.[230] In April 1969, Buckley invited Noam Chomsky, celebrity intellectual of the American New Left, onto his show to discuss his new book *American Power and the New Mandarins*, in which he criticized the US war in Vietnam.[231] Buckley defended the righteousness of the American intervention, which he considered born out of a "disinterested concern for the stability and possibilities of [this] region of the world." To underline his argument, he employed an analogy with Biafra: "For instance, if there's a mass starvation in Biafra, even though we did not cause it, there is a sense in which we are responsible if we don't do something to attempt to alleviate it." Chomsky replied that he had "never written about the terror carried out by both sides in Nigeria [. . .]. I don't like it, obviously, but I don't see any point in my giving them good or bad marks for it. On the other hand, if we were carrying out the terror, I would very definitely write about it."[232] The positions represent two opposing moralities: one, as exemplified by Buckley, can be called a morality of intervention; the other, to which Chomsky subscribed, a morality of non-intervention. The differing understandings are intertwined with diverging views of imperialism. The New Left denounced Western intervention per se.[233] For the conservative advocate of American exceptionalism, there were good causes that needed to be aggressively defended: defending civlians' rights to their lives was as much an American duty as the containment of communism.

The American pro-Biafran scene was composed of moderate leftists and conservatives of all stripes. What united these camps was their

[229] Buckley, "Where Is Rescue."

[230] See for instance John Chamberlain, "The Campus and Biafra," *The News and Courier*, April 21, 1969, A8 and the opinion pieces sympathetic to the Biafrans published in the *National Review*, the periodical Buckley founded in 1955 – the "Ur-Text of modern conservatism" – by their in-house writer on African affairs. Elspeth Huxley, "Biafra Libre?, *National Review*, August 22, 1967, 896, 921; idem, "Sacred Cow," *National Review*, September 24, 1968, 962, 975; Farber, *Rise and Fall*, 40. On Buckley and the *National Review* see further ibid., ch. 2; Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation*, 209–14 and Nash, *Conservative Intellectual Movement*.

[231] Chomsky, *American Power*.

[232] Transcript "Firing Line #143: Vietnam and the Intellectuals," New York City, April 3, 1969 (Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Library and Archives), 20, 19, 18–19, hoohila.stanford.edu/firingline/programView2.php?programID=163 (accessed, April 2, 2013).

[233] In the *Monthly Review*, the flagship journal of American socialism closely associated with New Left intellectuals, Biafra is never discussed in any detail. However, in one article Nigeria is cast as an object of US imperial expansion, without further references to the civil war. Harry Magdoff, "The Age of Imperialism: Part Three," *Monthly Review* 20 (Nov. 1968), 18–74.

positive view of Western – in particular American – leadership in the world. And the Biafrans – as an example of Westernized, perfected postcolonial natives – were an ideal object of empathy for this seemingly odd assortment of groups and individuals who often disagreed on other issues. The Christian religion of the Biafrans was one of the factors that made them the ideal subject of an intervention considered essentially humanitarian. The Biafrans were portrayed as modern, educated, "civilized" subjects: opposed to the radical empathy of revolutionary leftists, the Third Worldism of the pro-Biafran scene was based on democratic and Christian bonds of empathy.[234] Some Americans did assert that the United States should intervene, despite the criticism engendered by the country's war in Southeast Asia.[235] In Biafra, what seemed like a purer form of intervention was demanded, free of the political underpinnings of US Cold War interventionism. At a time when the Vietnam War earned America much criticism on the world stage, a humanitarian intervention in Biafra on behalf of starving Babies appealed to many Americans as an opportunity to show the world America's benign face.[236]

The Left and Gaullism after May '68: Biafra in Postcolonial France

On June 30, 1968, Biafra was for the first time *à la une* of a major French newspaper. The leftist Catholic intellectual Jacques Madaule lamented in *Le Monde* that, even though the Biafran War had cost more human lives in one year than the Vietnam War, French society was too self-absorbed to turn its attention to the suffering in Biafra.[237] Madaule was writing in the wake of the *événements du Mai*. That spring, radical students, iconically represented by their public face Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a University of Nanterre sociology student of German-Jewish descent, had barricaded the Quartier Latin, the academic quarter in the heart of Paris. They were soon joined by the majority of the French workforce; in the second half of May, millions of workers went on strike. Expecting that the French capital would have to be retaken from the revolutionaries by sheer military force, as in 1871 when the short-lived reign of the Communards was crushed by the French army, President de Gaulle fled

[234] See e.g. an interview with Paul Connett on Father Lyons TV show. Transcript of "Twin Circle Headline," New York, June 1, 1969 (SCPC Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 10).

[235] See e.g. Ronald J. Wylie to the American Jewish Committee, March 28, 1969 (American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1969, Ba-Biafra, Box 86), 1.

[236] For an introduction to the literature on America as Empire see Kramer, "*Power and Connection*."

[237] Jacques Madaule, "Pour le Biafra," *Le Monde*, June 30, 1968, 1, 10.

across the German border. In Baden-Baden, he discussed possible military intervention with the chief of the French forces in Germany, General Jacques Massu. Assured of the army's loyalty in what he anticipated might become a civil war, de Gaulle returned to France. On May 30, the President broadcast his decision to hold new elections, and threatened to issue a state of emergency if workers should refuse to return to work. De Gaulle's followers immediately rallied in support. That same day, they organized a massive demonstration of hundreds of thousands who filled the Champs-Elysées, waving the *tricolore*, sounding "de Gaulle n'est pas seul," "La France aux Francais," and, most notoriously, "Cohn-Bendit à Dachau."[238] But the Communist Party agreed to the election, and the spectre of revolution was subdued. The June elections were a huge success for the Gaullist party, which won the biggest majority in French parliamentary history.[239]

The motivations and concerns of Biafra activists have to be viewed against the background of the tensions occupying French society at the time. For Madaule, his compatriots' relative indifference to the Biafrans' suffering was due to the Biafrans' failure to outline a clear-cut ideology for their project.[240] And indeed, at least among large parts of the French left, Biafra was a contentious issue, as demonstrated by an effort to tackle the problem from a radical socialist vantage point, which took place on the pages of the Bulletin of the *tiers-mondiste* network CEDETIM.[241] In the first of a series of articles, Manuel Bridier, co-founder of the group, called for an analysis of the conflict that would move beyond simplistic assumptions about the oil interests of foreign powers. In a surprising conclusion for a Trotskyist, Bridier argued the case for conferring the right to self-determination to the secessionist state, even though he characterized Biafra's leadership as the "Ibo bourgeoisie." In making that move, Bridier abandoned the agreed upon position of *tiers-mondiste* thought of the time, which circumscribed the exercise of the right to self-determination to anticolonial movements for independence.[242]

Soon afterwards, Bridier backpedalled. In a follow-up article, he wrote, in view of the "correspondence received after the publication of our first article," clarifications had become necessary. The letters to the editor laid bare, Bridier wrote, "an ambiguity of interpretation – and probably, without our knowing it, in the publication itself." In this

238 "De Gaulle Is Not Alone"; "France for the French"; "Cohn-Bendit to Dachau."

239 Dogan, "Civil War"; Jackson, "De Gaulle and May 1968"; Joffrin, *Mai 68*; Knapp, *Gaullism*, 13; Ross, *May '68*, 58–60.

240 Jacques Madaule, "Pour le Biafra," *Le Monde*, June 30, 1968, 1, 10.

241 On the CEDETIM see Kalter, *Discovery*, 311–58.

242 Manuel Bridier, "Les problèmes posés par le Biafra," *Bulletin de Liaison du CEDETIM* 7 (November 1968), 20. On the right to self-determination in the postcolonial period see Fisch, *Selbstbestimmungsrecht*, 136–41, 148–51, 249–56.

second article, his call for Biafra's right to self-determination morphed into a casting of the conflict as a tribal war. Promoted by the interests of Western capitalists trying to secure control over Nigeria's oil reserves, he now described the secession as a setback to the advancement of international socialism. He still conceded that the fears of the "Ibo population are grounded." But he concluded that the maintenance of Nigerian unity would be favorable for the country's development.[243] Bridier's revision of his position – after having received letters challenging his line of argumentation – indicates how the issue was discussed in radical leftist circles: coming out in support of the secessionists was apparently not an easy option.

Nevertheless, parts of the left did publicly voice their concern about the situation in Biafra. In November 1968, leading French intellectuals, among them Simone de Beauvoir, Claude Lanzmann, Léon Poliakov, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, issued an appeal claiming that "the struggle in Biafra is the struggle of the whole left today."[244] However, this proclamation served more as a call for leftist action than as evidence of the existence of a leftist pro-Biafran front. In early 1969, Sartre, Beauvoir and others from the left also signed a pro-Biafran appeal together with a number of Gaullists.[245] The composition of signatories of the first petition implies that at least two intellectual currents were at play in forming the concern of these leftists. The first was the leftist political Catholicism of, in particular, the writer Jacques Madaule.[246] Madaule was a disciple of Emanuel Mounier, the great philosopher of French personalism and founder of *Esprit* magazine, which also published pro-Biafran opinion.[247] In its more conservative adaptation,

[243] Bridier, "Des précisions sur le Biafra," *Bulletin de Liaison du CEDETIM* 9 (May 1969), 6, 7, 8. See also idem, "La guerre civile au Nigéria," ibid., 13 (February 1970), 2. For an account of the conflict among more conventional lines of Leninist argumentation see *Biafra: bilan d'une sécession*.

[244] "Nigeria: Civilian Rule Timetable Dropped," *West Africa*, December 7, 1968, No. 2688, 1457; "Der Kampf Biafras ist der Kampf der Linken," Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben?*, 154–5.

[245] These included the former Gaullist ministers Pierre Billotte, Jean de Broglie, and Jean Charbonnel, former ambassadors to the UK and Nigeria René Massigli and Raymond Offroy, and the writer François Mauriac. "Nigeria," *Africa Report* 14 (1969), No. 3/4, 48.

[246] Madaule regularly wrote pro-Biafran pieces for *Le Monde* and collaborated with the Comité de Lutte contre le Génocide au Biafra. Yves Lavoinne, "Médecins en guerre: Du témoignage au 'tapage médiatique,'" *Le Temps des Médias* 1, No. 4 (2005), 114–26; Jacques Madaule, "Il n'y a pas de victimes privilégiées," Comité International de Lutte contre le Génocide au Biafra, eds., *Biafra: Temoignages – prises de position*, July 1969 (GFBVA, Biafra Presse II), 19.

[247] Philippe Schneyder, "Une guerre absurde," *Esprit* (January 1968), 99–103; idem, "Le martyre du Biafra," ibid. (October 1968), 414–9; S. Okechukwu Mezu, "Du Nigéria Oriental à la République du Biafra," ibid. (December 1969), 787–806; A. Torrès,

personalism was the philosophical vehicle through which human rights thinking had been introduced to postwar European thought. Against an atomized liberal individualism, personalism advocated the cohesiveness of social groups through ties built by human persons. Human rights were considered a way to ensure that the "dignity" of human persons – with all the Christian connotations implied – was safeguarded, by acknowledging the individual's attachment to social groups.[248] A similar intellectual current was formulated by the writer Jules Romains, a member of the Comité d'Action Pour le Biafra.[249] The Biafran campaign for national self-determination – with its close intertwining of individual and collective rights – resonated strongly with personalist human rights thinking.[250] Moreover, Christian bonds of loyalty also played a significant role here.[251]

The second current emanated from Sartrean circles. Strikingly, in contrast to its international counterparts the flagship journal of the French left, *Les Temps Modernes* published a number of pro-Biafran articles. The texts principally focused on the question of genocide in Biafra.[252] In connection with the rise of Holocaust memory, speaking out against genocides across the globe had become a central creed of the French left.[253] This intertwined with the personal concerns and aspirations of individual authors such as the French Jew Richard Marienstras or the Breton Yves Person, both of them prominent advocates of minority rights. Here, Holocaust comparisons and pleas for the Biafrans' right to self-determination dovetailed with personal concerns about minority rights.[254] For Person, the Biafrans were a "primary nation" just like the Bretons. But the West Africans, victims of a "horrible Holocaust"

"La guerre au Nigéria," ibid., 807–16; idem, "La fin du Biafra," *Esprit* (February 1970), 334–6 and Paul Thibaud, "Non récupérables," ibid., 336–8. The connection to Catholic personalism also applies to Jean-Marie Domenach, alongside Madaule, he was another signatory of the November petition on behalf of Biafra. For further context see Rieffel, *tribu*, 330–50.

248 Moyn, "Personalism."

249 Romains was an advocate of Unanimism, a literary movement that shared some of the fundamental assumptions of personalism in its evocation of a non-communist collectivism. "Communiqué de Presse," *Biafra* 13–14.

250 See here for esp. Torrès, "fin."

251 See for instance Schneyder, "martyre."

252 See esp. Marienstras, "Génocide dans le Sens de l'Histoire"; Person, "Génocide et Unité"; Marienstras, "Fin d'une nation"; Diamond, "Un ethnocide." See also Cau, "camp de concentration." Cau was the former secretary of Sartre at *Les Temps Modernes*. *Winock, siècle, 495*. On *Les Temps Modernes* see Davies, *Sartre*.

253 Judaken, *Sartre*e, esp. ch. 3; Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*.

254 See esp. Marienstras, "*génocide* très contrariant," and further idem, "Génocide dans le Sens de l'Histoire," "Fin d'une nation" and Person, "Génocide et Unité."

perpetrated in the name of "national unity," needed their own state much more urgently.[255]

Person was also, as his obituarist wrote, highly critical of the "insularity of the British Labour Party under Wilson."[256] But, among international concerns, discussions about Israel were perhaps a more important factor than anti-British sentiments in leftist French pro-Biafranism. The question of Jewishness had sparked intense debates in late 1960s France.[257] As elsewhere, the Six-Day-War had intensified political debates about the role of Israel in the Middle East. Parts of the Left became more critical of Israel – alongside de Gaulle – and denounced the state's imperialism in the region.[258] Others took a pro-Israeli stand. Sartre tried to develop a position that took the concerns of both sides seriously. He defended the Israeli state's right to exist against attacks from the increasingly pro-Palestinian mainstream on the left. This, however, effectively put an end to the celebrity-like status that the French philosopher had enjoyed in Arab intellectual circles.[259] The Biafran cause resonated with a number of French Jewish intellectuals who were concerned about the situation in the Middle East, even if this did not necessarily imply an outright pro-Israeli stance, among them the filmmaker Claude Lanzmann, the historians Léon Poliakov and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, and the Orientalist Maxime Rodinson, who was on the board of the Comité d'action pour le Biafra.[260] In other cases, there was a direct link in the minds and actions of contemporariees between a pro-Israeli and a pro-Biafran stance. For Bernard Kouchner, for instance, the causes of Biafra and Israel were intertwined: the rights of the "Jews of Africa" needed to be advocated alongside that of the Jews of Israel. The people of Israel and the people of Biafra both had decided "not to let themselves be thrown into the sea" by their Muslim enemies.[261]

[255] Person, "Génocide," 1067, 1065, 1055. On Person see Hargreaves, "Obituary." On Marienstras, see Hyman, *Jews of Modern France*, 205–7.

[256] Hargreaves, "Obituary," 283.

[257] This had diverse sources. See Bensimon, *juifs*; Hyman, *Jews*, ch. 10; Moyn, *Holocaust Controversy*.

[258] Heimann, "'Irresponsible'"; *Winock, siècle, 555–63*.

[259] Di-Capua, "Arab Existentialism"; Arthur, *Unfinished Projects*, 147–9; Judaken, *Jean-Paul Sartre*, ch. 6; Lamouchi, *Jean Sartre*, 151–65.

[260] "Communiqué de Presse," *Biafra: Bulletin du comité d'action pour le Biafra* 1 (April 1969), 13–14; Winock, *siècle*, 555–63; Malkin, "Israël"; Maxime Rodinson, "Israël, fait colonial?" *Les Temps Modernes* (1967), No. 253, 17–88.

[261] Bernard Kouchnir [sic], "Biafra et Moyen-Orient," Centre d'information et de documentation Moyen-Orient (C.I.D.), eds., *Biafra: Une lecon à méditer*, Brussels January 20, 1970 (first published *Eléments* (1969), No. 2–3, 24–26), 18. See also Gol, "En guise d'introduction."

Thus even in France, where leftist concern about Biafra was more widespread than in Germany, the United Kingdom, or the United States, Biafra cannot be seen simply as a leftist cause. To the contrary, many pro-Biafran voices deplored the left's silence. Such criticism also came from some who had themselves been part of the movement. Kouchner, who had been on the national bureau of the radical leftist Union des étudiants communists in the mid-60s, now lamented that, in the face of childrens' deaths, leftists asked: "are they of the Left? [. . .] Our ideologues are not concerned about it. There is no place for this in their political framework."[262] The Biafran campaign thus fed into his – and others' – alienation from the political projects associated with the New Left. Strikingly, Gaullists advocating the Biafran cause employed an essentially similar rhetoric. The Gaullist writer-politician Jacques Marette asserted that the Biafrans simply believed in the wrong things:

> The Biafrans do not want to start a revolution; they just refuse to be massacred. They do not believe in Lenin, nor in Mao, nor in "Che," but in Christ and in the leaders [. . .] in charge of their desperate fighting. This is really a very miserable cause.[263]

As many in the pro-Biafran camp agreed, the Biafran faith in God rather than revolution was out of tune with the *Zeitgeist* proclaimed by the New Left. Similarly, Richard Marienstras wrote in *Les Temps Modernes*, that the students and the movements of the left remained silent when they should have been calling out: "Nous sommes tous des Biafrais!"[264] This statement was a variation of the slogan "Nous sommes tous des Juifs allemands!"[265] which students had used to express solidarity with Cohn-Bendit, who had been expelled under a law that allowed the deportation of "seditious aliens" – and their identification with the subjectified "other."[266] Marienstras now emphasized that the protesters declared their solidarity with the wrong victims: the real metaphorical Jew was not the German-Jewish radical Cohn-Bendit, but starving Biafrans.

Gaullists joined in the anti-revolutionary tune. An article that the Jewish-French film director Hervé Bromberger, soon to be a member of the Comité d'action pour le Biafra, published in the Gaullist newspaper *Notre République* in September 1968 is worth quoting at length here.[267] Bromberger begins his article with an account of Daniel Cohn-Bendit's return to France after his expulsion, which had been accompanied by enormous media coverage. After the event, Bromberger, as he wrote,

[262] Kouchnir [sic], "Biafra et Moyen-Orient," 16. [263] Marette, "Retour," 8.
[264] "We are all Biafrans." Marienstras, "Génocide dans le Sens de l'Histoire," 777.
[265] "We are all Germans Jews." [266] Ross, *May '68*, 57.
[267] On *Notre République* see Lachaise, "La presse."

returned to his car and, barely back on the road, “a young African raised his hand, signalling ‘stop.’” The journalist gave the stranger a ride. His passenger immediately started a conversation about the conflicts roiling French society, and assured his driver that the unrest will not pose an enduring threat: “Your state is strong.” Moreover, the *événements* may have been necessary to remind the French people that they were exceptionally favoured by fortune – since they were ruled by de Gaulle. The young African changed the subject to Biafra, avowing that the secessionists will never surrender; the Biafran people would prefer death to subjugation. However, one last hope remains: de Gaulle. The African was convinced that the French President would intervene. While the protesters “abandonned the revolution to depart for vacation,” the President concerns himself with serious matters: Biafra. And, subsequently, “the press discovers the genocide [. . .].”[268] It is irrelevant whether this anecdote is true or not. More decisive is the text’s forceful invocation of de Gaulle as a symbol of hope for a benign French intervention in a conflict that did not gain the attention of leftist protesters: “Two million dead are not of interest.” Innocents were dying *en masse*, but students and intellectuals occupy themselves with petty self-absorbed quarrels instead of confronting the sea of problems abroad.

In contrast to Cohn-Bendit, who did not publicly voice his opinion about the conflict, the French president did exert more than mere symbolic influence on the civil war. The de Gaulle administration had clandestinely begun to support Biafra in late September 1967, and publicly shifted toward a pro-Biafran position in summer 1968 – directly after the peak of the *événements*. The government issued a number of statements in support of Biafra’s bid for self-determination, culminating in a speech in the National Assembly in which Foreign Minister Michel Debré characterized the Nigerian conduct of war as “genocide.”[269] The Elysée took the lead of the pro-Biafran movement, which enthusiastically welcomed the French initiative, lauding De Gaulle as the guarantor of the Biafrans human right to life.[270] “In a world in which might has largely replaced right,” de Gaulle’s France became, in the words of the secessionist head of state Ojukwu, “the star of hope in a blackened horizon.”[271]

Despite soaring hopes in Biafra, Paris never officially recognized the new state. Since then, commentators have speculated about the

[268] Hervé Bromberger, “Loin du Biafra,” *Notre Republique*, September 27, 1968, 6.
[269] “Declaration de M. Debré à l’Assemblée Nationale,” October 2, 1968 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–72, No. 19).
[270] Nicolas Martin, “Le Defi Biafrais,” *Notre Republique*, November 15, 1968, 8.
[271] Ojukwu to de Gaulle, September 11, 1968 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–72, No. 19.), 1.

reasons for the French government's policy re-orientation. According to a line of thought that originated in British diplomatic and press circles at the time, de Gaulle endorsed the Biafran cause in order to cloak more sinister interests behind a smokescreen of universalist rhetoric. French policy on Biafra is often understood to have been motivated by the hope to weaken Nigeria, the West African state with the largest population, rich in oil – and supported by the British.[272] Accordingly, American diplomats were convinced that Biafra not only appealed to "de Gaulle's romantic taste for underdogs," but that the French also intended to prop up "a dynamic new client amid the wreckage of an Anglo-American dream in Africa."[273] A number of historians ascribe the evolution of French foreign policy on the conflict to the Elysée – de Gaulle and his chief advisor on African affairs Jacques Foccart – and its contacts to francophone African elites, principally the Ivorian President Félix Houphouët-Boigny and Albert-Bernard Bongo of Gabon, the heads of states of two of the countries that had recognized Biafra.[274] The idea of Françafrique, the personal networks of power between African and French elites, nourishes such assertions, further strengthened by ex post accounts of the protagonists like Foccart, who habitually styled himself as the "shadow man" pulling the strings in the background.[275] Long after the conflict, French diplomats claimed that their intelligence units had developed the idea to spread the term "genocide" in the public campaign on behalf of Biafra – even though this had formed a central tenet of the latter's rhetoric already before the secession.[276] Economic interests, the promotion of French interests in a British sphere of influence, and personal ties with African leaders were indeed factors that influenced French policy, which included the clandestine delivery of mercenaries

[272] For contemporary British diplomatic and press sources see UK NA FCO 65/267 – UK NA FCO 65/272, for instance "Anglo-French Talks on Nigeria," October 31, 1967 [sic: 1968] (UK NA FCO 65/267); "France and Nigerian Oil," December 4, 1968 (ibid.) and Woodrow Wyatt, "Blood, Oil and Hate," *Daily Mirror*, March 7, 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/269) and French Ambassador to the UK to Michel Debré, May 8, 1969 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–1972, No. 20). For historical accounts along these lines see Bat, *syndrome Foccart*, 295–303; Guisnel, "Derrière la guerre"; Verschave, *Françafrique*, ch. 4.

[273] "Memorandum for the President," January 28, 1969, *FRUS, 1969–1976, Volume E-5*, no. 25.

[274] Houphouët-Boigny apparently boasted of being personally responsible for French support of Biafra. Robert Schasseur to Nathaniel Samuels, May 7, 1969 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 16 Biafra, Box 1871). Diplomats at the time tended to see French influence behind Bongo's and Houphouët-Boigny's position. Weigl, "Fernschreiben aus Libreville Nr. 42," August 29, 1968 (PA AA B 34/744). See also Baulin, *politique africaine*, 87–126.

[275] See esp. Foccart, *Foccart parle*; and the influential biography, Péan, *L'homme*.

[276] Robert, *'Ministre' de l'Afrique*, 180–1.

and arms.[277] Moreover, French strategic interested dovetailed seamlessly with popular concerns in France. The Biafran campaign resonated with a view of African decolonization as a project that could secure French influence in Africa in a Cold War world divided into competing blocs.[278] Willing to oppose the British, and in absence of intimate diplomatic relations with Federal Nigeria, the French government was in a position to decide relatively freely on the course of action. In this situation, the French government also went along with predominantly pro-Biafran public sentiment.

There were close ties between parts of the Biafra lobby and the de Gaulle administration. The Association France-Biafra was headed by Robert Buron, former cabinet member under de Gaulle in the 1950s.[279] François Debré, an avowedly pro-Biafran journalist who entertained close ties with the activist scene, in particular the Association France-Biafra, was the son of Michel Debré, de Gaulle's Foreign Minister since the end of May 1968.[280] Through him, Biafra activists had direct access to the Foreign Ministry.[281] Governmental officials initiated an "Aid Biafra Week,"[282] and repeatedly met with activists for briefings on recent developments, prompting the creation of the *Mission de liaison des organizations non-gouvernementales*, the French government's first body for non-governmental humanitarian action.[283]

The major example for the intimate ties between the French government and the lobby scene is the Comité d'Action Pour le Biafra. The head of the group was Raymond Offroy, a Gaullist deputy who, as a member of the *résistance*, had entertained close relations with de Gaulle for more than two decades.[284] Other principal figures included

277 The importance of French economic and strategic interests was unmincingly asserted in internal documents. See for instance Sous-Direction d'Afrique, "Note: La France et le Nigéria," March 3, 1970 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–72, No. 20/2). For accounts of French policy during the war see Bach, "Général de Gaulle"; Griffin, "France"; Vaïsse, *La grandeur*, 495–500.

278 On Africa in de Gaulle's vision of the world see Chaigneau, *politique militaire*, 18–21.

279 See the first edition of the group's bulletin *Le courrier du Biafra* (1969), No. 1.

280 Debré, *Biafra*; Philippe Vigneron, "9 mois d'activité en faveur du Biafra," *Le courrier du Biafra* 1 (1969), 1–2.

281 These family ties incited British diplomats to speculate that the French policy turnaround was due to the change of the Foreign Minister in mid-1968. Leslie Fielding, Letter to the West African Department, December 10, 1968 (UK NA FCO 26/299); "Bilateral Meeting with M. Debré," April 2, 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/269).

282 Michel Debré, "La France et le Biafra," *La Nation*, March 14.–15, 1969, unpaged supplement; M. K. O. Simpson-Orlebar to Patrick Moberly, April 1, 1969 (UK NA, FCO 65/269); Ministère des Affaires Étrangères Sous-Direction d'Afrique, "Nigeria," April 15, 1969 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–1972, No. 14/3).

283 Davey, "Beyond."

284 New Press Agency, "Press release No. 201: Hopes of improving Franco-Nigerian Relations," January 15, 1970 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–1972, No. 20/2); Letter

the Gaullist deputies Jean-Claude Fortuit and Alain Terrenoire.[285] The membership list of the Comité's honorary board of advisors in particular reads like a Gaullist who's who: veterans of the *résistance* like former chief of staff in de Gaulle's London headquarters Pierre Billotte, who was Minister of Overseas Departments and Territories in the first half 1968, Yvon Morandat, undersecretary of state in the Ministry of Social Affairs at the time, or former resistance fighter Roger Barberot, head of the Bureau du développement de la production agricole, created to enhance agricultural productivity in Africa. One of the most well-known members was the Nobel Prize winning writer and de Gaulle biographer François Mauriac. The board also included civil and military officials involved in the French-Algerian War who, when factions of the army rebelled in order to force de Gaulle to discard the idea of giving up French Algeria, had remained loyal to the President, like Henri Ingrand, de Gaulle's Secretary-General for Algerian Affairs in 1959 or Fernand Gambiez, a World War II veteran who, after his rise through the military ranks, had become Commander-in-Chief of the French Army in Algeria in 1961, or Jean de Broglie, who, like the head of the Association France-Biafra Robert Buron, was part of the French delegation which signed the Evian Accords. Pro-Biafran sentiments were particularly strong exactly among those Frenchmen who had come to the defense of French unity, law, and order when de Gaulle was under attack and France in turmoil.[286]

The composition of the Comité's membership also indicates how deeply intertwined the Biafran campaign in France was with the transformation of the French global vision in the era of decolonization. Members of the board included the retired General Pierre Marie Gallois, who had been one of the key figures in the creation of the French nuclear programme, and Christian de La Malene, a politician of the Gaullist right who had been French Minister of Scientific Research and Atomic and Space Questions for a few months in 1968.[287] Offroy, who had been the first French ambassador to independent Nigeria, was expelled by Lagos in protest over French nuclear tests in the Sahara.[288] When the

by Raymond Offroy, January 14, 1970, (ibid.); Marc Barbey to Maurice Schumann, January 29, 1970 (ibid.).

[285] W. J. Adams to Moberly, February 26, 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/268); *Biafra: Bulletin du comité d'action pour le Biafra* 1 (April 1969).

[286] "Communiqué de Presse," *Biafra: Bulletin du comité d'action pour le Biafra* 1 (April 1969): 13–14. On the French-Algerian War see Evans, *Algeria;* Williams, *Wars, Plots*, ch. 10.

[287] "Communiqué de Presse," *Biafra: Bulletin du comité d'action pour le Biafra* 1 (April 1969), 13–14.

[288] Bach, "Général de Gaulle," 263–4.

French Empire, with the nation already battered by the defeat at the hands of the Nazi *Blitzkrieg* invaders in World War II, began to crumble in the 1950s, nuclear technology was supposed to salvage the global "radiance of France" and forestall the threat of a cultural colonization by the United States.[289] That a Third World country like Nigeria would dare oppose French nuclear policy was not appreciated in Paris. Despite Nigerian efforts for renewal, diplomatic relations between the two countries remained interrupted for more than five years.[290] These sentiments played a role in moving Offroy alongside with French governmental officials toward his endorsement of the Biafran cause – and opposition to Federal Nigeria.[291]

The Algerian War in particular – and decolonization at large – are also significant in the way they had impacted understandings of French colonialism. After the administration's first pro-Biafran statements, the legal service of the government inquired with the Foreign Ministry whether the endorsement of Biafra's right to self-determination might be seen to contradict the principle of non-intervention. The Foreign Ministry responded, "The right of peoples to self-determination constitutes a traditional and fundamental principle of French foreign policy [. . .]." This principle was most clearly pronounced, as the Foreign Ministry staffer attested, in de Gaulle's policy on Algeria. In view of these principles, French concern about Biafran independence could not be considered a breach of Nigerian sovereignty: "France [. . .] has neither the intention nor the sentiment to intervene in the interior affairs of this state."[292] Similarly, Debré explained to the Nigerian Foreign Minister that "the French government has always proclaimed the right of peoples to self-determination." Under the guidance of de Gaulle, "initiator of this policy," this turned into a central moral tenet of French international policy advancing decolonization.[293] As Todd Shepard has shown, the Algerian War forced French officials, journalists and writers to reinvent the French colonial mission. More than in the case of its imperial competitors, French colonial expansion went hand in hand with the ambition to turn imperial subjects into Frenchmen – or at least a chosen few, the so-called *évolués*. At the height of the Algerian War, French colonial

[289] Hecht, *Radiance*, 2, 39. On the idea of "grandeur" see Gildea, *Past*, ch. 3
[290] Bach, "Général de Gaulle," 263–4.
[291] On the French government see also Sous-Direction d'Afrique, "Note: La France et le Nigéria," March 3, 1970 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–1972, No. 20/2).
[292] MR/HV, "Note pour le service juridique," August 10, 1968 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–1972, No. 19).
[293] Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, "Compte rendu de l'audience accordée à M. Arikpo," May 7, 1969 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–1972, No. 35/4), 4–5.

Republicanism was reoriented from an ideal of "assimilation" toward one of "association." To come to terms with the end of empire, the story of French imperialism was now renarrated as one of benevolent guidance that helped colonial "nations" along the path toward self-determination. In effect, much more than in the colonial era, nation-states were imagined as ethnically homogenuous units – in the metropole as well as everywhere else in the world.[294] French officials interpreted Biafra precisely along these lines – as an example of the universal process of the peoples' march toward "self-determination," which, at the same time, was also fueled by particular French values. In their statements, the de Gaulle administration inscribed their endorsement of Biafran secession in this tradition of the French Republic as a guarantor of the peoples' universal right to self-determination.

This rhetoric echoed by some highly optimistic voices among activists and journalists. The liberal-leftist *L'Express* explained that the government's declaration would produce a tidal wave of support for Biafra: "the movement continues to spread across Europe, even gaining momentum in America [. . .]." An international intervention could thus be expected soon.[295] This movement – as described in writings by pro-Biafran lobbyists like Raymond Offroy – was international in scope, yet French in character.[296] A number of French authors, who inscribed their accounts of the conflict into traditions of a particular universalism *à la française*, agreed. For Offroy, France had "always stood up for the right of peoples to self-determination. The old regime recognized the United States of America in 1778, five years before Great Britain did; the revolution has spread the rights of man and citizen throughout Europe and has allowed them to triumph [. . .]." Offroy's narrative moves through the nineteenth century, explaining Greek and Italian independence in passing as a result of French policy, to the more recent past: "the Fifth Republic has achieved in sub-Saharan African a decolonization that is the only complete success of its kind." Given that history, it was "normal" that France – comprising government and committed citizens – "would once again spearhead the fighting."[297]

French activists thus described Biafra as a homogenuous body of "une patrie, un people, une nation."[298] The rhetoric of national

[294] *Shepard, Invention*. See also Bancel et al., *République coloniale* and Cooper, *Citizenship*.

[295] Georges Henein, "Ojukwu est sûr de tenir," *L'Express*, August 12, 1968, 21–2.

[296] Raymond Offroy, "La France Doit Reconnaitre le Biafra," *Notre Republique*, January 31, 1969, 2.

[297] Idem, "Editorial," *Biafra: Bulletin du comité d'action pour le Biafra*, No. 1 (April 1969), 1–2.

[298] "One native land, one people, one nation." Jean-Louis Villaume, "Une patrie, un people, une nation," *La Nation*, March 14–15, 1969, unpaged supplement.

self-determination was used across political divides, but was particularly strong among pro-Biafran Gaullists.[299] The rejection of Federal polities impinged on these sentiments as well. De Gaulle himself spelled out these concerns in a press conference in September 1968 when he stated, alluding to British colonial constructions like Nigeria, that he was not sure whether the "system of federation [...] would always be very good or very practical. And, particularly, not in Africa." This not only applied to the continent to Europe's south. Since federations "consist in bringing together without consultation peoples who are very different – even opposed – and who, in consequence do not stay together at all. We see it in Canada. We see it in Rhodesia, in Malaysia, and in Cyprus. We see it in Nigeria"[300] In an article for *Notre Republique*, the Gaullist writer Philippe de Saint Robert used de Gaulle's statement as an opportunity for a plea against such "abusive federations," which act as "a prolongation of and a substitute for colonization." In contrast to Britain, France never trusted in these "breeding grounds of troubles or of wars." Thus, "in Biafra we see an entire people preferring suicide to foreign domination" at the hands of a British neocolonial joint venture with Lagos.[301] Accordingly, the Igbos, as the true "Jews of Africa," had become the *bouc émissaire* of the failed politics of British-Nigerian federalism.[302] In France, the rhetoric of rights was hence more overtly political than elsewhere. Gaullist activists integrated pro-Biafran advocacy in the traditions of French colonial Republicanism. Perceived in these terms, the Biafran crisis seemed to call for a particularly French advocacy of universal rights, now understood to include the right to national-self-determination at its core.[303] However, despite the widespread calls for Biafran self-determination, the French government never recognized Biafra officially. Limiting their support to rhetoric and clandestine military aid which, many felt, was too little to help Biafra win the fight, and too much too let them lose it.

For the French left, the close identification of the Biafran cause with de Gaulle posed a serious problem, and for many on the left that association

[299] For an example from a different camp see for instance Fédération Protestante de France to Eugene C. Blake, January 21, 1969 (WCCAG, General Secretariat, Nigeria/Biafra, 42.3.008/3).

[300] "Conference de Presse du General de Gaulle," September 9, 1968 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–72, No. 19).

[301] Philippe de Saint Robert, "Les fédérations abusives," *Notre Republique*, September 27, 1968, 3.

[302] Nicolas Martin, "Le Defi Biafrais," *Notre Republique*, November 15, 1968, 8. See also Armand, *Biafra vaincra*.

[303] See for instance Offroy, "La France Doit Reconnaitre le Biafra," *Notre Republique*, January 31, 1969, 2.

called for a re-consideration of their political outlooks. For some, like Bernard Kouchner and his associates, the Biafran crisis was an incentive to reinvent leftist politics. In the process, the language of revolution was discarded in favour of the languages of human rights, humanitarianism, and ethics – language that claimed to transcend the political logic of left vs. right. This is a striking similarity with, maybe even a structural continuation of Gaullisme, which, in its classic incarnation, had also claimed to cross political divides by standing in for "the people."[304] Biafra was thus deeply intertwined with the lessons of the French May: Gaullist pro-Biafrans and post-revolutionary leftists shared the conviction that the New Left had only advocated the causes of Third World peoples that appealed to their politicized empathy with leftist victims. For the emergent post-revolutionary French left, Biafra offered one of the first opportunities to re-invent their political commitment amidst the ruins of their revolutionary dreams of the past. Discarding their prior radical convictions, they now began to embrace the languages of ethics, human rights, and humanitarianism – as we will see later, this laid the foundation for one of the few continuations of Biafra protest during the rise of *sans-frontièrisme* in the 1970s.

Conclusion

Biafra was not a leftist cause. But the emergence of a pro-Biafran protest front in Western societies cannot be explained without reference to the history of "1968." The conflict in Nigeria was in general perceived not as a political, but as a humanitarian issue: the civil war had become "Biafra," a place where children starve to death. This "Biafra" could hardly be imagined as a site of anti-imperial revolution. The Oxford educated Ojukwu did not make for an African Mao, Ho Chi Minh, or Che Guevara. The icon primarily representing this new postcolonial state was a helpless, infantile victim: certainly no revolutionary subject fighting for liberation. Unable to survive on their own, the suffering figures of the Biafran children seemed to call for Westerners to step in. For the discursive predispositions of the New Left, focused on anti-imperialism and global revolution, this posed serious problems.

At the same time, there were strong echoes of the "1968" protests in the pro-Biafran campaign. Certainly on a visual level: the reliance on shock factor, on blood and gore was a key component of the New Left's representational arsenal.[305] There were very few pro-Biafran mass

304 As an introduction to Gaullisme see Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions*, ch. 10.
305 Slobodian, *Foreign Front*, ch. 5.

demonstrations, and most Biafra activists relied on more traditional political forms of lobbying, by petitioning parliamentarians, governments, and international organizations. However, Pro-Biafran protest actions also partly echoed the methods used by radical protesters: by naming their groups "committees," by organizing teach-ins or by going on hunger strike.[306] Yet now these strategies were being used by the "establishment," by the mainstream media, the moderate left and by conservatives.

This new breed of Third Worldism embodied by the campaign also integrated strong Christian currents. The vigils organized, for instance, by American Biafra committees relied heavily on Christian iconographic traditions. A lot of the support for the Biafrans came from the reformist currents within the churches that incorporated emerging religious forms of Third Worldism. Despite the substantial presence of Catholics in the pro-Biafran lobby, the efforts were geared toward ecumenical cooperation: not only between Catholics and Protestants, but also between Christians and Jews.[307] The 1960s were a decade of crisis for the Christian churches, which were suffering from reduced numbers of worshippers – according to Hugh McLeod, the biggest crisis in their post-Reformation history. In response, church leaders moved into the political sphere, intensifying their ecumenical efforts.[308] This trend held not only among Protestants and Catholics, but also among many Jewish communities. Paradoxically, the churches' move into the sphere of politics happened by way of a de-politicizing language of morality. Simultaneously, a number of protest movements and NGOs inserted a religiously coloured language of *Moralpolitik* into the political sphere.[309] In the pro-Biafran lobby, the Christian and Jewish connection was interconnected with other currents, creating a new non-revolutionary or post-revolutionary Third Worldism. The principle of non-intervention – a central tenet of the previously dominating New Leftist Third Worldism – was discarded in this new form of political action on behalf of others.

In some ways, the Biafran campaign harkened back to the post-war moment, when human rights politics were primarily a conservative

306 On this protest form see Streng, "'Hungerstreik.'"

307 See for instance "Americans for Biafran Relief," May 9, 1969 (American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library, Interreligious Affairs 1969, Ba-Biafra, Box 86); Americans for Biafran Relief, "For Immediate Release" (ibid.); Andelman to Rudin, (ibid.).

308 McLeod, *Religious Crisis*. See also Brown, *Death of Christian Britain*, and Hölscher, "Säkularisierung der Kirchen."

309 The semantics of the civil rights, anti-Apartheid and peace movements and of Amnesty International are cases in point. See Chappell, *Stone of Hope*; Skinner, "Moral Foundations"; Buchanan, "Truth"; and Hopgood, *Keepers*.

project with strong Christian overtones.[310] In reaction to the Biafran crisis, many conservatives who continued to believe in the postwar democratic consensus joined forces with moderate leftists critical of the radicalism of the studentry. The recourse to the language of Western "civilization" and also of the ideal of *bürgerschaftlichem Engagement* is a striking contrast to the anti-bourgeois leftist protest of the time, which called into question the credentials of "Western civilization" per se.[311] For the Biafran lobby, Christian as well as democratic bonds of empathy were crucial: the Biafrans, imagined as hard-working, well-educated Christians, represented the perfected natives, outcomes of a successful "civilizing mission" – which continued after the end of colonial empire in the global mission of Western "development." The Biafran campaign struck a deep chord among Gaullists, former Peace Corps volunteers, conservatives who believed in American exceptionalism and benign US imperialism, as well as among disillusioned leftists on the lookout for new outlets for their political alacrity in a time when belief in the revolution had begun to fade. And yet whatever their political leanings, Biafra campaign resonated with the personal objectives, sentiments and aspirations of all of these groups. In a myriad of ways, the "distant suffering" of a people in West Africa had become a close concern for a large number of people in the West.

[310] The key texts here are Duranti, *Conservative Human Rights* and Moyn, "Personalism."
[311] Garavini, *After Empires*, ch. 3.

Part III

The Ends and Afterlives of Biafra

8 Biafra, the Internationalism of States, and the Question of Genocide

In March 1969, former Royal Air Force pilot Leonard Cheshire, a highly decorated World War II hero, embarked on a fact-finding mission to Biafra. Cheshire, also the founder of a major disability charity, officially went to the crisis area as a private citizen, accompanied by the freelance journalist Hugh Hanning. However, behind the scenes, the trip was undertaken with the cooperation of the British Government. Whitehall, concerned about the one-sided nature of their intelligence, wanted to establish direct communication channels with the secessionist leadership.[1] During their stay, the British visitors talked to a number of high-ranking Biafran officials, including the head of state Ojukwu. As both Cheshire and Hanning emphasized, different secessionist leaders had indicated that Biafran sovereignty was negotiable. The security and safety of the population, however, was not.[2]

Before his return to Britain, Cheshire met Harold Wilson and other Whitehall officials in Lagos. The Prime Minister hoped that, by assuming a public role as a peace-broker, he could quell domestic protests about the crisis. Cheshire pressed the Prime Minister to hold personal talks with Ojukwu in Biafra. Wilson, fearing that such talks would alienate Lagos, refused to meet Ojukwu in the secessionist state or any state that recognized it; Ojukwu, concerned about his safety, in turn refused to meet Wilson outside Biafra.[3] The Wilson–Ojukwu meeting never materialized. If anything, Wilson's visit only strengthened the British–Nigerian friendship and dispelled the Prime Minister's own concerns about Lagos.[4]

[1] Patrick H. Moberly, "Record of Discussion," February 6, 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/227).

[2] Hugh Hanning, March 27, 1969 (ibid.); Maurice Foley to Hugh Hanning, April 29, 1969 (ibid.); Patrick H. Moberly, "Group Caption Cheshire," April 17, 1969 (ibid.).

[3] A. D. Brighty to Edward Youde, May 2, 1969 (ibid.); Edward Youde to Leonard Cheshire (ibid.).

[4] See for instance the assessment in Castle, *Castle Diaries*, 628 and Young, *The Labour Governments, vol. 2*, 208–10.

Later that year, Cheshire published an article in *The Times* decrying the government's unwillingness to reconsider its position on Biafra. He closed the article with an anecdote about a conversation he had with an FCO representative after his debriefing. On the way to the lift, "when by now we were just chatting about this and that," the British official

> suddenly said, "Curious how every single person who goes to Biafra seems to fall for it." Then, with the most disarming smile, "As infallible as light falling on photographic plate." I half contemplated stopping the lift doors and asking whether he was using the right metaphor. Photographic plates, after all, have a habit of recording the reality, not the deception.[5]

This anecdote – and the implied analogy between photographs of Biafra and actual visits there as ways to ascertain the Biafran reality – point to a central problem. Media reports had established an imagery of humanitarian catastrophe, famine and genocide that most contemporaries perceived to be accurate accounts of the conflict. Yet Whitehall officials had a different perspective: in the diplomatic corps in particular, many were convinced that the pro-Biafran reports were mere propaganda.

The Biafrans were initially reluctant to exploit images of starving children in their campaign. But as their singular value in attracting attention became more obvious, that reluctance faded, and images of starving children came to pervade their propaganda. Accordingly, the notion that the FMG deliberately starved the Biafran population to death to protect Nigerian unity spread among Western observers. This posed serious problems for London, Lagos' main ally. British Governmental officials were convinced that the Biafran allegations were unjustified. From their point of view, the problem was not that there was a crisis in Biafra, but rather that the secessionists executed their propaganda campaign much more skillfully than their Federal counterparts. Whitehall thus launched a diplomatic and propagandistic counteroffensive, which bred suspicions that the specter of famine and genocide were being blown out of proportion by Biafran propaganda – or was even nothing more than a product of that propaganda.

London was not alone in trying to eliminate potentially problematic political issues raised by the Biafra crisis. The diplomatic services of Western countries, the bureaucrats widely responsible for the formulation of foreign policy, held firmly pro-Federal stances. Elected officials in the parliaments and cabinets, whose ears were more closely attuned to the public, often pondered implementing more pro-Biafran policies. But,

[5] Leonard Cheshire, "Why Wilson's Mission Failed," *The Times*, November 17, 1969, 13.

with the foreign ministries in a world of nation-states promoting an internationalism of *existing* states, the Federal Nigerian position was the one that received governmental support. Nevertheless, with the exception of France, where Gaullists in government and the activist scene came together in support of Biafra, the activities of non-state actors posed a serious challenge to Western governments. This chapter focuses on governmental reactions to the conflict and the protests surrounding it, in particular those protests that took place in London, as well as in Bonn and Washington. Although private donations should not be discounted, the humanitarian aid operation was widely financed through governmental sources.[6] Governments reacted to the humanitarian crisis in response to calls from their publics; however, they tried to separate their humanitarian aid from politics. In the British case, this meant that humanitarian aid was accompanied by a diplomatic counteroffensive in support of Lagos, which discounted Biafran claims of genocide.

In this chapter, I first provide an overview of the reactions of the United States, German, British, and French governments to the conflict. Second, I analyze the language of emotions which governmental officials, foreign ministry bureaucrats in particular, used to describe – and often to belittle – public reactions to the conflict, in turn constructing their own position as one of rational policy professionals. Third, I examine the conclusions of an international fact-finding mission that London had impelled Lagos to allow into Nigeria, which ultimately negated Biafra's genocide claims and caused international interest in the crisis to die down. I close the chapter with a reflection on the ambivalent effects of what I call the fragmented universalization of the Holocaust. Biafra had become understandable as genocide through a visual narrative and rhetorical strategies of comparisons to the Nazi mass murder of the European Jews. However, because of the observer team's findings, these comparisons lost their credibility. The interest of the international community dissolved when it was clear that Biafra was not "like Auschwitz."

Western Governments and the Internationalism of States

The emergence of Biafra lobbies in Western Europe and North America had an impact on national politics. Western governments, pressed to respond to reports of starvation and genocide, began providing substantial financial support to the humanitarian aid operation. The largest share of the funding for the humanitarian effort in Biafra – around $170 million, according to a probably too low estimate made in June 1970 –

[6] Davis, "Audits of International Relief," 503.

came from governmental and not from private sources.[7] The United States government contributed the largest share. In 1968, rising domestic pressure had an effect on President Lyndon B. Johnson, who reportedly told Under-Secretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach to "get those nigger babies off my TV set."[8] To do just that, Washington increased its aid dollars: by the end of the year, over half of all international aid that went to Nigeria and Biafra came from US sources.[9] The US government tried to navigate between two poles: balancing a desire to assuage domestic protest with a need to maintain its relationship with London, Lagos, and the OAU. Steering a middle course, Washington channeled its relief through intergovernmental organizations and NGOs.[10] Thus the US government did not, as one commentator sardonically explained, put on their own show, but rather bought "a large block of tickets to a charity concert whose program had already been largely decided upon by the orchestra's musical directors."[11] Joining in to this concert, Washington provided the orchestra with substantial financial support, but took a seat in the back row of musicians.

Richard Nixon's election to the White House seemed to indicate that Washington would adopt a more pro-Biafran course. The Biafra lobby had pinned considerable hopes on the Republican politician who, after pressing the Johnson administration to provide aid to Biafra during his presidential campaign, had become the activists' "knight in shining armor."[12] When he assumed office, Nixon was determined to present himself as a more strong-willed fighter for humanitarianism then his predecessor, and signaled his determination to step up the American aid effort. Shortly after his inauguration, he appointed the African-American Rutgers law professor Clyde Ferguson as Special Coordinator of the relief effort. Soon the former UN diplomat announced a multimillion dollar increase in United States aid to the ICRC operation in the crisis area.[13] At one point, Washington even supported the JCA operation, which Lagos considered an illegal breach of their sovereignty.[14] According to Roger Morris, senior staff member of the National Security

[7] Ibid. [8] Morris, *Uncertain Greatness*, 42. [9] Sargent, *Superpower*, 74–5.

[10] Benjamin H. Read, "Memorandum for Mr. Walt W. Rostow: The White House," July 26, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27–9 Biafra – Nigeria, Box 1881); John White to James R. Grover, August 14, 1968 (ibid.); William B. Macomber, Jr. to John Conyers, Jr., July 30, 1968 (ibid.).

[11] Davis, "Audits of International Relief," quote on 504–5.

[12] William Chapman, "'Biafra Lobby' Melds Left and Right," *The Washington Post*, January 19, 1969, 1.

[13] Henry A. Kissinger, "Memorandum for the President," February 21, 1969, *FRUS, 1969–1976, Volume E-5*, no. 44.

[14] Sargent, *Superpower*, 78.

Council (NSC) during the conflict, Nixon even seriously considered recognizing Biafra as a state.[15] The President and his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger were aware that there was considerable public goodwill to be gained by taking a leadership role in the humanitarian issue. Kissinger himself commented in hindsight that Nixon was "happy for once to be on the humane side of an issue."[16]

However, Washington's overall approach was still defined by a bifurcated policy line: despite high-profile actions to appeal to the American public, Washington's handling of the conflict was nevertheless guided by the conviction that a unified Nigeria was, in the end, in their strategic interests.[17] Ultimately, the United States could not afford to alienate its Cold War partner across the Atlantic over Biafra, and so Washington dealt with the issue rather cautiously.[18] The policy line formulated under President Johnson changed in appearance under Nixon, but not in substance. This was in part a result of internal dissension between different government organs. The President, a number of members of Congress and state governors were swayed by public concern about the suffering in Biafra. The State Department and the diplomatic service, however, were representatives of a state-centric internationalism that clearly supported Federal Nigeria.[19]

The tensions between the White House and the State Department peaked in the summer of 1969, when Nixon ordered a revision of US policy on the conflict and initiated a US-led mediation effort. However, these efforts were thwarted by what Kissinger called a "bureaucratic guerrilla war" waged by the State Department.[20] To combat such subversive actions on the part of State Department officials, Nixon ordered that public statements and policy telegrams would henceforth need White House clearance – a measure that the State Department refused to carry out.[21] In the months that followed, the White House

[15] Morris, *Uncertain Greatness*, 123; see also Henry A. Kissinger, "Memorandum for the President," April 8, 1969, *FRUS, 1969–1976, Volume E-5*, no. 54.

[16] Kissinger, *White House Years*, 417. See also "Transcript of Telephone Conversation," January 15, 1970, ibid., no. 166.

[17] "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between Richardson and Kissinger," February 11, 1969, *FRUS, 1969–1976, Volume E-5*, no. 36; Henry A. Kissinger, "Memorandum for the President," February 22, 1969, ibid., no. 46; Shepard, *Nigeria*, 44–5.

[18] "Talking Paper for European Trip," undated, *FRUS, 1969–1976, Volume E-5*, no. 28.

[19] "Memorandum of Conversation," March 1, 1969, *FRUS, 1969–1976, Volume E-5*, no. 48. See further Sargent, *Superpower*, 75–9.

[20] Henry A. Kissinger, "Memorandum for the Attorney General," September 1, 1969, ibid., no. 111.

[21] Kissinger, "Memorandum for Henry Kissinger," 24.10.1969, ibid., no. 130; idem, "Memorandum for Henry Kissinger," November 14, 1969, ibid., no. 140; Sargent, *Superpower*, 77.

and State increasingly bypassed each other, as they pursued their own policies.[22]

There were a number of reasons for the State Department's outright preference for a "one Nigeria" solution: fears of a Balkanized Africa and of alienating fellow governments ranked high among them. The international world of diplomacy is built on direct contacts between ambassadors and their host governments, a relationship that tends to affirm the status quo. In his scathing critique of the sluggish bureaucracy of the State Department, Roger Morris decried the patronage relationships that pervaded the international network of apparatchiks in diplomatic service. In states like Nigeria, the "attachment to client regimes" tied diplomats to the maintenance of the "status quo."[23] The US embassy in Nigeria assumed a firmly pro-Federal stance from the beginning of the conflict and was vocal in protesting American actions that might have implied a rapprochement with secessionist Biafra.[24] Officials at the State Department headquarters approved of these positions, also embracing a clearly pro-Federal stance, in part thanks to the influence of Nigeria's diplomatic service in the United States.[25] Despite Nixon's recognition of the value of humanitarian aid in the eyes of the public – and, presumably, a sincere concern about the plight of the Igbos – Washington's policy line remained widely pro-Federal, caught between the perspectives developed by Washington's elective institutions and the State Department's state-centric approach.[26]

Government reactions to the situation were similar in other countries. In Germany, Biafra lobbyists effectively moved the grand coalition cabinet under Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger toward an intensification of humanitarian aid. In late July 1968, Foreign Minister Willy Brandt announced that the Federal Republic of Germany would give DM 5 million to humanitarian services, and the parliamentary Commission for Foreign Affairs created a "sub-commission for humanitarian aid in Africa" to coordinate the government's humanitarian effort. A month

[22] Roger Morris, "Memorandum for Kissinger," August 10, 1969, ibid., no. 101.

[23] Morris, *Uncertain Greatness*, 36.

[24] Hamilton to Lagos Embassy, July 20, 1967 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra, Box 1873); Joseph Palmer II. to Lagos Embassy, August 31, 1967 (ibid.); R. K. Kuchel: Airgram to State Department, September 23, 1968 (ibid., Box 1876); "Telegram 6116 From the Embassy in Nigeria to the Department of State," July 7, 1969, ibid., no. 83; "Telegram 7068 From the Embassy in Nigeria to the Department of State," August 5, 1969, *FRUS, 1969–1976, Volume E-5*, no. 99.

[25] Roy M. Melbourne to London Embassy, August 19, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1876); Robert Smith to London Embassy, March 15, 1969 (ibid., Box 1878); Bruce to State Department, March 19, 1969 (ibid.).

[26] Officials in the USAID apparently reacted similar to those in State. "The Road to Biafra," *Boston Globe*, December 10, 1969, 27.

later, the amount of German governmental funding for the relief operation had risen to DM 8.65 million.[27] In public statements on the conflict, the Bonn government emphasized its efforts to react to the humanitarian crisis and to encourage the opposing parties – as well as other African politicians – to enter into negotiations.[28] Many lobbyists sought to bypass the Foreign Ministry and instead worked through the Bundestag and the Commission for Foreign Affairs. Christian conservative Biafra lobbyists associated with the Arbeitskreis für Menschenrechte had been particularly concerned about the course the Foreign Ministry – for the first time headed by a Social Democrat – would pursue.[29]

The concerns about the SPD-led *Außenamt* soon dispersed,[30] as Foreign Minister and grand coalition Vice-Chancellor Brandt repeatedly expressed his understanding of the public's concern. In a letter to his right-hand man Egon Bahr, Brandt confessed: "Biafra depresses me, too." The conflict presented a contradiction that would be difficult to understand for the "average TV consumer." Whereas a few dead in Jordan or Israel sufficed to call on the Security Council, a mass tragedy like Biafra met with "abstruse juridical obstacles." Brandt wrote that the Bonn government should do everything that "conveys not only our humanitarian, but also our moral engagement."[31] In an interview on German TV, he called upon civilians to engage, arguing for a civil society transcending national borders.[32] In view of crises like Biafra, working toward a more just international order should begin by strengthening the moral conscience of individuals, not only for what happens in their immediate surroundings, "but wherever in the world violations of law and human dignity take place."[33]

[27] Durotoye, *Nigerian-German Relations*, 140; Wintzer, "Einleitung," XL.

[28] See, e.g. "Material für die Presse: Interview des Bundesaußenministers mit dem WDR/NDR," August 9, 1969 (AdsD, Willy-Brandt-Archiv A 3, 317); Brandt, "Rede vor dem Deutschen Bundestag am 26. September 1968," in Brandt, *Reden*, 69–75.

[29] "Biafra-Bericht des Biafra-Referenten im Katholischen Büro," August 10, 1968 (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 II), 9.

[30] See e.g. "Biafra-Bericht," August 10, 1968 (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 II), 6–7; "Dazu kann man nicht schweigen," *Union in Deutschland*, August 1, 1968, 1; Becher, "Rundschreiben an die Mitglieder des Auswärtigen Ausschusses und des Entwicklungsausschusses des Deutschen Bundestages betr. Biafra," Bonn July 25, 1968 (EZA 87/1118); Heinrich Tenhumberg to Willy Brandt, July 22, 1968 (PA AA B 34/747); Doc. 89, in Wintzer, ed., *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss, vol. II*, 1268–9.

[31] Doc. 252, Willy Brandt to Egon Bahr, August 10, 1968, in Blasius, ed., *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik 1968, vol. II*, 988. Willy Brandt, "Interview mit dem Hessischen Rundfunk am 29. Dezember 1968," in Brandt, *Reden*, 111–13.

[32] Ruhfus, "Statement für den Herrn Minister zum Thema Biafra für das ZDF," July 8, 1968 (AdsD, Willy-Brandt-Archiv A3, 282), 3.

[33] Brandt, "Vorwort zur Taschenbuchausgabe von 'Sozialdemokratische Perspektiven' im März 1969," in idem, *Reden*, 171–176. The notion of rights was inserted by Brandt

The Foreign Minister's qualms about the conflict were never translated into a policy line that treated both the Nigerians and Biafrans as equals.[34] In May 1968, Brandt met with all African ambassadors in Bonn to affirm the German government's respect for the principles of non-intervention and territorial integrity: the Nigerian Civil War, he said, was an issue that fell within the OAU's sphere of responsibility.[35] In keeping with that stance, German government only maintained diplomatic relations with Lagos.[36] This policy line was also defined by strategic and economic interests that Germany had in Nigeria. The German company Fritz Werner had been running a weapons and ammunition factory in Kaduna since 1963. After the outbreak of war, Bonn continued to supply the FMG with ammunition and other war material, channeling the delivery through Werner. The ministry even re-channeled 2 million DM of development aid originally intended for the building of a school in Port Harcourt into a technical school to be opened by the FMG with the aid of the arms factory in Kaduna. However, the Foreign Ministry did not approve the trade of airplanes or other material that would have needed Bundestag approval – and which would have faced public challenge.[37]

Although it increased humanitarian aid from mid-1968, Bonn remained committed to the principle of non-interference. Like other governments, it provided funds that were channeled through humanitarian organizations, in particular the German Red Cross and church organizations. A planned trip of a German Bundestag delegation to Biafra was abandoned because of concerns about a "politicization" of humanitarian aid.[38] A public hearing of the newly founded sub-Commission on Humanitarian Aid, intended to address mounting public pressure, was not convened because of similar concerns. Baron von Wrangel, the head

himself. See: "Entwurf: Zum Thema Jugend," November 1968 (AdsD, Depositum Egon Bahr, Box 399). See also Willy Brandt to Hans Wilhelm Stein, 1969 (AdsD, Willy-Brandt-Archiv A 11.1, 4); Evangelisches Dekanat Gladenbach, "An den Bundespräsidenten, an die Regierung der BRD, in Abschrift an die Vorsitzenden der CDU, SPD und FDP," June 15, 1969 (AdsD, Willy-Brandt-Archiv A 11.1, 4).

[34] See also Brandt, "Rede auf der Bundeskonferenz der FALKEN in Dortmund am 17. Mai 1969," in Brandt, *Reden*, 218–22.

[35] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 295.

[36] Referat I B 3 to German Embassy in Tel Aviv, August 16, 1968 (PA AA, B 34/744).

[37] Posadowsky-Wehner, "Aufzeichnung: Belieferung der nigerianischen Zentralregierung mit zivilen Reiseflugzeugen Do 28," August 24, 1967 (PA AA, B 34/713); Goldschmitt, "Militärhilfe und Waffenlieferungen für Nigeria," August 25, 1967 (ibid.); Goldschmitt, "Vermerk: Dornier-Team," November 21, 1967 (ibid.); idem, "Vermerk: Verträge der Firma Dornier mit MoD Nigeria," December 5, 1967 (ibid.). See further Referat I B 3, "Angebliche Lieferung von modernsten deutschen Flugzeugen an 'Biafra,'" August 30, 1967 (PA AA, B 34/713).

[38] Olaf von Wrangel, "Rundschreiben an die Damen und Herren der CDU/CSU-Bundestagsfraktion," September 25, 1968 (EZA 87/1118), 1.

of the sub-committee, admitted that the civil war's political and humanitarian issues were intimately intertwined. Yet he was also convinced that preventing the politicization of humanitarian aid would best serve German interests. In this respect, the sub-commission followed the policy outlined by the Bonn government.[39]

Not all in the Biafra lobby were satisfied with the Foreign Office's handling of Biafra.[40] In practice, Bonn's policy was not only formulated by the Foreign Minister, but also by the diplomatic corps' echelons below Brandt – and pro-Federal tendencies were strong among German diplomats. A case in point here is the head of the Foreign Office's department on sub-Saharan Africa, Count Harald von Posadowsky-Wehner, Germany's first ambassador to Nigeria after independence.[41] Pro-Federal tendencies in the diplomatic corps were fostered through contacts with other Western diplomatic services,[42] and the regular and direct dealings of Bonn officials with Nigerian diplomats through the German embassy in Lagos as well as Nigeria's embassy in Germany.[43] In contrast, contact with Biafran officials was limited, and what little there was received no publicity. Bonn carefully avoided steps that could be seen as a tacit recognition of the existence of Biafra as a state. If any move in this direction happened anyways, it was immediately questioned by the Nigerian embassy.[44]

Before the onset of the conflict, Nigeria and the EEC had agreed to talks about an association agreement. The continuation of these negotiations after the outbreak of war and the emergent humanitarian crisis provoked criticism from parts of the public.[45] The parliamentary sub-Commission on Humanitarian Aid suggested that Bonn should initiate a

39 Wintzer, "Einleitung," XL–XLI; Doc. 74, in Wintzer, ed., *Auswärtige Ausschuss, vol. II*, 1113–17. On the Bonn government's position see also "Sprechzettel für den Herrn Staatssekretär," August 30, 1968 (PA AA B 34/744);

40 See, e.g, Günter Gnodtke, "Deutsche Initiative im Nigeria-Konflikt: Unterredung von Herrn Bundestagspräsident Dr. Gerstenmaier mit Botschafter Dr. Gnodtke," April 8, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741), 1; Gerstenmaier to Willy Brandt, June 18, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741), 2. See also idem to Brandt, September 25, 1968 (PA AA B 34/742).

41 "Rettung durch die Stockfisch-Bomber," *Spiegel*, June 16, 1969, 109.

42 Harald von Posadowsky-Wehner, July 31, 1968 (PA AA, B 34/741); United States Department of State, Confidential Report, ca. August 1968 (ibid.).

43 For the view of Germany's Lagos embassy on the conflict see esp. the detailed report Ruyter to Auswärtiges Amt, "Betr. Einheit Nigerias," August 8, 1969 (PA AA B 34/741).

44 See e.g. Nigerian Embassy Bad Gogesberg, Note No. 140/68 to Foreign Ministry in Bonn, July 24, 1968 (PA AA B 34/747); idem, "Aide Memoire," July 23, 1968 (ibid.); Fritz Caspari, "Aufzeichnung: Nigerianischer Bürgerkrieg," August 1, 1968 (ibid.) and the numerous notes of the Nigerian Embassy in PA AA B 34/741.

45 See e.g. Aigner to Willy Brandt, August 16, 1968 (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 II).

mediation attempt. This suggestion was doomed from the outset by Germany's European partners.[46] In the WEU, the British delegate warned that such an initiative might jeopardize the relationship with Federal Nigeria. In the EEC, Germany had suggested, in addition to ratifying the association agreement, the member states should issue a statement calling on the Federal Nigerian Government to try its best to prevent the violation of human rights in the conflict. The French representative argued against such a statement: this would create an incalculable precedent, and afterwards, the EEC might be expected to issue statements on all sorts of world events.[47]

This stance might seem surprising considering France's public endorsement of Biafra's right to self-determination. However, the French government was not in its entirety as devotedly pro-Biafran as the state's leadership. Like in the United States or Germany, there were powerful pro-Federal tendencies in the diplomatic service, as evidenced by the pro-Nigerian inclinations of Maurice Couve de Murville, Michel Debré's predecessor as Foreign Minister. Unlike Debré, Couve de Murville was a career diplomat, who had served in a number of French embassies. In the summer of 1968, de Gaulle and his confidants started to take French foreign policy on the conflict out of the hands of Quai d'Orsay – and Debré replaced Couve de Murville.[48]

Despite the firmly pro-Federal British course overall, similar structures can also be identified in Whitehall's policy on the crisis. HMG's reaction to the crisis was widely determined by briefings issued by the British High Commissioner in Lagos, Sir David Hunt. Hunt had adopted a pro-Federal stance early in the conflict, arguing against a British or Commonwealth led peace initiative, and also opposed any appeal to the FMG to abstain from using military force. Hunt understood the crisis mainly as the result of Ojukwu's politics, whom he saw as a megalomaniacal leader prone to delusions of grandeur. Hunt successfully helped convince HMG to continue the sale of arms to Nigeria.[49] Pro-Federal tendencies were also strong in the FO, and, after the merger with the Commonwealth Office, the FCO. Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart was convinced that secession was a threat to a postcolonial

[46] Frank, "Gemeinsame Aktion der Sechs in Nigeria-Frage," August 22, 1968 (PA AA, B 34/743); Forster, "Gemeinsame Aktion der Sechs in Nigeria-Frage," August 19, 1968 (PA AA, B 34/744); Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz to Hermann Kopf, August 19, 1968 (ibid.); Durotoye, *Nigerian-German Relations*, 140–1.

[47] "Sprechzettel für den Herrn Staatssekretär für die Kabinettssitzung am 21.8.1968," (PA AA B 34/743).

[48] Leslie Fielding to West African Department, December 10, 1968 (UK NA FCO 26/299); Bach, "Général de Gaulle."

[49] Young, *Twentieth-Century Diplomacy*, 66–9.

Africa in which the forces of tribalism still lurked beneath the surface of modernization.[50] For Biafra activists, Stewart was "the authentic voice of the hawks" in the government.[51]

Yet discussions about Biafra were intense within the Cabinet, where some members expressed their dismay about Hunt's one-sided assessment.[52] Divergent positions were expressed through different historical analogies. After one of several heated debates in the Cabinet, Tony Benn noted that Secretary of State for Health and Social Services Richard Crossman had delivered "a great speech about the birth of a nation and how this was similar to the situation in Palestine in 1947. But others thought it was more like the American Civil War where a new nation did not emerge."[53] Crossman himself described in his diary how he had fought with Wilson over which was the correct analogy. To his statement that Biafra reminded him "overwhelmingly [. . .] of the Israeli determination" to assert its independence at whatever cost, Wilson replied that the "analogy isn't with Israel but with the American Civil War. General Gowon is seeking to do exactly what Lincoln did, to prevent a separatism which will destroy the state." For Crossman, Stewart and Wilson were "quite unable to make the British people accept the significance of the moral principle they both stand for, the Federal, the unitary principle, rather than the appeal to humanity."[54] Yet for Crossman himself, this was not a matter of morality. He was one of the few who embraced a pro-Biafran stance while describing their own position as "*Realpolitik*."[55]

Foreign Policy Reason and the Emotionality of Publics

In general, reasoned *Realpolitik* was a reserve of the pro-Federal camp, at least in terms of political rhetoric. In diplomatic circles, foreign policy was widely seen as a prerogative of professionals evaluating the situation in view of the "facts." This foreign policy "reasoning" was juxtaposed with the Biafra lobby's emotionality. Thus, immediately after the making of Biafra as an international media and protest event, an essentially pro-Federal government rhetoric of reason emerged. In May 1968, when

[50] *Hansard Commons*, March 13, 1969, column 1683–94, hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1969/mar/13/nigeria-1 (accessed May 24, 2013); Bruce to State Department, March 21, 1969 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1878); Castle, *Diaries 1964–1970*, 617; "Oversea Policy: Nigeria. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs," March 10, 1969 (UK NA CAB/129/140).

[51] Save Biafra Campaign, *Biafra: Restore Flights Now!* (UK NA FCO 65/250).

[52] Castle, *Diaries: 1964–1970*, 617.

[53] Benn, *Office without Power*, 215. Castle, *Diaries 1964–1970*, 617–18.

[54] Crossman, *Diaries*, 746–7.

[55] Crossman, *Diaries*, 409.

the first articles firmly criticizing Whitehall's policy appeared, American diplomats in the London embassy informed the State Department about the mostly pro-Biafran "emotionally-charged reporting on the Nigerian war that has appeared in the London press [...]."[56] Conversely, British diplomats in Washington, DC later observed that in the United States, "a country obsessed by television and broadcasting," Biafran propagandists had "used to the full for dramatic and harrowing appeals" the "wasteland" produced by the "surfeit of public information media." The Biafrans found powerful allies among PR agents and other Americans "who for one reason or another have fallen for their story [...]." The Biafra lobby put up a great propaganda show: "Given such a talented set of musicians the production of themes has been no difficulty. [...] Running through the whole performance has been sympathy for poor little Biafra, the underdog [...]."[57] Such language was particularly prevalent in the FCO. In internal memos and correspondence, FCO bureaucrats evoked the need for cool policy reasoning to control the unchecked sentiments holding sway in public: it had "to be recognized that the straight and honest presentation of facts carries too little weight once the world's emotions have been aroused," the "tide of unreasonable emotion" obstructing a fair judgment of the conflict.[58] A colleague explained that "the Biafran rebels have been able, thanks largely to the highly competent, if unscrupulous, activities of Markpress to make the most of the propaganda appeal of emotive issues such as the starvation of children [...]." The FCO officials agreed that selling the Nigerian Federal Government's position was much more difficult because they "have to rely on more intellectual arguments which do not possess the same headline value."[59] Accordingly, "one of our problems is that the Biafran case is an emotional one whereas the Federal case is an appeal to the intellect."[60]

[56] Bruce, Airgram to US Department of State, May 17, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1875). For the articles see Frederick Forsyth, "Gutted hamlets, rotting corpses – this is genocide," *Sunday Times*, May 12, 1968, 9; idem, "The terrible slaughter that Britain ignores...," *Evening Standard*, May 14, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1875); John Young, "War against Biafra to Continue," *The Times*, May 22, 1968, 5.

[57] British Embassy Washington, D.C., "Memorandum on 'Biafran' Propaganda Effort in the U.S.A.," March 1969 (UK NA, FCO 26/300).

[58] G. S. Littlejohn Cook, "Memorandum," October 25, 1968 (UK NA FCO 26/299), 1; W. R. Haydon, "Memorandum: Our Public Line on Nigeria," October 21, 1968 (NA FCO 26/299).

[59] John Peck, "Confidential Note," January 30, 1968 [sic! 1969] (ibid.), 1. For similar statements see also "The Biafra Lobby" (UK NA, FCO 65/250).

[60] D. C. Tebbit, "Comment on Confidential Note by John Peck," January 28, 1969 (UK NA FCO 26/299).

Officials of other governments who also faced the challenge of a domestic Biafra lobby saw the campaign in similar terms. In August 1968, Bahr informed Foreign Minister Brandt about the call for an arms embargo by German Protestant "Church princes." The Social Democratic politician thought it was not in the interest of German foreign policy to give in to the wave of emotions. However, "emotions are always stronger than reason." He advised "to feed the animal and thus to direct it."[61] The bureaucracy of the diplomatic services couched their reaction to the emergence of a Biafra lobby, as well as to pro-Biafran positions adopted by states like France, in these terms.[62] A British diplomat commented on the change of the head of the French Foreign Ministry: "Where M. Couve de Murville remained cool and cautious, M. Michel Debré adopted an essentially emotional, even mystic, attitude to the Ibos."[63]

Although intended as a critique, the reading of emotion into pro-Biafran rhetoric in France was in line with traditions of Gaullist political writing. De Gaulle himself often evoked the "logic of sentiments" as the basis of human action, which, he proclaimed, also informed his own leadership qualities, firmly based in emotional instincts as they were.[64] For activists like the staunch Gaullist Raymond Offroy, Biafra was one of the instances "[q]uand le cœur a raison," as the title of one his books put it.[65] The book was in part memoir, and in part a condemnation of the non-francophone world's ignorance of Biafra's suffering. The text was inscribed into traditions of Gaullist writing. In de Gaulle's World War II memoirs, published in three volumes across the 1950s, the merger of reason and feeling was elevated to a central trope of French political thought, with its famous opening passage in particular: "All my life, I have crafted a certain idea of France. Sentiment inspires me just as much as reason does."[66] The Biafra lobby front in France thus had a language available to them that was opposed to the diplomatic rhetoric of

[61] Doc. 245: Bahr to Brandt, August 6, 1968, in Blasius, ed., *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik 1968. vol. II: 1*, 970.

[62] Referat I B 3 des Auswärtigen Amtes, "Beitrag für das Gespräch des Herrn Bundesministers mit dem dänischen Außenminister," August 22, 1968 (PA AA B 34/744). See also Wickert, "Fernschreiben No. 1504," August 6, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741). For OAU Secretary General Diallo Telli and other OAU officials, French policy was an "affront" the organization. Müller, "Fernschreiben aus Addis Abeba Nr. 118," August 1, 1968 (ibid.).

[63] Leslie Fielding to West African Department, December 10, 1968 (UK NA FCO 26/299).

[64] Gaulle, "Du prestige," 256. [65] Idem, *Quand le cœur*.

[66] Hazareesingh, *Shadow* 58; Gaulle, *Mémoires de Guerre*, 1.

cold policy reasoning, but still connected to the power of governmental office.[67]

Gaullist diplomats were the exception. Dominant currents in the world of state internationalism differentiated between pro-Federalism as the reasonable response and the over-sentimental reactions of publics falling prey to Biafran publicity coups. This bifurcation meant that, as long as the intergovernmental sphere of states was where negotiations between Biafran and Nigerian officials took place, the prospects for success at the negotiating table were dim. Nevertheless, in January 1969, British commentators pinned considerable hopes on the Commonwealth Conference of heads of states hosted by London – the first since the conference in Lagos that took place only days before the first coup three years earlier.[68] There was also the expectation that the Biafran leadership would be willing to back away from its insistence on secession.[69] However, the FMG resolutely refused to even put the conflict on the conference agenda. Instead, the British government, as a concession to public concern, invited all the heads of the member state delegations to an informal out-of-session meeting at Lancaster House. During the hour long "cocktail party," the head of the Nigerian delegation Awolowo was not strongly questioned. Not even "Biafra's friends" from Zambia or Tanzania exerted pressure on him, unwilling to put their remaining influence within African diplomatic circles at risk.[70] After the conference, Wilson addressed the House of Commons, accusing the Biafrans of stalling diplomatic progress.[71] Ultimately, the conference reaffirmed once more Nigeria's sovereign right to put down the "rebellion." Gowon hailed the conference as "another vote of confidence in Nigeria" and, employing the language of reason characteristic of foreign policy professionals, a "victory for sanity."[72]

The question of whether government assessments of the conflict were "rational" in the sense that they did justice to the complexities of the

67 Ibid. See also Sous-Direction d'Afrique, September 6, 1968 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–1972, No. 19).

68 See e. g. Patrick Keatley, "Nigeria Bars Talks on Biafra," *The Guardian*, January 7, 1969, 1.

69 Fenner Brockway and James Griffiths, "Letter to the Editor: Bringing Peace to Nigeria," *The Times*, January 9, 1969, 9.

70 Stremlau, *International Politics*, 300–3.

71 *Hansard Commons*, January 21, 1969, column 254, hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1969/jan/21/commonwealth-prime-ministers-meeting-1 (accessed May 20, 2013).

72 Quotes in Stremlau, *International Politics*, 303 and Cronje, *World and Nigeria*, 116. For positive press reports on Wilson's efforts, see Patrick Keatley, "Mr Wilson to seek peace in Nigeria," *The Guardian*, January 14, 1969, 18 and "Nigeria Peace Bid Collapses," *The Observer*, January 12, 1969, 4.

matter is less settled. Their perspective on the conflict was tied to the world in which they operated: a system of international diplomacy in a postcolonial world of nation-states. The FCO is a case in point here. As the former colonial power, Whitehall was probably best prepared to produce comprehensive information, but it relied almost exclusively on High Commissioner Hunt, who was dedicated to the Federal side from early on.[73] Moreover, Western governments largely trusted information from the Federal side; by comparison, reliable intelligence from Biafra was more difficult to come by. With numerous foreign embassies in Lagos, the Federal Military Government maintained ties to international diplomatic circles that the secessionist regime lacked. Most of the politicians who visited Biafra had pro-Biafran leanings, and hence the bureaucrats in the diplomatic corps considered their reports partisan. Foreign policy-makers also looked askance at most of the media reports from Biafra – sometimes deservedly, but information stemming from these sources thus remained undervalued.

Despite their rather one-sided understanding of the conflict, the British government disseminated information itself, and tried to convince journalists of the benefits of Nigerian unity.[74] Such measures could be drastic in the case of writers working for newspapers usually sympathetic to Labour. After Walter Schwarz wrote "some frightful reports" for the *Guardian*, Whitehall "thought it was time to tackle him." An FCO official wrote in a confidential report: "We had a good go at him."[75] Efforts at influencing press coverage of British involvement were not restricted to releases in the United Kingdom. Through its embassies, London monitored coverage of the war in the foreign press, which they tried to influence by supplying editors with information and articles.[76] On a lesser scale, other foreign ministries also sought to influence the reporting and to tamp down the wave of public sentiment. German Foreign Ministry officials warned representatives of the Biafra lobby in the churches not to exacerbate "emotions through one-sided reporting."[77]

[73] Young, *Twentieth-Century Diplomacy*, 66–69.

[74] See e.g. R. E. Holloway, "Memorandum," October 24, 1968 (NA FCO 26/299).

[75] John Wilson, "Confidential Report by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office," November 24, 1969 (NA FCO 65/446). See also L. C. Glass, "Confidential Minutes," October 7, 1969 (NA FCO 65/446).

[76] B. R. Curson, "Internal Report: Nigeria and Information Work in Europe," March 12, 1969 (NA FCO 26/300); Arengo-Jones to Nigel Gaydon, January 17, 1969 (NA FCO 26/299); Leslie Fielding to the West African Department, December 10, 1968 (NA FCO 26/299).

[77] "Sprechzettel für den Herrn Staatssekretär zum Gespräch mit den Vertretern der beiden Kirchen am Mittwoch, 10. Juli 1968 um 16 Uhr," July 9, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741), 4. See also Pressereferat VLR Eick, "Vermerk. Betr.: Biafra," Bonn May 15, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741).

Like the FCO, the German Foreign Ministry circulated pro-Federal media accounts.[78] It is hard to measure the precise impact of these efforts in determining the public perception of the conflict. However, soon after the making of "Biafra" as an international protest and media event, Whitehall – and to a lesser degree other representatives of the internationalism of states – initiated a diplomatic and propagandistic counteroffensive, which would quickly cast serious doubts on the claims of the pro-Biafran activists. One issue was decisive: the question of genocide.

The International Observer Team: The Rebuttal of the Genocide Allegations

From the outset, the Biafran propaganda effort had fared much better than that of its Federal counterpart. In mid-1968, the image that international media reports sketched of Lagos was particularly unflattering. Humanitarian representations of the conflict painted the FMG as a regime of *genocidaires* starving innocent babies to death for the sake of national unity. To answer these challenges, Lagos followed the Biafran example and enlisted the services of international PR agencies, although many Nigerians considered the propaganda battle already lost, at least in Western publics. However, the FMG, backed by governments around the globe, simply did not need to rely on the effects of international media campaigning as much as Biafra.[79] Lagos realized that the support of the OAU was the key to an uncontested position in international diplomacy, and thus concentrated their diplomatic efforts on fellow African governments.[80] This move paid off, as the support of the OAU consequently also helped secure the support of the United Nations, the Commonwealth, and most governments of third-party countries.

Prioritizing military success over international publicity, in July 1968, the FMG began open preparations for a final offensive to subdue Biafra. Parts of Nigeria's military staff were entirely oblivious to the effects of bad press. Colonel Benjamin Adekunle received particular notoriety. Adekunle, it was widely reported, said that he wanted "to prevent even one Ibo having even one piece to eat before their capitulation."[81] For

[78] This was criticized by Biafra activists. See for instance Aktionskomitee Biafra Münster to Fritz Burgbacher, August 27, 1968 (ACDP 01–158 Nachlass Fritz Burgbacher, 025/3).

[79] Davis, *Interpreters*, chs. 4–5. Federal propaganda was also handicapped by internal rivalry between the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of External Affairs. See Stremlau, *International Politics*, 255–63.

[80] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 255–63.

[81] "Let's Finish it Off," *The Economist*, August 24, 1968, 22. Internationally, a great stir was also created by Adekunle's interview with *Der Stern*. "'Ich muß die Ibos

many observers, words like these aroused fears of genocide: journalists expected a "final solution for Biafra." Soon, this dire vision was encapsulated in the expression of Nigeria's policy of the "quick kill."[82] Nigeria's projection of its military might – and their lackluster PR performance – was perhaps more damaging to London than to Lagos, putting a serious strain on British–Nigerian relations. The debate reached a fever pitch when the British Parliament convened for a special one-day emergency debate on Nigeria on August 27. With pro-Biafran demonstrations in the Gallery, this was the most violent fray so far.[83] Although nearly 50 Labour and Tory MPs had tabled a motion calling on the government to stop the arms sales to Nigeria, the government prevented a vote by employing a "procedural device." William Whitlock, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, filled the last minutes of the time allotted to the debate by refusing to end his speech – and thus circumvented a parliamentary vote.[84]

Only three days later, the FMG announced that it would invite an international observer team to Nigeria to show the world that there was no genocide. On the evening after the debate in the Commons, Commonwealth Secretary George Thomson and Commonwealth Minister of State Lord Shepherd met with Anthony Enahoro, the Nigerian High Commissioner in London. If the final offensive could not be avoided for military reasons, the British informed the Nigerian official, the British government expected determined measures to project a favorable public image of the advance: the invitation of foreign observers became the condition for continued British support.[85]

The Biafran allegations of genocide thus had an impact on British policy, although they did not change Whitehall's ultimate policy line.

killen – sorry,'" ibid., August 18, 1968, No. 33, 81–2. Advocates of the Biafran cause frequently referred to Adekunle's statements. See e.g. Biafra Union to Fenner Brockway, August 22, 1968 (Churchill College Archives FEBR 219a); Biafran Mission to the United Nations to U Thant, November 11, 1968 (SCRBC: Biafra War Collection (1966–1970), MG 788, Box 2, Folder 9), 6; H. G. Hanbury to Fenner Brockway, November 15, 1968 (Churchill College Archives FEBR 219a).

[82] "A final solution for Biafra?" *The Guardian*, July 15, 1968, 6; Colin Legum, "Gowon strikes to 'finish off' Biafra," *The Observer*, August 18, 1968, 1; "The Crime of the Quick Kill," *The Times*, August 28, 1968, 11; "Biafra's Last Stand," *The Times*, September 17, 1968, 11.

[83] Bruce to Department of State, August 27, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1876).

[84] Hansard Lords, August 27, 1968, columns 1433–1534, hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1968/aug/27/nigeria (accessed May 23, 2013); "Too partisan to mediate," *The Guardian*, August 28, 1968, 6; "Nigeria Debate Ends in Angry Demonstration: Public Join in MPs' Protests: Clamour for Vote against Arms Supplies," *The Times*, August 28, 1968, 4; Stremlau, *International Politics*, 264–5.

[85] Smith, *Genocide*, 75–6.

While the British government continued its arms supplies to Nigeria, it demanded an effective response to the calamitous publicity. And indeed, the idea to allow international observers into the country was to prove to be the most effective strike of the pro-Nigerian campaign. The team, which started its work in mid-September, consisted mostly of retired military personnel from Canada, Poland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, alongside representatives from the OAU and the United Nations. They periodically reported from the war zone from September 1968 to January 1970. Lagos provided the team with accommodation, food, and means of travel. Nigerian soldiers acted as tour guides, showing them the sites of battle, usually several days after the fighting.[86] That the affiliation with their host, the FMG, may have inclined the observers to a more pro-Biafran perspective was one of many problems in the mission's design. Although commissioned to judge whether genocide was happening, the team did not include any international jurists or, for that matter, "people capable of telling an Ibo from a non-Ibo."[87] Moreover, the observers were never provided with a definition of what would constitute genocide, a legal concept they may not have been intimately familiar with.[88] British MPs and some Whitehall officials argued that the observer team should also operate in Biafra: if there was genocide, that was where it was happening. However, the Nigerian government flatly refused to send the team into territories held by the secessionist army, fearing that the team's presence in Biafra would confer official status on the "rebels."[89]

In its first report, the team unequivocally declared that no genocide had occurred – an assessment repeated in all following statements.[90] The pro-Biafran lobby tried to counter these reports and sent a lawyer, the Ghanaian jurist Dr. Mensah to Biafra in late 1968. After his visit, Mensah presented his findings at a conference of activists and international lawyers at the Faculty of Law in Paris in March 1969. The conference concluded that *prima facie* evidence for genocide existed.[91] Yet the conference went almost completely unnoticed in international media, while the findings and reports of the international observer team received substantial international attention. That conclusion was precisely the opposite: that there were no grounds for calling the Nigerian campaign in

[86] Ibid., 66–81. [87] Cronje, *World and Nigeria*, 84. [88] Smith, *Genocide*, 80.
[89] Ibid., 77. [90] See esp. International Observer Team to Nigeria, *No Genocide*.
[91] The Britain-Biafra Association later distributed the report of the Paris conference among British MPs, but the action did not have a tangible impact. *Nigeria/Biafra Conflict: An International Commission of Jurists find prima facie Evidence of Genocide*, 1969 (Rhodes Library, University of Oxford, MSS.Afr.S. 2399); Ajibola, *Foreign Policy*, 154–5. See also Biafran Mission to the United Nations to U Thant, November 11, 1968 (SCRBC: Biafra War Collection (1966–70), MG 788, Box 2, Folder 9), 7.

Biafra genocide – such a charge, then, was the invention of Biafran propagandists and their international allies.[92] Nigerian propaganda relied quite heavily on the reports issued afterwards,[93] and pro-Nigerian governments could point to the observer team's reports to underline that the government they supported did not perpetrate genocide.[94] In a parliamentary questioning in November 1968, Foreign Secretary Stewart proclaimed that the "story about genocide has been proved beyond doubt to be completely false."[95] And indeed, discussions about the conflict began to wane after the publication of the reports. The observer team's rebuttal of the genocide allegations was the beginning of the end of Biafra's moment in international media.

Some pro-Biafran voices remained unconvinced of the validity of the observer team's findings,[96] pointing out that the observer team's reports did not disprove the issue at the core of the allegations: innocents were still dying en masse. Whether this crime should have been called genocide or by a different name was only an "academic discussion," a rhetorical exercise of "splitting hairs," they explained.[97] But the Biafran campaign had put so much weight on the genocide argument that, once it was discarded, a central rhetorical pillar came tumbling down. Some of Biafra's international allies thus reached for new definitions: if it was not genocide, than at least it must be something comparable, they argued. Confronted with the possible prospect of continuing death from hunger,

[92] See, e.g., "International Panel in Biafra Finds No Proof of Genocide," *New York Times*, October 4, 1968, 12; Michael Wolfers, "Nigeria Observers Find no Evidence of Genocide," *The Times*, October 4, 1968, 8; Klaus Natorp, "Zweifel an der These vom Völkermord," *FAZ*, November 18, 1968, 2; "Keinerlei Beweis für Völkermord in Biafra," ibid., November 19, 1968, 10; Brigadier Sir Bernard Fergusson, "Tragic Facts of Nigeria Deny Genocide Story," *The Times*, December 12, 1968, 7; Michael Wolfers, "Observers Report Little Damage in Umuahia," *The Times*, April 26, 1969, 6; Julian Mounter, "No Evidence of Genocide in Nigeria," *The Times*, July 21, 1969, 5; "Canadian Reports from Biafra: 'No Evidence of Any Atrocities,'" *New York Times*, January 15, 1970, 14; "No Mass Starvation Is Found by Observer Team in Biafra," *The Washington Post*, January 16, 1970, A1; Michael Wolfers, "Observers Find No Signs of Genocide in Biafra," *The Times*, January 1, 1970, 4.

[93] See, e.g., "No Evidence of Genocide," *United Nigeria*, October 11, 1968, 1; Committee of Ibo Intellectuals, *Ojukwu's "Self-Determination."*

[94] See also the statement in the House of Commons by Harold Wilson: *Hansard Commons*, December 3, 1968, column 1241, hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1968/dec/03/nigeria (accessed May 23, 2013) and the exchange of letters between H. G. Hanbury of the Britain-Biafra Association and FCO officials. H. G. Hanbury to Michael Stewart, November 2, 1968 (UK NA FCO 65/249); D. M. Day to H. G. Hanbury, November 19, 1968 (ibid.); D. M. Day to H. G. Hanbury, December 13, 1968 (ibid.).

[95] *Hansard Commons*, November 18, 1968, column 884, hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1968/nov/18/nigeria (accessed May 23, 2013).

[96] See e.g. Scholl-Latour, "Solidarität mit Biafra," 5.

[97] "Une trentaine de médecins pilotes et journalistes dénoncent 'le génocide au Biafra,'" *Le Monde*, February 12, 1969, 8; Garrett, "Genocide," 11.

The Times asked in its 1968 end-of-year review whether what could be observed in Biafra were a form of "genoslaughter."[98] Other advocates of the Biafran cause came up with more clumsy neologisms and re-conceptualizations. One Tom Garrett wrote in the *Church Times* that

> Genocide or no, the [. . .] Biafrans most certainly face the danger of "hegemonocide," if one may coin this word, i.e., the elimination of their most eminent men, many of whom are distinguished sons of Africa as well as of Biafra. This to the African mind, with its deep sense of family and tribal solidarity, is tantamount to genocide.[99]

In a piece entitled "Who killed Biafra," published in *The New York Review of Books* a few weeks after the end of the war, the eminent anthropologist and Biafra lobbyist Stanley Diamond similarly charged that "cultural genocide was being perpetrated." For the Biafrans, a successfully forged new nation, Diamond continued, "genocide meant both more and less than physical extinction. It meant the collapse of their symbolic universe [. . .]."[100] For Raphael Lemkin, who had developed the concept of genocide, the idea of cultural genocide was crucial for the definition of the crime, even though it was not included in the UN's genocide convention.[101] Even if it had been, the Biafran case rested on feet of clay – the "symbolic universe" of Biafra was a construction of very recent date and fragile composition. Just like Israel, Biafra was a nation born in genocidal death. Yet Western opinion increasingly felt that the danger of genocide was not real. Since both were mutually dependent, it was thus questionable whether the concept of Biafra was real at all: Were both just fictions created by an inventive secessionist leadership?

Biafra and the Limits of Holocaust Universalism

In September 1968, Bundestag President Eugen Gerstenmaier began to reflect on why the public interest in Biafra was beginning to dwindle. Gerstenmaier acknowledged the effectiveness of Biafran propaganda, but he pointed to what he considered their main fault: "they believed that this concern [. . .] would eventually save them politically and militarily." The conservative politician advised the Biafrans to abandon these hopes. In a similar situation a good two decades before, the world had reacted equally indifferently:

98 "Nigeria: Genoslaughter?" *The Times*, December 31, 1968, 1.
99 Garrett, "Genocide," 11.
100 Stanley Diamond, "Who Killed Biafra?," *New York Review of Books*, February 26, 1970, 17–27, reissued in *Dialectical Anthropology* 31(2007), 339–362, quotes on 360, 359.
101 Moses, "Raphael Lemkin"; Siegelberg, "Unofficial Men."

the concern of the whole world, of all cultured people was with the German Jews when they had been sent to Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, but what has become of it? This concern could not save them, or very few of them.[102]

When Gerstenmaier gave this talk, it was already questionable whether sympathy for the plight of the Biafrans would result in political support. However, the Holocaust analogy does not fit perfectly here. The Holocaust, as it unfolded, was inconceivable; the systematic mass murder of a people was hard to imagine in a world before the rise of Holocaust memory culture.[103] During the crisis in Biafra, Holocaust memory was still nascent, but already formed a reference point for many contemporaries. The comparison of the Nazi mass murder of Europe's Jews to other conflicts perceived as genocide, like Biafra, contributed to the development of Holocaust memory. Yet, paradoxically, exactly these comparisons also tended to negate the perception of conflicts like the Nigerian Civil War as genocide: it was not like Auschwitz. There was starvation. But the concentration camps – leaving alone the death camps – invoked in media reports and captions of photographs from Biafra were not actually found in Biafra. In his book recounting the conflict, Captain Armand, a French veteran of the Algerian war who fought for Biafra as a mercenary, described how his expectations before his departure were formed by media representations of the humanitarian crisis. His motivation to enlist for the mission was based on the conviction that the secessionists' cause was a righteous struggle against genocide. When he arrived in the secessionist state, he expected he would find himself "in a besieged Biafra resembling an African Auschwitz." But what he found was different. He found a people fighting for self-determination, fighting back when war was waged against them.[104]

As a mercenary, Armand was not bothered by the fact that the crisis was first and foremost a war, and remained sympathetic to the secessionists' cause. Yet the reaction of many other contemporaries was different. When the conflict ceased to be an African Auschwitz, it stopped being a conflict where the roles – Biafran victims and Nigerian aggressors – were clearly defined, and international observers began to lose interest. Biafra continued to be seen as a humanitarian crisis; but it now became a more complicated event that did not fit simple narratives. The Nigerian Civil War became a war again. Beyond that, few contemporaries wondered what exactly it was.

[102] Eugen Gerstenmaier, "Biafra – Ursachen und Rettungsversuche: Vortrag von Bundestagspräsident D. Dr. Gerstenmaier vor der Volkshochschule Schwäbisch Hall," September 14, 1968 (ACDP 01–210 Nachlass Gerstenmaier, 083).

[103] Novick, *Holocaust in American Life*.

[104] Armand, *Biafra vaincra*, 12–13.

The visual component of this perception of Biafra was crucial. For most contemporaries, the specter of genocide had been summoned by media images. Photographs in particular are bound to the past, often serving to visually define our memory. However, relying on photographs can lead to the event that it "shows" being eclipsed by the images themselves: what we remember is the photograph, not the object.[105] Similarly, contemporaries in the late 1960s remembered the Holocaust in terms of images that showed Nazi mass crimes, but not necessarily genocide. Through the Auschwitz-Biafra analogy, at least parts of the object behind these visual representations were eclipsed: the only thing that remained to be seen was genocide, in Nazi Europe as well as in postcolonial West Africa. That Biafra and Nigeria fought a complicated civil war was made invisible by the broad strokes application of the genocide label. Yet once the perception of Biafra as genocide was invalidated, the whole of the conflict became invisible.

The twofold effect of images from Biafra can be illustrated with a drawing first printed on a flyer of the Comité de lutte contre le génocide au Biafra (Figure 8.1). On one half is the drawing of an inmate, reduced to a skeleton, sitting on a plank bed, evoking the iconography of concentration camps, in particular photographs taken by Margaret Bourke-White at the liberation of Buchenwald.[106] Yet the drawing is captioned, "Auschwitz" – the site of the genocidal annihilation of the Jews. The void that the absence of photographic representations of Auschwitz has left is filled with ink – the drawing, as a visual representation, is not as dependent on the object represented as a photograph is. Roland Barthes calls the person or thing photographed "the Spectrum of the Photograph." "This word retains," he explained, "a relation to 'spectacle' and adds to it that rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead."[107] The dead of Auschwitz returned in representations of the bodies of starving Biafrans, or so many contemporaries felt. The photographs of the original dead, of the victims of the Nazi genocide, were missing. However, the representations of other dying people filled this void: the Biafrans, a people doomed to die in present but who evoked a different genocidal past.

The other half of the flyer shows a standing figure so emaciated that his or her age and sex can scarcely be identified. The caption, "Biafra," is the only explanation. Like the "Auschwitz," which has a capital "A," this is a "Biafra" with a capital "B.": "the alphabet of horror," as the

105 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*.
106 Barnouw, *Germany 1945*.
107 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 9.

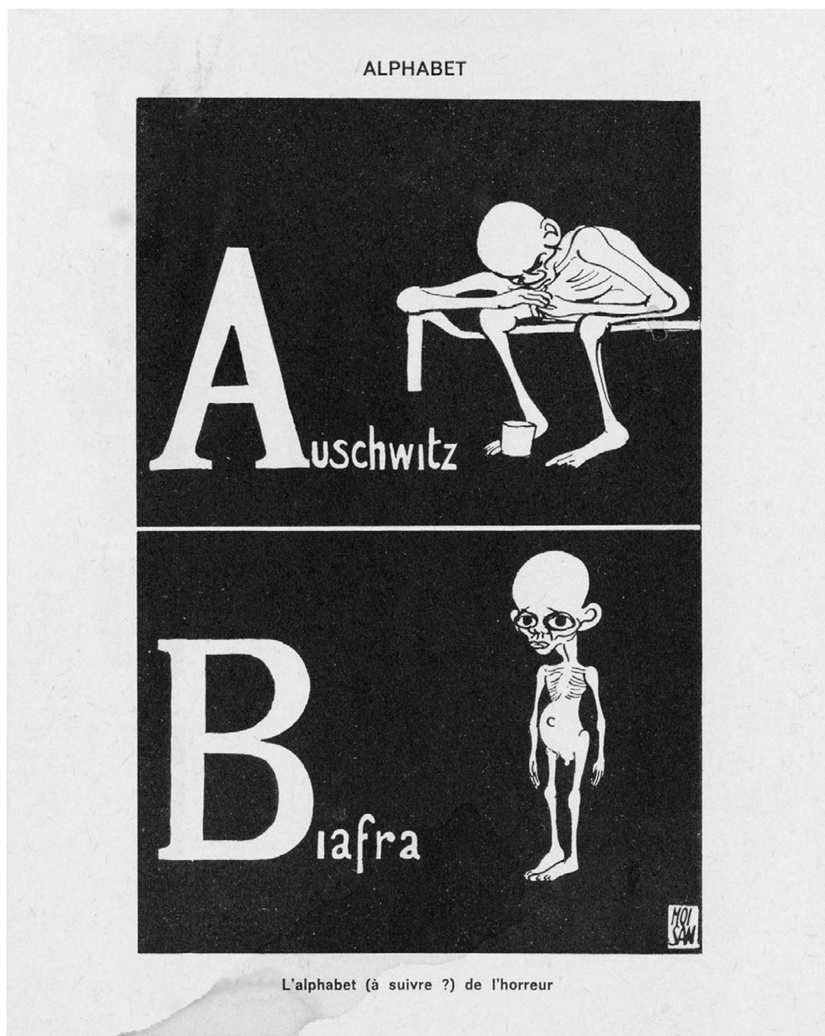


Figure 8.1 Comité de lutte contre le génocide au Biafra, Flyer "L'alphabet (á suivre ?) de l'horreur," April 1969. SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria–Biafra Information Records, 1968–1970, DG 168, Box 12.

caption to the French flyer explained.[108] This evocation resonated with Biafra activists in Germany. The Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker, which

[108] "L'alphabet (á suivre) de l'horreur," April 1969 (SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria–Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 12).

had evolved out of the Hamburger Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, used a variation of the drawing on the cover of the first issue of their periodical aptly called *Pogrom*.[109] A German proverb can help to open up the particular meanings of this drawing: "Who says A, also has to say B." For the pro-Biafran Germans, the drawing suggested that who says "Auschwitz" also has to say "Biafra." This illustration also echoes Max Horkheimer's dictum that "who does not want to talk about capitalism should also remain silent about fascism."[110] Yet in the Biafran version of this verdict, fascism and capitalism were dropped from the equation. What remained was genocide.

The Nigerian Civil War was inscribed into an iconography and rhetoric of genocide comparisons, with the Holocaust as its Ur-Gestalt. Yet this analogy did not leave a lot of space for the analysis of complex political systems. In the course of the war, it became apparent that the Nigerian Civil War could not be integrated into simple narratives – the Biafrans were not mere "innocent victims" but a party in a complicated conflict. Confronted with the complexities of a political matter in a barely known world region, Western interest in the war quickly diminished. The case is characteristic of the ambivalent effects of Holocaust comparisons: for some time, Holocaust rhetoric may help to focus the attention of the media and the public on a certain topic. It can also help to create political pressure to act. Yet the Holocaust is such an extreme crime that the demands it poses to any event it is compared to can almost never be met. And if it is not "like Auschwitz," the international community is free to turn away from bloody civil wars that are fought somewhere in the more remote parts of our world: an intervention seems unnecessary. Leaving aside the complex question of whether such interventions are beneficial or not,[111] the question remains whether Holocaust memory culture does, as is often claimed, at all raise awareness for the suffering of others.[112] It certainly does not contribute to a nuanced perception of conflicts and mass crimes.

Part of the problem may be the fixation on visual icons. Indeed, there are "image acts" that make history, but not because of a force inherent to them. In a certain sense, an "image act" has to be written. The meanings ascribed to images depend on, for example, the meanings ascribed to other images associated with them. Thus the photographs from Biafra

[109] See also Tilman Zülch, "Auschwitz – Biafra – Bengalen," *Pogrom* 2, No. 11 (1971), 2–3.
[110] Horkheimer, "Die Juden und Europa," 115.
[111] For a critical analysis of interventionism see Wertheim, "Solution from Hell."
[112] That is the thesis in Levy and Sznaider, *Erinnerung*, and, in a more reflective manner, in Alexander, "Social Construction."

were understood as images of an "African Auschwitz." Within the shared visual and semantic space of associations and entanglements that developed, both complexes became visible in a similar manner – as genocides. When it turned out that this frame of reference did not match the Nigerian Civil War, the image act "Biafra" lost its power.

Conclusion

The genocide allegations were a core component of the Biafran campaign. As an effect, the mission of the international observer team also, to some extent, decided the secession's prospects. The Biafrans had based their claims on a language of legal norms in which human rights, self-determination, and genocide intertwined. The assertion that the human rights of the population of the former Eastern Region could only be guaranteed through the founding of a sovereign state of Biafra hinged on the genocide allegations: because of the genocide, there must be self-determination. However, the inversion of this argument meant that without genocide there would also be no self-determination. As it turned out, Biafra was no African Auschwitz. And therefore Biafra did not become an African Israel.

The historian should perhaps refrain from judging whether the observer team's assessment was correct, given the pitfalls involved in employing "genocide" as an analytical concept.[113] More important here are the effects of the observer mission and the "genocide" label – and these were decisive. As a civil war in which both sides were victims *and* perpetrators, the conflict was much more complicated than its designation as "genocide" initially suggested.[114] The concept failed to represent the conflict adequately, especially because of its identification with the Holocaust. The rebuttal of the genocide allegations in effect invalidated the Biafrans' narrative about the conflict, which had aroused substantial international sympathy. In reaction, the Biafran leadership tried to reframe their campaign along the lines of a "Biafran revolution," which Ojukwu proclaimed in his "Ahiara Declaration" of mid-1969, the title alluding to Nyerere's Arusha Declaration of two years before, the most important document spelling out a generic African socialism.[115] Evoking the purportedly auspicious prospects of the secessionist project, this

[113] For a critique of the anachronistic usage of 'genocide' as an analytical category in historiography see Tanner, "Historiker," and for reflections on the implications of the Biafran case for genocide studies see Heerten and Moses, "Nigeria-Biafra War."

[114] On "civil war" as a label and a type of conflict see Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence* and Armitage, "Civil War."

[115] Ojukwu, *Ahiara Declaration*.

move was also meant to counteract the growing class antagonism in a Biafran state in which corruption flourished.[116] In Biafra's international campaign, this also implied a shift to the left: still asserting that the Biafrans were fighting a just cause against genocidal oppression, they now increasingly argued that they were confronted with the indifference of a racist world dominated by white imperialists. In this way, they tied their campaign increasingly to the rhetoric of anticolonialism and Black Power. This was a stunning repositioning in view of the frequent evocation of Biafra as a state run by civilized African Christians, which, however, underlines the Biafrans' disappointment in the transnational support their project had mustered. These renewed Biafran efforts did not decisively further their project: the rhetoric resonated much less with their global support base than the genocide claims had; the "principles of the Biafran revolution" remained widely absent from pro-Biafran rhetoric among Western activists. The Biafrans, it seems, were fighting a lost cause.[117]

These definitional battles were much more than a war of words. They were part of the fight for interpretational sovereignty. Semantic conflicts were a key part of the actual war. How the conflict was described and perceived was part of the fight over the belligerents' main war aim: sovereignty. The language employed by Federal Nigeria – as well as many diplomats – was crucial here. The Biafrans were branded as "rebels" illegitimately vying for power. Along with this, their fight was labeled as "irrational," and sympathies for their endeavor as overly "emotional."

Yet political structures were at least equally decisive. Because of its entrenchment in the UN machinery, the appeal to the genocide convention was deeply embroiled in the politics of the intergovernmental organization – and in the wider internationalism of states.[118] The locus of the possible implementation of the persecution of genocide thus tended to impede such moves. As one of the members of the society of recognized states, states accused of genocide have better access to the forum deciding such claims than the accuser does. As the Biafran case shows, the loyalty of a number of key states or IOs is enough to keep the groups making the allegation at bay. These do not necessarily have to be the "big powers": after the OAU committed to a pro-Federal line, the United Nations did so as well, and so did the Commonwealth, another fellow intergovernmental organization. At the time, concerns about alienating the "Third World states" or the "Afro-Asian bloc" were widespread.

[116] Wirz, *Krieg in Afrika*, 164–6.
[117] Anthony, "'Resourceful and Progressive," 56–61.
[118] On the politics of the UN see Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, and Mazower, *Governing*, part II.

Memories of colonialism were still fresh. Thus the principle of non-intervention was – at least officially – almost inviolable, and nearly all powers refrained from questioning the OAU stance. When the United Kingdom assumed a firmly pro-Federal position, this further corroborated the position of the United States and most other Western governments, which tended to favor a "united Nigeria."

In a postcolonial world, the nation-state has become the universalized polity form. The composition of such a state is not per se defined for eternity, but the mechanics of internationalism work toward defining them as supra-temporal fixed entities. The "everyday referendum" which bolsters a state is not only voiced by its citizens, but also by the international community of states that defines who or what is or becomes a state – and who or what does not.[119] Thus, a few decisions by key individuals and governments worked toward securing the existing form of Nigeria as a state. Structural factors were equally decisive: the internationalism of diplomatic services helped to foster a culture of client relationships that strengthened the position of existing states. Often perceiving themselves as rational bulwarks of foreign policy professionalism, these bureaucrats also helped to move national policy lines in a pro-Federal direction when elected officials had strong sympathies for the secessionists. These, however, were discarded as irrational fits of sentimentality by dabblers in foreign policy, politicians overly susceptible to the emotions of the public that they depended on in elections.

In most cases, the outcome of these structures was a policy line that supported humanitarian aid financially, but did not extend any of this support to Biafra politically or even symbolically. Governmental officials tried to disentangle their engagement from the conflict's political dimension by employing a language of humanitarianism. Among elected representatives – in the legislatures of all four countries, but also among elected officials in the executive organs – there were pro-Biafran tendencies, most notably in the Elysée, but also in the White House. But these politicians, susceptible to the public opinion on which their electoral success depended, were confronted by foreign policy professionals in their respective diplomatic services who were more intimately bound to preserving an international system of sovereign states. The latter described their own position as one of "neutrality" and "non-interference." However, these policies were not "neutral": by treating the FMG as a symbolic equal, a state among states, Lagos received a form of support that the Biafrans were refused. When the FCO – and to a lesser degree, the foreign policy machineries of other states – embarked on a propaganda

[119] Renan, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation," 55.

mission to the support of Lagos, the prospects for Biafra became ever more dim. Since these counteroffensives primarily targeted the public, they hit Biafra at a vulnerable spot. The propaganda sphere was the only one where they held an advantage. If this front were to fully collapse, the Biafran cause would probably be lost for good.

9 The End of Biafra, the End of the Lobby

> The end of the war came like a flash of tropical lightning, momentarily illuminating a half-remembered landscape [...].
>
> (St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*, 393)

In 1970, a fortnight after New Year's Eve, Biafra collapsed. One of the brigades under Third Division commander Colonel Olusegun Obasanjo pierced through the secessionist lines to join forces with the Federal First Division in Umuahia, Biafra's former makeshift capital. The advance effectively split the Biafran enclave in two, isolating Biafra's leadership from the last remaining food-producing territories in the east. Unlike the Federal Army's usual strategy to halt and secure the newly gained position, Obasanjo ordered an offensive. The Federal army met with almost no resistance. On January 10, Owerri, Biafra's last remaining town fell to Federal forces. The next morning, Ojukwu and parts of his entourage fled to the Ivory Coast aboard one of the last planes flying out of Uli Airport. The head of the defunct state left the task of formally surrendering to his Chief of Staff. On January 12, Philip Effiong ordered the Biafran troops to lay down their arms in a message transmitted by Radio Biafra. Three days later, the surrender was formally sealed during a meeting of Nigerian and Biafran officers at the Federal headquarters near Lagos. On January 15, Biafra was consigned to history.[1]

In Nigeria, reactions to Biafra's fall were rather sedate. There was little rejoicing or celebration. Most people were simply relieved that the war was over. Gowon declared that, in this war, there were neither victors nor vanquished. Quoting Abraham Lincoln, he called upon Nigerians to bind up the "nation's wounds." The Nigerian head of state followed up on his earlier public pledge to grant a general amnesty to Biafra's leaders. There were virtually no war-related detentions. High-ranking Biafran officers, most prominently General Philip Effiong, were immediately placed on indefinite leave, but allowed to resume their pre-war rank in the Nigerian army. Ojukwu having fled, none of Biafra's leaders

[1] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 365–6; Iliffe, *Obasanjo*, 27–32.

were put on trial.[2] With the end of the war, the process of reconciliation was supposed to begin.[3]

Like at the end of many wars, there were instances where soldiers looted, harassed, or raped civilians. Nevertheless, contrary to what was feared, the federal Nigerian army did not "kill off" the Igbos after the surrender.[4] Internationally, however, fears that Federal forces would use the opportunity to complete the "genocide" were rampant. From his exile, Ojukwu warned that only outside intervention could prevent "a genocide that would make 1939–45 Europe a mere child's play."[5] Many in the West, most prominently Pope Paul VI, also called for international action.[6] In Washington, the Nixon administration issued a flurry of public statements and emergency plans.[7] Some media reports showed images of starving "Biafran Babies" once more, revitalizing the iconography of Biafran famine.[8] There were not as many journalists in Biafra as at the media event's peak in mid-1968, but the reports added to the feeling of resurgent crisis. For many journalists the prospect were "Peace or Genocide," as a *Boston Globe* headline read.[9] To avert the latter option, journalists reminded the Federal government that this was "time for Nigerian compassion."[10] But, placing little confidence in Lagos' restraint, Western commentators urged governments and humanitarian organizations to take over the mission themselves and bring in aid immediately.[11]

And indeed, after Biafra's fall, the humanitarian situation in the crisis worsened once more. Yet the calls for outside intervention and

[2] St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*, 402–3; Stremlau, *International Politics*, 371–2.
[3] O'Connell, "Ending"; Last, "Reconciliation and Memory."
[4] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 367; Harneit-Sievers, "Nigeria."
[5] "Ojukwu's Call from Exile," 455.
[6] "Lagos and Rome: Opposite Reactions to Biafra's Fall," *New York Times*, January 14, 1970, 1; "Pope Sends Message to Head of Nigeria," *Chicago Tribune*, January 13, 1970, 2.
[7] Richard Stewart, "Nixon's Biafra Plan: U. S. Copters for Aid," *Boston Globe*, January 17, 1970, 1; Robert Young, "Nixon Orders More U.S. Aid for Biafrans," *Chicago Tribune*, January 13, 1970, 1; "Transcript of Telephone Conversation," January 14, 1970, *FRUS, 1969–1976, Volume E-5*, no. 159.
[8] See esp. "Hunger is the Enemy," *The Times*, January 12, 1970, 7.
[9] "Nigeria: Peace or Genocide?" *Boston Globe*, January 13, 1970, 10; see also "Nigeria läßt den Eisernen Vorhang vor Biafra nieder," *FAZ*, January 19, 1970, 5; Linda Greenhouse, "Biafran Here Fears 'Mass Slaughter,'" *New York Times*, January 13, 1970, 15.
[10] Hubert H. Humphrey, " . . . and Victims Must Be Helped," *Los Angeles Times*, January 16, 1970, A7; "Time for Nigerian Compassion," *New York Times*, January 12, 1970, 28. See also Winston Churchill, Jr., "A Time for Magnanimity," *The Times*, January 12, 1970, 9.
[11] See, e.g., Walter Schwarz, "The Chances of Avoiding Genocide in Biafra," *The Guardian*, January 13, 1970, 9; Antony Terry, "Last Hours of a Country Facing Destruction," *The Times*, January 12, 1970, 6.

reprimands of the Nigerian government did not help the humanitarians' cause. Instead they sparked a backlash against any further foreign intervention. The FMG was determined to take the matters of relief into its own hands and gave full control over coordination of the operation to the Nigerian Red Cross – not the ICRC. Lagos shut out foreign aid from France, Portugal, South Africa, and Rhodesia – governments that had supported the secessionists and were suspected of furthering European imperialism or white supremacy. The Irish missionaries who had engaged for the relief campaign were expelled.[12] A number of humanitarian organizations were barred from assisting in the relief operation, including JCA, Caritas, and the French and Nordic Red Cross national bodies – organizations that had breached the federal blockade and defied Lagos' orders.[13]

However, in the view of most contemporaries, Biafra's genocide claims already lacked credibility. This assertion was soon corroborated again. In the days following the Biafran downfall, journalists found that the conditions in the defunct secessionist state "don't add up to genocide."[14] *West Africa* reported about the "great non-story of the war: the complete absence of massacre, genocide and slaughter which many confidently predicted would happen when Biafra was overrun."[15] These assessments were partly based on the reports of the international observers who were again dispatched on fact-finding missions.[16] Moreover, U Thant visited Lagos and issued public statements emphasizing Nigeria's efforts to treat the Igbos well.[17] In the following months, humanitarian organizations issued reports that concluded that wartime fears had blown the threat out of proportion.[18] Public concerns about Federal "hawks" and the discipline of their troops were still serious. But Gowon, who was sketched as a reasonable man and a devout Christian, apparently kept these tendencies successfully in check. Meanwhile, the reputation of the

12 O'Sullivan, *Ireland*, 100–2.

13 Stremlau, *International Politics*, 366–72.

14 Hugh Mulligan, "In Biafra: Neither Genocide nor Mass Relief," *Boston Globe*, January 26, 1970, 1, 4.

15 "Red Cross in the Field," *West Africa*, January 31, 1970, 128.

16 "No Biafra 'Atrocities' Found: International Military Team Makes Report," *Boston Globe*, January 16, 1970, 1; Robert M. Smith, "Washington Aide Finds No Evidence of Reprisals," *New York Times*, January 15, 1970, 14.

17 "Thant Sees Signs of Nigeria Reconciliation," *Los Angeles Times*, January 20, 1970, A8; "Thant Told Biafrans Will Be Treated Well," *Chicago Tribune*, January 20, 1970, A8; "U Thant Reports Ibos Well-Treated," *The Washington Post*, January 20, 1970, A11.

18 See, e.g., George Gordon-Lennox, "Release at Will: Special Feature on Red Cross Aid to Nigerian War Victims," *American Red Cross News Service*, 1970 (NARA RG 200, ARC 1965–1979, Box 65, DR-900, Nigerian Conflict, 1968); Josephine Noble, "Report #6," *Quaker Service-Nigeria*: *Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation*, February 1970 (NARA RG 200, ARC 1965–1979, Box 65, DR-900.02 Cooperation with Other Agencies).

secessionist regime was dwindling further. In view of the observer team reports, some wondered what had become "of the millions of starving children who were dying by the thousands each day? [...] It began to appear that the Nigerians might not have been the 'bad guys' [...]." Those were Biafra's fraudulent artists of propaganda, who, it seemed, even either invented or created the starving children.[19]

The end of the war dealt not only a deathblow to the Biafran state, but also to the Biafra lobby. Despite the efforts of many supporters of the humanitarian campaign to disentangle the two, the humanitarian and the political dimensions of the conflict were deeply intertwined. Once Biafra's political campaign was discarded, the Biafran humanitarian lobby lost its legitimacy as well. In this chapter, I describe how Biafra and, correlatively, the Biafra lobby came to an end. In both cases, two intimately intertwined dimensions need to be highlighted. The Biafran campaign was first terminated in international media, which had begun to portray the secessionist leadership in an increasingly negative light, and then on the battlefield. Similarly, the Biafra lobby also ended first in the media and then on the frontlines of the protests.

The End of Biafra

Viewed in hindsight, the war's major turning point that tipped the scales against Biafra occurred, ironically, when the secessionists mounted a major, and initially successful, military offensive. In the spring of 1969, Biafran forces took the offensive at the western front, recapturing Owerri and other important strategic positions. Soon, secessionist troops were marching toward Port Harcourt.[20] In response, Gowon ordered a fundamental reorganization of the Nigerian army, replacing all three divisional commanders. Gowon's shakeup was a crucial step toward winning the war. Of particular importance was the replacement of the "Black Scorpion" Adekunle with Obasanjo at the top of the Third Division. Obasanjo, the later President of Nigeria, would play a key role in winning the war militarily.[21]

The reorganization was also a major step toward improving the image that Nigeria projected internationally. With his widely publicized outbursts, Adekunle had repeatedly embarrassed Lagos: his statements seemed to prove the genocidal intentions of the Federal army, and played into the hands of Biafran propagandists.[22] According to all indications,

[19] Frederick Emrich, "Why? By Whom?" *Boston Globe*, January 22, 1970, 22.
[20] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 321–30.
[21] Iliffe, *Obasanjo*, 27–30. [22] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 330–2.

the dismissal of Adekunle also changed the situation on the ground. Previously, Biafran infiltrators clandestinely operating in federal-held territory had returned to Biafra with stories about atrocities against Igbos who got in the way of Federal forces. After the "Black Scorpion's" removal, these increasingly gave way to reports of fair treatment, and the equitable distribution of food. Gowon's reorganization of the military thus helped allay the fears of many within the Biafran enclave and limited the material Biafran propagandists had to work with.[23] The important role that newly acquired aircraft played for the success of Biafran offensive convinced Lagos that they needed to strengthen their aerial warfare effort. East Germans and other Europeans took the places of poorly trained Egyptian pilots; in skilled hands, Nigerian bombs hit civilian targets much less often. This also helped to limit the material that could be used in Biafran atrocity stories.[24]

The Biafran offensive initiated in the spring of 1969 had detrimental effects on the secessionists' campaign in a different regard as well. The Biafrans hit strategically important targets, in particular oil production facilities. On May 9, 1969, Biafran forces attacked drilling sites operated by the Italian company Agip. During the onslaught, 11 Europeans were killed and 18 other foreign workers captured – among them 14 Italians, 3 Germans and 1 Lebanese citizen. Despite international protests, Biafra sentenced them to death for support of Nigeria's war against Biafra. Only intense diplomatic efforts – in particular by the French government, which threatened to freeze its military shipments – and appeals by, among others, Pope Paul VI, moved Ojukwu to reconsider the death sentence. The oil workers were allowed to leave. But for Biafra's image abroad, the incident was a disaster.[25]

Perhaps the most decisive blow to Biafra's image abroad was the image the leadership projected in the protracted negotiations with Lagos and the ICRC over humanitarian aid.[26] The FMG was willing to allow the ICRC to transport relief supplies into the enclave, but the issue touched a sensitive nerve for both sides: sovereignty. According to the Geneva Conventions, Lagos had the right to inspect the relief supplies. It agreed

[23] Ibid. [24] Ibid., 333–4.

[25] "18 Oilmen Doomed by Biafra Court," *The Washington Post*, June 2, 1969, A1; "Biafra Sentences 18 Oilmen to Die on Charges of Aiding Nigeria," *Boston Globe*, June 2, 1969, 7; "Rome, Bonn Join Effort to Save 18 Oilmen," *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1969, B10; Steyn, "Shell-BP," 440. On this incident's effect on the previously strong support for Biafra in Italy see Githa Reinecke to Fenner Brockway, June 8, 1969 (Churchill College Archives FEBR 219b); A. J. Collins, "Note for File: Incident involving Italian oil men in Nigeria," May 30, 1969 (UK NA FCO 65/264).

[26] For a short overview see Gould, *Struggle for Modern Nigeria*, 112–19.

to the combination of land and sea corridors and daylight flights proposed by the ICRC, as long as they were channeled through FMG inspections. Yet the Biafran leadership refused to allow such inspections as a challenge to their sovereignty, and refused to accept the ICRC aid that arrived through Federal Nigeria. The ICRC operation was dispensable for the secessionists as long as the churches kept flying into the enclave. In early August 1968 Count Gustaf von Rosen, flying a plane purchased by German Church organizations, had proven that the Federal blockade could be breached.[27] The FMG demanded that inspections were their sovereign right. When the ICRC tried to deliver aid to Biafra without inspection, the FMG reacted harshly: Nigerian air force attacked Red Cross planes and hospitals.[28]

The actions of both camps increasingly frustrated ICRC officials and international observers, who felt that both sides place more value on political goals than human lives. This damaged Biafra's reputation, though, more than that of the FMG, as the "rebels" depended on the support of Western publics.[29] In the eyes of the international public, Ojukwu's refusal to allow Lagos to inspect the shipments was inexcusable: it directly prevented an effective relief operation, and his explanation– that Lagos could use the inspections to poison food and medical supplies – were considered doubtful internationally.[30] State Department officials were therefore able to publicly declare that Biafra, not Nigeria, was "the major problem" in relief matters.[31] Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs Thomson mused in a Commons debate that, "genocide is by no means the Federal intention, though I am afraid that I gloomily have the feeling that suicide for their people sometimes seems to be the intention of the Ibo leaders."[32] German Foreign Minister Willy Brandt was wondering whether Ojukwu might be "insane."[33] Journalists opined that the secessionist leadership was "gambling that the horror of mass starvation and death will generate enough world pressure to force Nigeria into a cease-fire agreement."[34] Biafra thus felt impelled

[27] Stremlau, *International Politics*, 210. [28] Hentsch, *Face au Blocus*.

[29] See, e.g., "Leaders argue, children starve," *The Economist*, July 13, 1968, 21–2 and Stremlau, *International Politics*, 205–14; Wiseberg, "Humanitarian Intervention."

[30] Böker to Auswärtiges Amt, September 10, 1968, in Blasius, ed., *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik, 1968, vol. II*, doc. 292, 1128–31.

[31] Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Joseph Palmer II qtd. Warren Unna, "Biafra Hires PR Firm For $400,000," *The Washington Post*, July 24, 1968, A14.

[32] Bruce, to Department of State, August 27, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1876); *Hansard Commons*, August 27, 1969, column 693, hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1968/aug/27/nigeria.

[33] Doc. 252: Brandt to Bahr. August 10, 1968, in Blasius, ed., *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik, 1968: vol. II*, 988.

[34] Stanley Meisler, "Biafra: War of Images," *The Nation*, March 10, 1969, 304.

to issue statements that it "is not the intention of the Government of the Republic of Biafra to play politics with the mass suffering of the victims of Nigeria's war of genocide."[35] Yet these statements did little to allay international concern over Biafran actions.

The rhetoric of Holocaust comparisons also backfired with the growing doubts about Biafra's credibility. Nigerian propagandists on their part compared the leadership of the breakaway state with that of Nazi Germany. When debates on the arms trade with Nigeria were set for both houses of the British parliament in June 1968, the Nigerian head of propaganda Anthony Enahoro circulated a letter to the delegates warning that the "indiscriminate and ill-founded use of the highly emotional word 'genocide'" would remind Britons of the fate of the Jews in Nazi Germany. However, there could be no question of genocide against the Igbo of Biafra: this was mere propaganda. For Enahoro, the "rebel command" was "a régime which compares, in many respects, with the Hitler-Goebbels phenomenon."[36] Ojukwu's move to engage a press agency "to sell the idea to the world that there was a country called Biafra whose 12 million inhabitants were threatened with genocide by Nigeria" was an invention solely serving the Igbo elite, "a whopper on the grand scale that a connoisseur of mendacity such as Hitler would have appreciated."[37] The analogies between Biafran propaganda and that of the Nazis became a cornerstone of pro-Nigerian rhetoric, which turned the secessionists' Holocaust comparisons on their head: the "Jews of Africa" became "African Nazis." Nigerians penned reader letters complaining that the "the whole world has been completely taken in by the admittedly clever propaganda of the 'Biafrans' [. . .] as the Germans were taken in completely by the propaganda of Goebbels in the 1930s and early 1940s."[38] Soon, even more detached observers concluded that, if there was an administration to be compared with the Nazis, it was the Biafrans. Bernard Nicholls commented in one of his letters to Oxfam's General Secretary that the "very general fear in Biafra of what has been called genocide is, I'm sure, real, but I am also sure that it is misguided, and that the bulk of the people are as much victims of a wicked and deliberate propaganda line as were the Germans under Hitler."[39]

[35] Biafran Government, "Statement. Red Cross Relief Operations," June 27, 1968 (OXA, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 1).

[36] Anthony Enahoro, "Chief Enahoro writes to British M.P.s on Nigerian Civil War," June 12, 1968 (Churchill College Archives NBKR 4/41), 4, 6.

[37] Editorial, "The Bigger the Lie," *United Nigeria* No. 4, October 11, 1968, 2.

[38] Akinwande Williams, "What a Policy of Calumny," *The Economist*, September 14, 1968, 4.

[39] Nicholls to Kirkley, December 5, 1968 (OXA, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 2), 1.

The international observer team's report, which concluded that there was no Biafran genocide, was the final deathblow for public opinion about the secessionist state. The diplomatic counteroffensive initiated by London substantially changed perceptions of the Biafran government. As a result, the language of foreign policy reason and secessionist sentimentality percolated from diplomatic circles into the public sphere. Pro-Federal politicians introduced this rhetoric into parliamentary debates about the conflict. Emphasizing his personal ties to Nigeria, the Tory MP John Cordle averred that his "sympathy is engaged not by seeing the cause at many miles' distance." But no "useful function" is served "by using the sort of emotional language which disfigures reasoned analysis and debate [....]." These misconceptions followed from "the machinations of the public relations firms which have been retained by Colonel Ojukwu at fantastic expense to repair, in terms of so-called world opinion, what his rebel armies have lost on the battlefields."[40]

Cordle, however, was part of pro-Federal lobby group, a "commando group [formed] to fight rebel propaganda."[41] Upon the initiative of the PR agency Galitzine, contracted by Lagos, the forcefully pro-Federal "United Nigeria Group" was formed in London in March 1969. Sir Miles Clifford, chairman of Nigerian Electricity Supply and formerly a civil servant in Nigeria for more than two decades, acted as chairman of the group.[42] In a letter to the editor of *The Times*, the group explained that the members were "by no means anti-Ibo," but simply "sick to death of Biafran brain-washing by Press and BBC." They "decided to form a 'United Nigeria' Group to disseminate the truth in every possible way and prevent the secessionists from snatching a political propaganda victory and so breaking up the country."[43] Members of the group wrote pro-Federal articles and book accounts, and used a variety of other occasions to raise their voice in defense of Nigerian unity.[44] With this new support base, even the inept Federal propaganda started to yield some fruits,[45] for instance by countering images of the "Biafran Babies" by

[40] *Hansard Commons*, June 12, 1968, column 251, hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1968/jun/12/nigeria-supply-of-arms (accessed May 20, 2013).

[41] David Russell to Sir Miles Clifford, December 6, 1968 (RHL, MSS.Brit.Emp.s.517.6, United Nigeria Group)

[42] "Minutes of the Nigeria Group Inaugural Meeting," London, March 6, 1969 (ibid.); "United Nigeria Group," March 12, 1969 (ibid.).

[43] United Nigeria Group, "Letter to the Editor of *The Times*," March 19, 1969 (ibid.), 1.

[44] For source examples see for instance the texts written by Sir Rex Niven, also a former civil servant in Northern Nigeria and a confidant of the Sardauna of Sokoto Ahmadu Bello. Niven, *War of Nigerian Unity*; idem, "Modern Nigeria."

[45] On Galitzine's efforts see Davis, *Interpreters for Nigeria*, 88–96 and further Graham-Douglas, *Ojukwu's Rebellion*.

publishing photos of happy Nigerian children.[46] Journalists also began to criticize the emotional outburst of support for Biafra and published consciously sober, cool journalistic accounts. The French journalists Jean Wolf and Claude Brovelli, sought to counter the "skilful propaganda of Colonel Ojukwu" and show the "true face of this African conflict [. . .]." This face was apparently not that of Biafra's starving children. The book included maps and statistics about Nigeria's foreign trade balances, arguing that the conflict was the result of the intervention of foreign powers. However, they did not include photographs of the humanitarian crisis.[47]

Doubts about the leadership's trustworthiness seem to have been finally confirmed at the end of the war: "Ojukwu flees as Biafra faces total collapse," readers of *The Times* read on their newspapers' front page on January 12, 1970.[48] Reports about Ojukwu's flight featured in many papers, detailing how Ojukwu arrived at Uli airport to commandeer an airplane that French missionaries had prepared to fly out sick Biafran children. The humanitarians were forced to relinquish the aircraft, reportedly more afraid of the infuriated Biafran military accompanying their head of state than they were of the advancing Federal troops.[49] Parts of these accounts were mere Nigerian propaganda fantasy, such as the assertion that Ojukwu took his white Mercedes with him on the plain.[50] But, overall, these reports firmly confirmed the world's opinion of the secessionist leadership. Editorials ascribed most of the blame for the genesis and prolongation of the conflict to an arrogant and over-ambitious Igbo leadership, which, blinded by "romantic illusions," had lost touch with reality.[51] Media reports began to portray the Biafran leadership as representatives of a nascent, yet already spoiled, fraudulent postcolonial African elite. In contrast to the more pro-Biafran opinion published before, *Der Spiegel* sketched Ojukwu as a dandyish man about town – unlike "Africa's traditional leaders," this rakish bon vivant was never put into the prisons of the colonial powers, "never suffered under hunger or pain." He had studied at Oxford, the editorial pointed out, where he was known as a "Playboy in fast MG sports cars." As the leader of Biafra, this "double-tongued" politician had duped the world

[46] *Nigeria demain* (October 1969) cover page. See also the covers of November/ December 1969 and May/June 1970 and Pierre Kalck: "'Il n'y a pas de génocide . . . '" *Nigeria demain* (October 1969), No. 1, 14–15.

[47] Wolf and Brovelli, *Guerre des Rapaces*. See also Seeburg, *Die Wahrheit über Nigeria/Biafra*.

[48] "Ojukwu flees as Biafra faces total collapse," *The Times*, January 12, 1970, front page.

[49] See for instance "Ojukwus Flucht auf Kosten von 30 Kindern," *FAZ*, January 16, 1970, 5.

[50] Emrich, "Why?"; "The End of the Nigerian Civil War," *The Washington Post*, January 13, 1970, A14; St. Jorre, *Nigerian Civil War*, 397–8.

[51] Stanley Meisler, "Tribal Pride Blinded Biafrans," *Boston Globe*, January 15, 1970, 1.

with propaganda, inventing a "religious war" instigated by the "Islamic Haussas against Christian Igbo and cried 'genocide' at a time when there could be no question of it."[52]

Journalist Karl-Heinz Janssen explained in an article in *Die Zeit*: "the end was despicable." In view of the behavior of Biafra's "beloved *Führer*" during the days of the secessionist downfall, many Germans may have thought of May 1945: "was not Ojukwu's address the spitting image of Hitler's last order of the day (Berlin stays German, Vienna will be German again)?" However, for the *Zeit* journalist, these associations were misleading: "Ojukwu was no Hitler and Biafra not a police state." The newspaper had been widely sympathetic to the secessionists' cause throughout the war, and Janssen tried to defend prior representations of the conflict. Terror and propaganda alone, he reasoned, would not have sufficed to convince seven million Igbos to fight a doomed war for two and a half years.[53] Certainly, Biafra was not a police state or a dictatorial regime of terror. But it was also not the birth of a new nation molded out of the clay of tribal groups. Yet the very fact that the *Zeit* writer felt he had to write this article in Biafra's defense is revealing: as a political project, Biafra had become dubious.[54]

Ojukwu was particularly responsible. His leadership style had alienated many of his followers, including his own Biafran "ambassador" in Paris, Raph Uwechue.[55] The most dramatic demonstration of Ojukwu's loss of support from his closest allies, though, was the return of Nnamdi "Zik" Azikiwe to the Federal camp. The anticolonial hero Zik, a close confidant and business partner of Ojukwu's father, was one of the political poster boy's of Biafran secessionism originally, but had left Biafra in the summer of 1968 for the United Kingdom. After months spent undercover in London, Zik returned to the Nigeria and met Gowon for a much publicized breakfast meeting after landing at the airport in Lagos. In a press statement released in London and Lagos, Azikiwe explained that Biafra's claims of genocide were a "hoax."[56]

According to the Federal government, Biafra was nothing but a "cancerous [sic] symbol of disunity and disintegration," as Nigeria's Foreign Minister Okoi Arikpo put it in an address to the UN General Assembly.[57] Nigerians began to use analogies to the American Civil War to support

[52] "Ein Kavalierskrieg," *Spiegel*, January 19, 1970, 82–7, here 84, 85–6.
[53] Karl-Heinz Janßen, "Das Ende mit Schrecken," *Die Zeit* January 16, 1970, 3.
[54] See also Walter Schwarz, "Biafra: An Epitaph," *The Guardian*, January 12, 1970, 13.
[55] See Uwechue, *Reflections*.
[56] "Azikiwe on Ojukwu's 'April Fool,'" 416; Stremlau, *International Politics*, 348–9.
[57] Arikpo, *A Testimony of Faith*, 5.

their claims of postcolonial sovereignty and unity,[58] portraying Gowon as a Nigerian Abraham Lincoln who would successfully keep the nation together. Gowon himself internalized this role.[59] Harold Wilson wrote that Gowon "was as devoted a student of Lincoln" as he was himself. During their meetings, the Nigerian head of state "quoted many analogies with the American Civil War [. . .]."[60] In Cabinet discussions, Wilson emphasized that the American Civil War – not Israel – was the correct analogy.[61] The press also began to use the Civil War as an explanatory frame, replacing their earlier Holocaust metaphors.[62] In a July 1969 *Time* magazine interview with Gowon, the writer described Gowon's "air-conditioned office," in which a "well-thumbed copy of Carl Sandburg's Abraham Lincoln – *The War Years* lies amid a clutter of radio equipment and six telephones." Gowon himself, the article went on, a "devout Methodist in a largely Moslem and animist nation, a member of an insignificant tribe in a federation of tribal giants, [. . .] clearly sees himself in the Lincolnesque role of healer of his nation's divisions."[63]

Popularized by pro-Federal Nigerians and British diplomats alike, the Civil War analogy portrayed the conflict as a battle against the rebellious Biafran leadership around Ojukwu, just like Lincoln had proclaimed that "'[t]he war was not against the people of the South, but against Jefferson Davis and his War Lords.'"[64] These assertions dovetailed with Nigerian portrayals of the conflict as a war by the avaricious circle around Ojukwu, who willingly suppressed ethnic minorities to build an Igbo Empire.[65]

58 On the American Civil War as a model for anticolonial self-determination and the postcolonial defense of unity against secession see Fisch, *Selbstbestimmungsrecht*, esp. 111–19.

59 On African nationalist leaders' use of Abraham Lincoln, see Gaines, "Colonization to Anticolonialism."

60 Wilson, *Labour Government 1964–1970*, 632. See also Stewart, *Life and Labour*, 240.

61 Benn, *Office without Power: Diaries 1968–1972*, 215. For this juxtaposition see also Hugh Hanning, "Nigeria facing another 'Congo,'" *The Guardian*, July 3, 1967, 17.

62 See, e.g., Klaus Natorp, "Nigeria braucht die Ibos," *FAZ*, October 1, 1968, 1; Stanley Meisler, "Biafran Leader Makes Surprise Nigeria Visit," *Los Angeles Times*, August 18, 1969, 17; Frederic Hunter, "Nigeria and Biafra Woo U.S.," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 24, 1969, 6; "Leader Proclaims Biafra's Loyalty to Lagos Regime," *New York Times*, January 16, 1970, 1.

63 "An Interview with General Gowon," *Time*, July 4, 1969, 27.

64 Richard Ewemade Ebegbe to Dean Rusk, August 2, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27–9 Biafra – Nigeria, Box 1881), 2. See also Joe Iyalla, "For Peace in Nigeria,"*New York Times*, July 14, 1968, E11.

65 See e.g., Committee of Ibo Intellectuals, *Ojukwu's 'Self-Determination'*; Federal Ministry of Information Lagos, *The Collapse of a Rebellion: And Prospects of Lasting Peace*, Lagos 1968; Etienne Mallarmé, "Biafra: Humanitarisme et Politique," *Nigeria demain* 2 (November/December 1969), 20.

After the end of the war, when Ojukwu, as press reports described, cowardly abandoned "his people," the language of analogies with the American Civil War abounded. Readers of the *New York Times* were told that, "[s]o far the language of victory on the federal side has had the generosity of Grant at Appomattox." The only danger apparently came from the subdued secessionists: "we all know how long the spirit of Appomattox lasted. The thirst for revenge and for profit in the fallen South overwhelmed generosity [. . .]."[66]

Biafra's sympathizers tried to counter these analogies to the American Civil War.[67] The secessionists also used American traditions in their political rhetoric, pointing to the the Declaration of Independence and comparing their actions to the American colonies' Revolutionary War. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., who witnessed the enclave's collapse on a trip that pro-Biafran activist Miriam Reik organized for him and fellow novelist Vance Bourjaily, dubbed Ojukwu Biafra's "George Washington."[68] Yet, in the end, the language of federal unity won out against the fading echoes of what had been Biafra's global PR campaign. The West African battlefields would not be the birthplace of a new nation. Rather, they were sites where the unity of a postcolonial state had been successfully defended: Nigeria's "Appomattox."

The End of the Biafra Lobby

In 1972, the British journalist Suzanne Cronje published *The World and Nigeria*, one of the first book accounts of the international history of the war. Like many other writers, Cronje highlights the connection between propaganda and foreign policy. The war began to impinge on the consciousness of the general public "only in 1968, when starvation in Biafra had produced horrifying visible effects. [. . .]. When people in Europe persisted in believing the evidence of their own eyes [. . .] it was claimed in London and Lagos that Ojukwu was using starvation for his own political ends." This was not "altogether unjustified," Cronje explains. "The Biafrans certainly did not manufacture starvation, but it soon became evident to them that world interest could be aroused more easily by

[66] Anthony Lewis, "A Confusion at Appomattox," *New York Times*, January 19, 1970, 46. See also "To understand Nigeria," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 10, 1970, 18; Clare Robertson, "Letter to the Editor: State of Nigeria," *The Guardian*, January 15, 1970, 12.

[67] See Julius K. Nyerere, "The Nigeria/Biafra Crisis," September 4, 1969 (UK NA, FCO 65/50), and also Richard West, "Biafra: The Last Hope for African Independence?" *Sunday Times*, June 1, 1969 (Pictorial supplement), 41 and F. Iheanacho Okole, "Circular," June 14, 1968 (CCA NBKR 4/41).

[68] Vonnegut, Jr., "Biafra," 173.

evidence of suffering than by political arguments." The Nigerians also used rhetoric that did not strictly stick to the facts. Yet "official circles in London, Washington and elsewhere [. . .] took up and publicized the Federal 'concessions' while the Biafran suggestions received little public attention [. . .]."[69]

Cronje had already been a staunch critic of the Labour government during the conflict, a member of the Britain-Biafra Association, and a co-author of the book *Britain's Shame* with Auberon Waugh.[70] Therefore, her critique of the British policy line – and her apologetic tone in portraying the Biafran position – should come as little surprise. Yet in her 1972 book, Cronje does not mention her membership in the Association, perhaps in an effort to distance herself from her Biafra lobbyist past. Pro-Biafran positions were no longer popular, even among their former adherents. If she had still been convinced that being perceived as a part of this campaign would have bestowed her with the "moral capital" of the righteous humanitarian, she might have decided to take the credit for her dedication. Yet she decided not to.

The perception of the Biafran campaign had changed decisively within a relatively short time span, and with it the public perception of its supporters, who came to be seen as perhaps well-intentioned, but naïve victims of Biafran propaganda who overreacted to the secessionists' appeal to their emotions. Journalists began to acknowledge that the civil war was a complex conflict that could not be justly represented through atrocity images and appeals to emotion alone.[71]

Moreover, the humanitarian impulse increasingly came to be cast as interventionist. Logically, the strongest reactions against Biafra's Western supporters came from Federal Nigeria, where "Unionists" agreed that the relief operation should be run and controlled by the Nigerian government. The actions of the churches and some relief groups, as well as French support for Biafra, were decried as meddling in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation-state. In Northern Nigeria, portraits of Paul VI and Charles de Gaulle were destroyed in demonstrations.[72] The international press questioned whether intervention was the right course,[73]

[69] Cronje, *World and Nigeria*, 210. [70] Waugh and Cronje, *Biafra*, 115.

[71] See, e.g, Klaus Natorp, "Das Mitleid mit Biafra," *FAZ*, December 3, 1968, 1.

[72] "Comment: Stop This Man," *Nigerian Tribune*, August 15, 1968 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–1972, 21/1); Nigerian Trade Union Congress to French Embassy, September 14, 1968 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–72, No. 19); Ruyter, "Fernschreiben aus Lagos Nr. 344," August 3, 1968 (PA AA B 34/741).

[73] Agence Française de Presse, "AFP-016: Nigeria Catholics 2 (Kaduna)," August 7, 1968 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–72, No. 19); idem, "Agence Française de Presse: AFP-026: Manifestations au Nigéria contre la France et le Vatican," August 8, 1968 (ibid.); "Lagos: Biafra am Frieden nicht interessiert," *FAZ*, August 9, 1968, 3.

and singled out the French president in particular for critique. The FCO and pro-Federal propagandists in the United Kingdom saw French policy as postcolonial power politics, "a blatant example of irresponsible neocolonialism actuated by motives either squalid or petty."[74] The motives of French governmental support for Biafra were also questioned in British and US media,[75] with formerly pro-Biafran papers running articles that criticized the de Gaulle administration. For many commentators, the French president was a master of *Realpolitik* who had only used the rhetoric of rights and humanitarianism as a veil to disguise French interests.[76]

The motives of some of Biafra's humanitarian aides did not remain beyond doubt, either. In autumn 1968, British freelance journalist Susan Garth, who had set up the ad-hoc charity Biafran Babies Appeal, addressed Queen Elizabeth II in a letter in which she condemned Britain's arms deliveries to Lagos. In a dramatic and carefully staged gesture, she handed over the letter at Buckingham Palace accompanied by a casket that allegedly contained the remnants of a Biafran girl, decapitated in a Nigerian air raid.[77] Her project, which foresaw the shipping of Biafran infants to "children's villages" to be established in the Ivory Coast, soon met with criticism from humanitarian organizations and the media. After similar measures by a number of other organizations, many aid workers began to wonder whether flying children out of Biafra was the best way to proceed. The implications of child abduction were not highlighted by these critical voices. The problem was quite simple: too many children already died onboard the planes. What further infuriated other humanitarians was that Garth professed to work together with established organizations and the Biafran government in order to lend more weight to her appeals for donations and government funding. None of this was true.[78] Garth's financial conduct broke the neck of her project. In late January 1969, the New York State Supreme Court froze

74 "The French Intervention," *United Nigeria*, October 11, 1968, No. 4, 2.

75 On assumptions in the British press that French support for Biafra was self-interested, see French Ambassador to the UK to Michel Debré, May 8, 1969 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–1972, No. 20).

76 See for instance "De Gaulle Meddles Again," *The New York Times*, August 14, 1968, 42; Hugh Hanning, "De Gaulle's ill-favoured fief," *The Guardian*, December 9, 1968, 13; Günter Krabbe, "Gespenstische Waffen-Luftbrücke," *FAZ*, December 24, 1968, 4; "The Gaullist Mission," *The Times*, October 24, 1968, 11.

77 "Briton Delivers Letter to Queen Describing the Plight of Starving Children in Biafra," *New York Times*, September 23, 1968, 6; "This Message was Cabled to All the World's Leaders," *The Times*, December 12, 1968, 3; Susan Garth Biafran Babies Appeal, "This Boy Died Only an Hour after the Picture Was Taken . . . Don't Let More Die," c. 1968 (SCPC, Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–70, DG 168, Box 5).

78 John Ocallaghan, "Biafran Babies Appeal Worries the Charities," *The Guardian*, December 13, 1968, 4. See also German Embassy Abidjan, "Besuch von Miss Susan

the Appeal's bank accounts and the court ruling ordered her to stop soliciting funds. In a widely publicized statement, the judge described her "as 'a lady bountiful with other people's means'" and commented that it was "'quite obvious that she has no facilities to carry out the lofty purposes of her corporation.'"[79]

Even more decisively, the dubiousness of Biafra's claims of genocide left an imprint on the perception of the humanitarians' campaign on their behalf. Contemporaries with pro-Biafran leanings could not escape the conclusion that part of the Biafran campaign was nothing more than an effective propaganda campaign that exploited "the human, the caritative concern of the world with their children's death from starvation politically."[80] In Germany, where pro-Biafran church activities were particularly strong, journalists criticized Caritas and Das Diakonische Werk for naively swallowing Biafran propaganda and adopting the term "genocide." In response, the organizations dropped the term from their publications on the conflict.[81]

The growing doubts about the Biafran project left a mark within humanitarian circles as well. Parts of the humanitarian sector grew increasingly skeptical of the Biafran cause. It was hard to grasp the reality behind the "emotions, illusions and slogans," as Bernard D. Nicholls from the Church Missionary Society commented in a letter to the editor of *The Times*: "They come so readily." Yet the "facts are more elusive."[82] The newspaper, edited by a largely pro-Biafran Catholic, did not accept the letter for publication. Nicholls laconically explained to Oxfam's General Secretary that it was "not a very good letter," as it "didn't ride along on the present tide of emotion about the business."[83] Nicholls had

Garth in der Botschaft," October 24, 1968 (PA AA B 34/744); Bünemann to German Embassy Abidjan, 04.11.1968 (ibid.).

[79] "A Bar on Collection for Biafra," *The Guardian*, February 1, 1969, 3. See also Robert E. Tomasson, "Biafra-Aid Role Denied Woman a Judge Calls 'Lady Bountiful,'" *New York Times*, February 1, 1969, 10; "Court Orders Halt to Biafra Collection," *Chicago Tribune*, February 1, 1969, B3; "'Lady Bountiful' Told to Stop Soliciting Funds for Biafra," *The Washington Post*, February 1, 1969, A13.

[80] Eugen Gerstenmaier, "Biafra – Ursachen und Rettungsversuche: Vortrag von Bundestagspräsident D. Dr. Gerstenmaier vor der Volkshochschule Schwäbisch Hall," September 14, 1968 (ACDP 01–210 Nachlass Gerstenmaier, 083), 29–30.

[81] The most outspoken critic was Klaus Stephan of Bayerischer Rundfunk. See "Manuskript zur Sendung 'Guter Wille im Dschungel der Wirklichkeit,'" November 13, 1968, Bayerischer Rundfunk (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 IV). See also Ludwig Harms, "Widersprüche um die Biafra-Hilfe zwischen Kirche und Rotem Kreuz," *Die Welt*, November 25, 1968, 7; idem, "'Wir durften nicht mehr länger warten . . . ' Die Hilfsorganizationen verteidigen sich gegen die Vorwürfe," ibid., November 26, 1968, 7.

[82] Bernard D. Nicholls, "Letter to the Editor of the Times: Biafra's Rights," November 26, 1968 (OA, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 2).

[83] Idem to H. Leslie Kirkley, 05.12.1968 (OA, DIR/2/3/2/33).

doubts about the Ojukwu regime's "claim to legitimacy." Some, like Dr. Wolfgang Bulle, executive director of medical missions for the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, went further, suggesting that the Biafrans willingly sacrificed millions of lives to garner international sympathy and support. Bulle lamented that the international press and publics had been fooled by Biafran propaganda that presented the conflict as a genocidal religious war. For him, the conflict was "'purely political' and 'purely domestic', a contest between native factions to determine which shall run the country [. . .]."[84]

The Biafran leadership also lost – or alienated – some of their vital international partners. In October 1968, the secessionists and their American gunrunner Henry Wharton parted ways after a dispute about the latter's loyalty.[85] In a meeting with Ojukwu in December 1968 Lord Fenner Brockway and James Griffiths explained that although both of them "have been to many African countries," they did not "think we have ever loved a country or loved a people more than we have during this last week in Biafra [. . .]."[86] After their return, however, the two parliamentarians privately indicated their frustration with Ojukwu's tough position on negotiations of relief, and publicly declared that, as Brockway wrote in a letter to the editor of *The Times*, nobody who knows General Gowon could believe "that he is deliberately intent on the genocide of the Ibo people [. . .]."[87] Dame Margery Perham, noted writer on African affairs and former Oxford tutor, still held sympathies for the Biafrans when Lagos invited her to visit the federally held parts of the country in the late summer of 1968. During her stay, she changed her mind and arranged for a radio broadcast during which she urged General Ojukwu to surrender. After speaking to military and political personnel on the Federal side, Perham said that she had concluded the fears of genocide were unfounded.[88] Another major blow for the Biafrans was the August 1968 resignation of Robert Goldstein as their PR consultant in the United States. In February 1968, Goldstein had admitted to

84 "Physician's Report: Biafrans Blamed for Their Suffering," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, March 14, 1969 (NARA RG 200, ARC 1965–1979, Box 65, DR-900.02 Lutheran Church Mission Synod).

85 American Embassy London to Department of State, October 30, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Pol 27 Biafra-Nigeria, Box 1877); Alexander Mitchell, "Gunrunner is Fired, Called an Enemy Agent," *The Washington Post*, October 29, 1968, A15.

86 "Brockway and Griffiths Visit Ojukwu," 341.

87 Bernard D. Nicholls to Kirkley," December 21, 1968 (OXA, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 2); Fenner Brockway, "War in Nigeria," *The Times*, November 12, 1968, 9.

88 Margery Perham, "*Why Biafran Leaders Should Surrender*," *The Times*, September 12, 1968, 9; idem, "A letter to General Gowon," *Spectator*, January 31, 1969, 132–3. For reactions see: W. R. Haydon, "Memorandum: Our Public Line on Nigeria," October

a US State Department official that "[d]espite his original desire only to 'make a dollar'," he had "become 'emotionally involved' in 'Biafra's' cause."[89] Just over a year later, that emotional involvement had turned into disappointment. By then Biafra's former spin doctor was now sure that, "Ojukwu was using these starving children to get military concessions, possibly, at the negotiating table," as he explained in a May 1969 interview on BBC.[90]

Some Biafra activists tried to counter the narrative that they were naïve do-gooders duped by a well-executed propaganda campaign, often by reinforcing Biafran genocide claims. One of the individuals who remained whole-heartedly devoted to the Biafran cause even after the end of Biafra was Elfriede Reinke, editor of the *Biafra Nachrichten*. A firm believer in the righteousness of her cause, she criticized Catholic organizations like Caritas and Misereor for their cooperation with the Federal Nigerian government to bring relief to the war victims. They had become, she said, mere "lackey[s] of the Nigerian military government."[91] Reinke believed that Germans' assessments of the Biafra situation were clouded by their Nazi past: Germans, particularly mistrustful of propaganda because of their country's history, were easy to convince that "a political dictatorship would be at work, when in reality the recognized leader of a people fighting for survival tries to make his and his people's voice heard."[92] But what Reinke failed to acknowledge was that it was not just Germans who disapproved of Biafran propaganda. Such reactions against the Biafran campaign had become widespread internationally by the end of the conflict in 1970.

Even as some activists conceded Biafra as a lost cause, others tried to translate the campaign into an international network of human rights activists in a post-Biafra age. On a weekend in late May 1970, representatives of Biafra committees from 12 countries met in Liège to see if "an

21, 1968 (UK NA FCO 26/299) and Yakubu Gowon, "Letter to Dame Margery Perham," October 28, 1968 (OXA, COM 3/1/1: Confidential Papers on Nigeria/Biafra 1968–70). See also Dent, "Nigerian Civil War," and Faught, *Into Africa*, 147–51.

[89] Robert Smith, "Memorandum of Conversation. Relationship between Goldstein & Associates and the 'Republic of Biafra,'" February 14, 1968 (NARA RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Political Aff. & REL Biafra-NIG, Box 1872).

[90] Qtd. Davis, *Interpreters for Nigeria*, 114.

[91] Letter of Elfriede Reinke, September 6, 1970 (AEK Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 VI.); "Harry Huiskamp zur Lage in Nigeria: Warten auf die Ernte . . . Aber: 'Die These vom Völkermord kann ich nicht unterstützen,'" June 15, 1970 (ibid.); H. Merz (Misereor), "Misereor Rundbrief," December 17, 1970 (ibid.).

[92] Elfriede Reinke, "Biafra und die Deutschen: Reaktionen auf eine Artikelserie von Werner Holzer," *Biafra-Nachrichten*, November 15, 1970, No. 6, 4. See also Misereor to Elfriede Reinke, December 22, 1970 (ibid.); Elfriede Reinke to Misereor, December 23, 1970 (ibid.).

International coalition to work on other human rights problems" could be created. Paul Connett, head of the ACKBA, was one of the driving forces behind International Conscience in Action, as this coalition was christened. Tying the network's agenda to the imagery of borders and blockades so present during the Biafran crisis, Connett envisioned "a coalition which would aim to break the blockade which separates man from human rights, human needs and human compassion." The charter specified that the aim was "to protect human rights (and to reintroduce the idea that they are as important as the rights of states)." These human rights were not only the rights of individuals, but also the collective rights of groups: "In particular the ICA will fight any attempt to destroy a group of people, its right to life, property, identity, and future [. . .]."[93] Their efforts were in vain. The network dissolved after a few months.[94] After Biafra had been consigned to history, the Biafra lobby dissolved as well. The founders of International Conscience in Action were some of the cause's last holdouts, and as such had trouble gaining the traction – or the moral capital – such a movement needs.[95] The only group from the coalition that was to outlive Biafra for more than a few months was the Hamburg-based Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, which evolved into the Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker in 1970.[96] Yet even if their success story is exceptional, it is also paradigmatic of the changes in the field of rights-based activism. In tune with their Biafra campaign, the organization continued to work on issues such as minority rights and genocide prevention, remaining at the margins of the mainstream of human rights activism focused on individual rights.[97]

Conclusion

At the heart of Biafra's global moment lay a basic friction: observed through the lens of humanitarianism, the conflict appeared to be a "human problem." But Biafra was primarily a political project. Claims of genocide and the icon of the "Biafran babies" were used to garner sympathy for the Biafran cause. However, during the course of the war, it became increasingly questionable whether the Biafran cause merited any support at all. For Biafra, the loss of international reputation

[93] Paul Connett, "Conference Report," *International Conscience in Action* 3 (June 1970), unpaged.
[94] See, e.g., Hannah Baneth to Tilman Zülch, May 12, 1970 (GFBVA, Biafra allgemein 1968–78).
[95] For a colourful example of such reproaches see Kennedy Lindsay to Elfriede Reinke, August 8, 1970 (ibid.).
[96] See letter by Tilman Zülch, February 21, 1977 (ibid., Biafra Korrespondenz 1972–82).
[97] Wildenthal, "Imagining."

was decisive: once the secessionist regime's esteem had crumbled, the wider transnational campaign on their behalf began to dissolve as well. The secessionists' main capital within international diplomacy was of a moral nature: they needed good publicity to garner transnational support. In contrast, the FMG only needed to secure the continued support of governments. But the image of the FMG was also far from impeccable. Gowon had a lot of sympathizers, but serious concerns about the "hawks" in the government and the field remained. Moreover, Federal forces were responsible for killing ICRC staff and downing aircraft flying for the Swedish Red Cross. In June 1969, Lagos declared August R. Lindt, the ICRC special representative to Nigeria, *persona non grata*.[98] In the view of Lagos and many other contemporary observers, Nigerian sovereignty and humanitarian demands contradicted each other. Even if the idea of genocide was a propaganda invention, what the elites and governments on both sides of the front lines between Nigeria and Biafra shared was a disregard for the welfare of the lower strata of the population, which were hit hard by the war.[99]

In effect the Nigerian Civil War helped produce a loss of confidence in postcolonial governments *per se*. The conflict made clear that governmental actors – probably on both sides – were willing to gamble with human lives in a poker game of power politics. In the years to come, the convictions expressed by humanitarian activists during the Biafran crisis in the idiom of breaking down borders would come to appeal to increasing numbers of contemporaries. The idea that human rights and genocide prevention should transcend the sanctity of national sovereignty would come to be central tenets of international political thought.

[98] Forsythe, *Humanitarian Politics*, 185–92.
[99] For a source example see, e.g., "Nigeria: Champagne and Starvation," *Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 1970, E4.

10 The Afterlives of Biafra

Toward the end of 1968, the current of petitions on Biafra sent to the United Nations had dried up.[1] Yet in May 1969, a new, if decidedly smaller, wave of letters protesting the actions of the FMG rolled into the United Nations.[2] Although they were few in number, they pointed to a change within the field of human rights advocacy in the years to come. Most of these petitions aimed at the release of a prisoner of conscience: Wole Soyinka. The Yoruba novelist and playwright, already an important public intellectual, had been jailed by Lagos in the autumn of 1967.[3] Soyinka had clandestinely traveled to the secessionist state to try to move the Biafran head of state Ojukwu to arrange for a peace deal. Lagos – concerned about the possible disloyalty of Midwestern Nigerians like Soyinka – imprisoned him and a number of other intellectuals, most of them Yoruba, without trial on charges of treason.[4]

International protests were slow to develop. Yet by spring 1969 they had been set in motion,[5] taking the form of a letter campaign initiated by Amnesty International. A member of Amnesty lamented that the "lack of proper legal practice in this case is horrifying. That it should happen to anyone is a shame to us all, but that it should assail the human rights of one of the black people's most able artists is truly a disgrace."[6] A

[1] Five petitions dating from December 1968 are held in the archives. UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part G.

[2] UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part H.

[3] On Soyinka see Msiska, *Postcolonial Identity*.

[4] See Soyinka's autobiographical account of his imprisonment, *The Man Died*.

[5] Alfred Friendly, Jr., "Nigeria Detains Playwright after Cease-Fire Plea," *New York Times*, September 2, 1967, 3; Letter to Secretary-General U Thant. May 9, 1968 (UNOG UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part B); "Chinua Achebe on Biafra," *Transition* 36 (1968), 37. "Did He . . . Or Didn't He?" *The Guardian*, July 24, 1968, 6; "Soyinka Writes from Prison," *The Guardian*, May 28, 1969, 10; Charles R. Larson, "The Trial of Wale Soyinka," *The Nation*, September 15, 1969, 259–60. Some poems were smuggled out of prison. See Wole Soyinka, *Poems from Prison*; Paul Johnson to Harold Wilson, March 20, 1969 (UK NA, FCO 65/453).

[6] Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, May 15, 1969 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part H). See also Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, June 6, 1969 (ibid.).

number of letters decried that the FMG used "the tactic of a dictator" to suppress dissenting voices.[7] The language employed in these letters differs from the rhetoric of calls for action on behalf of Biafra, leaning on the language of democracy pitted against dictatorship, rather than the apolitical humanitarian tone Biafran activists had favored.[8]

In October 1969, Lagos released Soyinka and 150 other civilians.[9] The effect the letters and editorials played in the FMG's decision is hard to ascertain.[10] But the petitions on behalf of Soyinka represented an early form of the version of human rights that would – as dominant accounts have it – win the day in the years after the fall of Biafra: advocacy by individuals for individuals. In this, its moment of breakthrough, scholars argue that human rights advocacy had little to do with concerns about genocide prevention or global suffering.[11] Yet, in many ways, the Biafran campaign was similar to what came later. Organized grass-roots advocacy defined human rights after their breakthrough as they had during the Biafran campaign: NGOs and other non-state actors tried to move governments and IOs to action, adeptly using the channels of modern mass media to disseminate their message.[12] Biafra activism was also similar to later human rights campaigns in its forging of "odd alliances": liberal leftists and early neo-conservatives, Christians and atheists, students and pensioners were united in these networks.[13]

Yet a crucial difference between these two versions of human rights can be seen in the absence of a language of dictatorship and totalitarian rule – with all its political implications – from the Biafran campaign. As Mark Mazower has shown, the human rights breakthrough of the 1970s would not have been thinkable without the supporting role of US economic, financial, and political power. Crucially, in the context of the Helsinki network and Human Rights Watch, human rights became a Cold War weapon, deployed against the Soviet Union.[14] But this

[7] "Sample of three similar communications from individuals in the United States of America, May 2 and 5,1969" (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part H).

[8] However, as an exception see the language used by some Biafrans in exile, e.g. "Biafranische Studenten in Österreich an deutsche Botschaft in Wien," June 28, 1967 (PA AA B 34/710); Nwankwo and Ifejika, *The Making of a Nation*, 6.

[9] Charles Mohr, "Nigerian Writer Freed by Lagos," *New York Times*, October 9, 1969, 19; "Nigerian Playwright Released," *The Washington Post*, October 23, 1969, H3.

[10] G. David Anderson to D. McEntee, January 9, 1969 (UK NA, FCO 65/453); Anderson to McEntee, January 28, 1969 (ibid.); E. G. Willan to John Wilson, June 10, 1969 (ibid.); John Wilson to Hugh J. Arbuthnott, October 3, 1969 (ibid.).

[11] Moyn, *Last Utopia*.

[12] See Cmiel, "Emergence" and "Recent History"; and, for various perspective Eckel and Moyn, eds., *Breakthrough*.

[13] See, e.g., Eckel, "Utopie der Moral.

[14] Mazower, *Governing*. The best study of the Helsinki human rights network is Snyder, *Human Rights*.

political dimension was largely absent during Biafra, when Cold War sensibilities – with Washington's transatlantic partner in London supporting Lagos – restrained US support for humanitarian intervention. In their rhetoric, human rights and humanitarian advocacy are both frequently pitted against the power of states. However, both human rights and humanitarian advocacy groups are also often dependent on the support of states – in particular Western states close to the centers of global power – to bolster their efforts.

In this chapter, I situate the Biafran campaign in the history of human rights and humanitarianism since the 1970s. I will analyze the Biafran War as a decisive moment of transition for the history of human rights and humanitarianism in the twentieth century. It signaled the emergence of a new form of political activism promoted by non-state actors in particular. But it was also an experience of disillusionment, connected with the wider loss of trust in postcolonial state actors that dealt a serious blow to the relationship between Western activists and non-Western political movements. This disillusionment helped paved the way for more overtly interventionist creeds of Third Worldism, human rights activism and humanitarian action.

Two interconnected fields are relevant here: international law and the advocacy of non-state actors.[15] With regards to the Biafran conflict and its aftermath, two national cases – within their transnational and global contexts – have been particularly important for the subsequent history of human rights. The activities of American international lawyers who have embarked on a campaign to resurrect the notion of "humanitarian intervention" are significant in that they helped lay the groundwork for a turn toward a more interventionist stance in international legal thinking. This project would only come to full fruition after the end of the Cold War. By then, it had joined forces with a powerful line of argument and action originating in France: *sans-frontiérisme*. Under this banner, French activists and intellectuals created new avowedly non-political creeds that grew increasingly powerful in the wake of Biafra. By the 1980s, French activist and politicians – in cases like that of Bernard Kouchner, a single individual played both roles – begun advocating a *devoir* or a *droit d'ingérence*. These two – and other – currents of idealism increasingly flowed into each other in the 1980s, and in particular after the end of the Cold War. In the 1990s, the "responsibility to protect" was cast as the mold for UN resolutions. In that historical moment, human rights, humanitarianism, and genocide prevention had begun to form an at

[15] On the cooperation between lawyers and activists in advancing a human rights agenda, see Moyn, *Last Utopia*.

times myopic, but nevertheless firmly integrated conglomeration of convictions on which the formulation of foreign – as well as domestic – policy has, since then, been increasingly based.[16] The Biafran episode offers us a window through which we can see this new global order emerge – both despite the dramatic loss of international interest in the conflict since late 1968, and also because of it.

International Law, US Empire, and the Resurrection of Humanitarian Intervention

Shortly after the Biafran War ended, newspaper readers in the West felt as if they were experiencing *déjà vu*: the specter of genocide haunted the postcolonial world once again, now in East Pakistan, where the Bengali population was being targeted by aggression that was partly religious and partly racial, as international media reports emphasized. The situation was also worsened by a cyclone that had hit the region the previous year. International organizations and non-state actors responded by setting up a large relief operation. "[I]t's just like Biafra," President Nixon told Kissinger.[17] Yet this time, the result was different: East Pakistan's secession led to the creation of the sovereign state of Bangladesh. In contrast to the conflict in West Africa, the complexities of Cold War coalition building worked to the independence movement's advantage. India, Bangladesh's ally, had received the support of the Soviet Union, and – by weakening neighboring Pakistan – became the dominant regional power in South Asia.[18]

This mélange of postcolonial conflict, humanitarian emergency, and Cold War politics was also the matrix in which the late twentieth century turn toward the law of humanity was fostered. In view of postcolonial governments' unbridled violence and blatant disregard for the human rights of parts of their population, international lawyers felt called upon to act.[19] Biafra was one of the crises that moved American lawyers to try to resurrect the concept and practice of humanitarian intervention, which, as most accounts have it, had emerged in the nineteenth century, but foundered in the era of the world wars.[20]

[16] On the role of humanitarianism in contemporary politics, see Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*.
[17] "Transcript of Telephone Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger," March 30, 1971 *FRUS, 1969–1976, Volume XI*, no. 15.
[18] Raghavan, *1971*.
[19] On Biafra as an example of the need for reforming humanitarian law, see e.g. Bothe, "Rechtsprobleme," 24.
[20] Bass, *Freedom's Battle*; yet see also Moyn, "Spectacular Wrongs" and, on nineteenth-century interventions, Rodogno, *Against Massacre*.

One of the main points of departure for this discussion was a petition titled "Humanitarian Intervention to Protect the Ibos," which Yale Law School professors Michael Reisman and Myres S. McDougal had filed to the United Nations in September 1968.[21] As a legal and political act, the document's submission was inconsequential: the "world organization" did not respond to this or other calls for action and limited its response to humanitarian aid through UNICEF. However, the petition had a second life: the text was circulated in the wider circles of international legal scholars and practitioners, and was one of the central texts discussed at the first major academic conference devoted to the problem of humanitarian intervention, held in Charlottesville, Virginia, in March 1972. Co-financed by the Carnegie Endowment, the conference assembled a number of the US's leading international lawyers as well as legal advisors to the American government. In 1973, the petition was published in a volume of texts that emerged from the conference.[22]

The moral indignation found in McDougal and Reisman's petition was still palpable four years later in Charlottesville. In a forceful intervention, Michael Reisman explains that he had come to the conference because he was "an unwilling participant in the "politics of empathy." When human beings are killed in another part of the globe, it upsets me very much and I want to do something about it." Images of suffering such as the starving Biafrans impelled him to try "fashioning an instrument in international law for mitigating these horrors."[23] Most of the lawyers assembled in Charlottesville agreed: intervening in humanitarian crises like was not only a question of legal right, but also of morality. For Rutgers law professor Tom J. Farer, Yale law school professor Arthur Leff was right when he called upon contemporaries to forget about "abstract garbage" like international law in view of the famine in Biafra, as the latter wrote in a letter to the *New York Times* in 1968. Farer quoted Leff's letter, which expressed the "instinct of every decent person," at length. The choices were clear: "When people are dying, you act. If they are starving, you send in food. If they are sick, you send in medicine. And if they are being murdered? Or starved slowly? Or degraded? Do you send in troops?"[24] Writing "in the wake of Biafra," the Virginia Law School

21 Reisman and McDougal, "Humanitarian Intervention."

22 See e.g. Sol Neil Corbin to Cohen, September 30, 1968 (SCRBC: Biafra War Collection (1966–70), MG 788, Box 2, Folder 14); Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*, 42; Lillich, ed., *Humanitarian Intervention and the United Nations*.

23 "Conference Proceedings Part I: The Past," in Lillich, ed., *Humanitarian Intervention* 17.

24 Arthur Allen Leff, "Letter to the Editor: Food for Biafrans," *New York Times*, October 4, 1968, 46; Farer, "Humanitarian Intervention: The View from Charlottesville," Lillich, ed., *Humanitarian Intervention*, 149–64.

Professor Richard B. Lillich similarly argued that the use of force in humanitarian interventions was something that needed to be regulated, but should not be taboo.[25] For Burns H. Weston, University of Iowa law professor, the question that the group of legal scholars needed to answer was "what we do when it is five minutes to midnight, when it is, in fact, a horrible genocidal conflict," like in Biafra.[26] In such "ticking time bomb" scenarios, there is no time for a painstaking, time-consuming effort to understand a political crisis; according to the compulsory logic of imminent action, the use of force for humanitarian purposes can not be ruled out when a catastrophe may be prevented.

As Martti Koskenniemi has emphasized, the "politics" of the work of international lawyers needs to be considered to understand the mechanics of international legal thinking.[27] Primarily, it was American legal scholars who sought legal solutions to the problems of international society.[28] Similarly, the growing body of international legal texts devoted to the creation of international mechanisms of humanitarian intervention was international in its ambitions, but its origins were decidedly American.

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that the sole dissenting view in the Charlottesville discussion came from the participant who was least closely associated with American academia and politics. The Argentine scholar and diplomat Richard Pedro Quadri, pleading for a more international approach, remarked that he had "heard that we are talking of international law, but very frankly we come to the foreign policy of the United States." He insisted that no "kind of intervention, any kind whatsoever, in any country" could be accepted; the inherent dangers of abuse would be too imminent. Separating humanitarian aims and geopolitical interests would be nearly impossible.[29]

However, in Charlottesville, this was a minority position. Most of the conference participants wanted to breathe life into a vision of humanitarian intervention. McDougal and Reisman, as representatives of Yale Law School, politically close to Washington, promoted a flexible,

[25] Lillich, "Intervention to Protect," 219.

[26] "Conference Proceedings Part III: The Future," Lillich, *Humanitarian Intervention*, here 86, 89.

[27] Koskenniemi's *Gentle Civilizer* is the essential starting point on the history of international law. For a critique see Moyn, "International Law."

[28] See also Baxter et al., "Legal Consequences," 82; Carl, "American Assistance"; "Nigeria/Biafra: Armed Conflict with a Vengeance," 10–4. For a non-US example see Francis Wodie, "sécession du Biafra." For a balanced ex post perspective on the notion of humanitarian intervention in Biafra see Wiseberg, "Humanitarian Intervention."

[29] Conference Proceedings Part II: The Present," Lillich, *Humanitarian Intervention*, 72, 73.

non-formalist policy-oriented approach to international law.[30] McDougal saw international law as a channel to promote and protect America's global interests.[31] Before other law schools embraced human rights law, McDougal and his associates were already incorporating "human dignity" – and to a lesser degree human rights – as central elements of their jurisprudence. Morality and power, they hoped, could enter a mutually beneficial relationship through an American hegemony driven by universal human values.[32]

A closer look at the petition's line of argument can help to elucidate the kinds of intervention they called for. Reisman and McDougal first review the "legal and policy foundations" of humanitarian intervention. Revising scholarly positions since, in particular, Grotius, the Yale professors unequivocally explain that international policy "has been firmly and continuously for humanitarian intervention in these extreme cases where the most minimal of human rights were in jeopardy." When the right to life of civilians is at stake, forceful intervention in the territory of another state is not only permissible, but, for states that have signed the UN Charter and the Genocide Convention, even mandatory.[33] This was certainly not the standard reading of the UN Charter, which was largely understood to endorse the principle of non-intervention.

The petition's narrative moves from nineteenth-century interventions – mostly of Western powers who came to the protection of Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire – to the present. In spite of its colonial underpinnings, many international lawyers embraced these as precedents. For instance, Lillich argued that the "doctrine of humanitarian intervention [...] should have been invoked long before" in Biafra: the situation found there "would have been ideal for collective humanitarian intervention of the nineteenth century type."[34] Again, there were some critical voices. As J. W. Samuels explained, there were "many difficulties" with interventions of the type

> where so-called civilized nations have acted to curb abuse of human rights by "uncivilized" nations [...]. [T]he political world has changed drastically since the nineteenth century. No longer would a state dare call itself "civilized" as opposed to some other "uncivilized" state.[35]

[30] On the close relationships that Myres McDougal entertained with a number of legal advisors to the government and high-ranking civil servants see his papers in Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, Myres S. McDougal Papers, Manuscript Group Number 1636, Accession 94-M-59.

[31] Koskenniemi, *Gentle Civilizer*, 474–94.

[32] Moyn, *Last Utopia*, 195.

[33] Reisman and McDougal, "Humanitarian Intervention," 178.

[34] Lillich, "Intervention," 216.

[35] Samuels, "Humanitarian Relief in Man-Made Disasters: International Law, Government Policy and the Nigerian Experience," 8.

However, not all contemporary lawyers and activists agreed that this language should be discarded. Many supporters of the Biafran cause had been less reluctant to talk of "civilized states" and their responsibility to act. This may well be a more honest depiction, given the shared characteristics of humanitarian interventionism in the nineteenth and the late twentieth century.[36]

Through their projection of a moral history of humanitarian intervention, the international lawyers firmly inscribed their project into the colonial traditions of the discipline. Europe's colonial expansion was driven by international lawyers, most of them liberals intent on "civilizing," a process they wholeheartedly welcomed. What was called the "standard of civilization" distinguished between sovereign Western powers and their adversaries outside the law who could, after a successful colonial "civilizing mission," attain an equal legal status in the future. Through the notion of "sovereignty," the colonial contexts of its emergence were hardwired into the discipline's fabric.[37] In postcolonial times, this did not vanish, despite the universalization of sovereignty through global decolonization. Within non-Western states (but not only there), the treatment of minorities could continue to relegate peoples to places outside the law. Through Western measures of interventionism – for instance, in the current "war on terror" against adversaries placed outside the law, but also in humanitarian interventions – these tendencies again came to full fruition on an international level.[38]

For Reisman and McDougal – as well as most of the other lawyers – the main difference between the nineteenth-century interventions and the present cases were the existence of the United Nations and the legal documents associated with the organization's founding. However, most of the Charlottesville discussants agreed that the UN's record in crisis situations was abysmal. Yet they agreed that UN intervention would be hard to come by, at least as long as the General Assembly was dominated by Third World states and the Security Council blocked by Soviet obstructionism.[39] Ellen Frey-Wouters, a professor of political science at the City University of New York, similarly lamented that the "regional organizations in the developing world have engaged in generally

[36] On these parallels see Brauman, "Indigènes"; Wallerstein, *European Universalism*. On the concept of "civilization" in international politics see also Mazower, "End of Civilization."

[37] See here esp. is Koskenniemi, *Gentle Civilizer*.

[38] The key text on the colonial and postcolonial dimensions of international law is Anghie, *Imperialism*. On the role of international law in European expansion see also Fisch, *Expansion*.

[39] "Conference Proceedings Part III," 107.

ineffective activities intended to safeguard fundamental human rights."[40] Some scholars implied that the notions of the Biafran War as an "internal matter" or an "African matter" were counterproductive, as only a full and thorough internationalization of the conflict would have enabled the right actions.[41]

This position matched with a conviction that was beginning to hold sway among Western politicians, diplomats, and international lawyers at the time: that Third World states used a "double standard" measuring human rights abuses along a color line. Outrage, they thought, would only be heard when the perpetrators were white. Rupert Emerson, an American political scientist and an expert on decolonization, wrote that the

> principle of sovereignty still reigns. To cite only a single example, the problems of Biafra, including mass murders and a long civil war costly in human lives and misery, were regarded by the international authorities of Africa and of the world at large as a domestic concern of Nigeria in which they had no standing save to help to bring the war to an end, essentially on Nigeria's terms.

Emerson called for a reconsideration of the principle of non-intervention. "Have not some of the 'barbarous acts' which erupted in the Third World" outraged the "the conscience of mankind" as defined in the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?[42]

The result was an assertion that Western powers – in particular the United States – needed to intervene in crisis situations, even over the protests of non-Western states and regional organizations. Ralph Zacklin, director of the Carnegie Endowment's international law program, stated what otherwise would have remained the elephant in the Charlottesville conference room: the readiness to resort to unilateral action if the United Nations were not ready to act. "[I]t is unrealistic to look toward multilateral or regional action, given the present geopolitical situation."[43] According to Reisman and McDougal, it was clear that "nonorganizational interventions for humanitarian considerations may be lawful" since this was "clearly demonstrated by the cases reviewed."[44] The cases referred to, however, were nineteenth-century colonial as well as US Cold War-era interventions – both highly contested political

[40] Ibid., 96.
[41] See e.g. Nixon, "Self-Determination," 473–97, esp. 494–7. See also Samuels, "Humanitarian Relief."
[42] Emerson, "Fate of Human Rights," 226. See also Moyn, *Last Utopia*, 118–9. For similar reproaches written by Biafrans, see Letter to UNCHR, October 18, 1966 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part A), 1, 2.
[43] "Conference Proceedings Part III," 90–1.
[44] Reisman and McDougal, "Humanitarian Intervention," 193.

measures, and certainly not "pure" humanitarian interventions pursued in a pristine sphere of *Moralpolitik*.

What these lawyers ultimately imagined was a US-led coalition of Western powers that would use the alleged legal norm of humanitarian intervention to project their global hegemony. In the decade after Biafra, the United Nations would need to be circumvented to pursue this project; dominated by the Third World bloc and obstructed by Cold War rivalries, the organization was, as many felt, too sluggish to be moved to humanitarian action along these lines. The General Assembly, patterned on the model of a national parliament, was thought to be particularly vulnerable. Postcolonial crises like Biafra gave a further boost to the disillusionment with the United Nations, which was particularly strong in Washington, the American population in general, and US-based international lawyers in particular. Two of the most influential book accounts criticizing the United Nations that appeared at the time had been penned by pro-Biafran public intellectuals: William Buckley, Jr. and Conor Cruise O'Brien.[45]

Only once international lawyers, activists, and diplomats engaged in a joint venture to bypass the world organization and use other venues for the promotion of human rights and US power would they be more successful.[46] The creation of IOs closely aligned with Washington – especially the World Bank and the World Trade Organization – were key instruments in the realization of this project in the last decade of the Cold War. However, it was only after the end of the Cold War that a new international order could emerge, one based on the supremacy of American power. By the second half of the 1990s, the United Nations moved back toward a policy line affirmative of US hegemony and the law of humanity. Human rights and the principle – if not always the practice – of humanitarian intervention were then able to reach their maximum popularity. Yet a number of historical processes had to merge to form this new global order.[47]

France, Biafra, and the Rise of Sans-Frontiérisme

After the end of Biafra, the pro-Biafran transnational network of activists also quickly came apart, with one major exception: France. Shortly after the secessionists' surrender, *Guardian* journalist Walter Schwarz already evoked "Biafra's embarrassing ghost," that still "lingers on" on the other side of the channel. "A Biafra lobby without a Biafra is odd enough in

[45] O'Brien and Topolski, *United Nations*; Buckley, Jr., *United Nations Journal*.
[46] Moyn, *Last Utopia*.
[47] Mazower, *Governing*. See also Hoffmann, "Human Rights."

itself." Yet French activist groups like Offroy's Comité d'Action pour le Biafra continued to issue warnings of the genocide in Biafra.[48] Offroy and his Comité remained highly active for months after the end of the conflict: they wrote editorials in Gaullist and Christian newspapers and organized a "solidarity meeting with Biafra" in front of Les Invalides, a major site of national commemoration in the heart of Paris.[49] In France, unlike other countries, the campaign had not lost its moral capital and continued for longer than anywhere else.

The French Biafra committee with the most lasting impact was the Comité de lutte contre le génocide au Biafra. Within a year of the end of Biafra, the Comité merged with an ad-hoc group set up by the medical journal *Tonus* in response to the humanitarian crisis in East Pakistan,[50] and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) was born. Out of MSF's efforts to provide medical care to victims in humanitarian emergency situations evolved the larger conglomerate of *sans-frontiérisme*, a French ethics of interventionism that became a global trademark of non-state human rights advocacy in the late twentieth century. The first members of this new breed of activists had been shaped in the hospitals of beleaguered Biafra, where they served with the French Red Cross: Bernard Kouchner and his associates, the self-proclaimed inventors of this form of idealistic thought and action.[51] These French doctors had experienced the suffering of a group of innocent victims firsthand in the secessionist enclave and returned to Paris to revolutionize international politics.[52] As they explained, what they found in the refugee camps and medical centers of Biafra was the suffering "Third World"; in their narratives, these humanitarians enact the part of the explorers of a *terra incognita* of postcolonial misery.[53]

Yet the story that MSF's "Biafrais" constructed about the operation in West Africa cannot be taken at face value. According to their self-stylization, the French doctors positioned themselves against the ICRC's policy of neutrality, insisting instead that they would speak out against the atrocities they witnessed in the field. Yet the public measures to

[48] Walter Schwarz, "Biafra's embarrassing ghost lingers on," *The Guardian*, January 28, 1970, 3.

[49] Letter of Raymond Offroy, January 14, 1970 (CAD Afrique-Levant, Nigéria 1966–72, No. 20/2); Marc Barbey to Maurice Schumann, January 29, 1970 (ibid.); Raymond Offroy, "Pitié pour les enfants du Biafra," *La Nation*, June 30, 1970 (ibid.); Raymond Offroy, "Le drame des enfants biafrais," *La Croix*, August 26, 1970, 2

[50] "Médecins sans frontières," *Tonus* 449, January 11, 1971, 2.

[51] On MSF see Redfield, *Life in Crisis*, and for a critical biography of Kouchner see Péan, *monde*.

[52] See e.g. Bernard Kouchner, "Préface: Le devoir d'ingérence."

[53] Ross, *May '68*, 156–8.

"speak out" against genocide that Kouchner and the others had taken during the conflict were not as drastic as their ex post narrative suggests. In their public statements at the time they did not move beyond any allegations that had not already been discussed publicly before. The genocide charges had already been the subject of mass media reports for months when the "French Doctors" issued their first warning.[54]

Yet in the ensuing years, the principle to act according to one's personal convictions – convictions that were based on universal morals – became the central tenet of *sans-frontiérisme*. The idea of *témoignage*, of speaking out in public, was central, and contained an implied critique of the ICRC. To some degree, this position was fueled by the view that, when the Holocaust was unfolding, the ICRC had failed to speak out in time to save the lives of millions of Jews; the criticism Kouchner and the MSF leveled against the Red Cross operation in Nigeria was in part that the organization had repeated its "failure" in the face of genocidal horror.[55] This analogy was not only an impetus during the actual crisis, but also for its narrative construction afterwards. The rise of Holocaust memory was a crucial factor in the humanitarians' public ascendance. These two processes coalesced in their *mise-en-scène* of the figure of the "witness." Like the quasi-sacral figure of the Holocaust survivor, the humanitarians returned from the abyss, having seen the horrors of this world. Often working together, they now wanted to undo such wrongs and turn this world into a better place.[56]

Moreover, the activists entered a synergetic relationship with media representatives; ably deploying humanitarianism's moral capital, this joint venture was mutually beneficial for journalists and humanitarians alike. The media campaigns enacted during the concurrent postcolonial crises that MSF helped to publicize in the West not only raised awareness of Third World emergencies. It also provided the protagonists of the movement with substantial control over the interpretation of their own activities. With the aid of publishing houses, newspapers, radio, and television, they regularly supplied publics with their reflections on the state of Western ethics of care.[57]

Even though the principle of *témoignage* is now closely associated with *sans-frontiérisme*, these forms of activism were far from unique to the campaign of the "French doctors" during the Biafran crisis. The creed of "witnessing" and of taking a public stance through mass media

[54] As a source example see for instance Max Récamier and Bernard Kouchner, "Deux Médecins Français Témoignent," *Le Monde*, November 27, 1968, 15. See further Desgrandchamps, "Revenir sur le mythe"; and Lavoinne, "Médecins en guerre."

[55] Brauman, *Humanitaire le dilemme*, 21.

[56] Wieviorka, *Era of the Witness*.

[57] Taithe, "Reinventing," 147–58.

outlets were central tenets of Biafra activism *tout court* – not just in France, but all over the global North. Furthermore, the language of emotionality on which the French doctors relied heavily, was strongly reminiscent of the language that many Biafra activists and journalists had used. Bertrand Taithe succinctly describes one of the tropes of the MSF narrative about Biafra, which proclaims that "reason, and particularly *raison d'État*, is the enemy of humanity since individuals can change things by being there."[58] This juxtaposition binds together seemingly opposing sides: the post-*gauchiste* humanitarians and the Gaullists whom many of them had fought during the *événements* only shortly before. Both movements expressed their programs through languages privileging individual intuition and emotive sensibilities. Thus, the circles around Kouchner succeeded in turning a general feature of a large transnational campaign into a seemingly unique trait of their individual advocacy. In their accounts of the Biafran crisis, the French doctors had fought a lost cause against a world that refused to speak out. The activists' self-dramatization required major omissions of facts, though: it ignored the activities of an entire global network of like-minded people who had spoken out, including journalists, activists, and some politicians.[59]

Yet why could the Biafran campaign be turned into the myth of origins for such a movement in France but not elsewhere? And why did French activists succeed in re-narrating the events along these lines? There are a number of answers to these questions. First of all, to a large degree, the "French Doctors" were the "last men standing": many of the other activist groups that had emerged during Biafra had disappeared.[60] With the field left largely vacant, the French doctors could claim all the credit for themselves. Second, the MSF narrative in France could still be based on the perception of the Biafran campaign as an unquestionably good thing – a conviction that had collapsed virtually everywhere else by the end of the war. Third, the structure of the media event "Biafra" had, despite the quantity of ink spilled about the crisis, created few lasting effects and relatively little knowledge about the situation in Biafra. Thus, the French doctors could re-arrange the narrative about Biafra as they saw fit.

However, to understand the political context of MSF's campaign which allowed them to rewrite their history in Biafra, it is vital to explore the contemporary conditions that allowed for these constructions. In the years after Biafra's fall, French intellectual circles began

[58] Ibid., 149. [59] See e.g. Kouchner, *Charité Business*, 207–16.
[60] I consciously used the masculine form here. The humanitarian activist in this sense was a decidedly male figure. Ross, *May '68*, 164–5.

to embrace a new ethics: humanitarianism and human rights became new languages which intellectuals used to translate their political idealism into a post-revolutionary age. The *gauchiste* epiphany, the oft-told story goes, came with the French translation of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* in 1974, which sent shockwaves through Paris' intellectual circles. The book's "revelation" disillusioned the French left with Marxism in principle: in view of Stalinist terror, they were forced to discard their idealized visions of communisms. The role of the so-called *nouveaux philosophes* around Bernard-Henri Lévy ought not to be underestimated here. After their televised rupture with classical leftism, these public intellectuals had become national icons. The *telos* of revolution, which had defined most of the dominant intellectual currents of the *années soixante-huit*, crumbled under the weight of their incriminations.[61]

These developments had a large impact on the field of rights-based activism: this turn from ideology to moralism fueled the stellar rise of human rights convictions in French politico-intellectual circles. In a ritual of intellectual patricide, these new French intellectuals leveled caustic criticism against Sartre, *Übervater*-philosopher of the French New Left. Alongside his philosophy, they buried the ideals of *tiers-mondisme* with which he was identified. The lapsed leftists publicly denounced their former beliefs in Third Worldist revolutionary thought as the misguided thoughts of youth.[62] These conversions to ethics and a philosophy of rights resonated with Kouchnerian ideas – and these powerful new creeds marched forwards in lockstep.

Thus, the "philosophers on TV" and the celebrity humanitarians joined forces to promote the philosophy and the politics of human rights as a panacea to solve the myriad ills of a postcolonial world – and of a postcolonial France. In a number of highly publicized events, these doctors and their intellectual accomplices prescribed the remedy to the ills of a (post-) modern world.[63] In 1985, MSF founded the think tank Liberté Sans Frontières (LSF) to provide the intellectual and political groundwork for their idealism. At the LSF's first conference, a number of

[61] For an account along widely traditional lines see Horvath, "Solzhenitsyn Effect.'" Most East European dissidents were not primarily interested in a return in human rights, but in a return of the history of their suppressed nations, however. See Kopecek, "Human Rights." On the general process see Bourg, *Revolution to Ethics*; Christofferson, *French Intellectuals* and Wolin, "'Death of Man.'"

[62] For the *anti-tiers-mondiste* assaults from French intellectuals, activists and writes, see Chaliand, *Mythes révolutionnaires*; Burguière, ed., *tiers monde*; Bruckner, *sanglot*; Brauman, ed., *tiers-mondisme*. For an account which grasps the demise of the Third Worldist utopia in admirable lucidity see Malley, *Call from Algeria*, ch. 5.

[63] Ross, *May '68*, 158–69.

prestigious activists and intellectuals once again attacked revolutionary *tiers-mondisme* as a way to promote a new humanitarianism *à la française*.[64] The embrace of ethics in French intellectual circles thus affirmed a political position that had taken root during the Biafran conflict. Other crises further fueled the debate – notably, the fateful aftermath of the Vietnam War, including the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia to topple the genocidal Khmer Rouge, and the famine that the Communist Mengistu regime in Ethiopia had wrought on its own population. However, its main driving force was a primarily self-referential debate within a French left that had left its dreams of a revolutionary future behind.[65] The post-*gauchiste* intellectuals held up human rights as a fig leaf to cover their recent embrace of capitalism.[66]

As an effect, the political character of human rights – despite the language of de-politicization – was more clearly accentuated. In the wake of Solzhenitsyn, totalitarianism was denounced in all its guises; yet far more frequently than before, the guise being denounced was communism. But, perhaps even more importantly, the criticized governments were practically always those of postcolonial states. The former colonies' governments were *per se* expected to descend into totalitarian rule, and the states' populations became the quintessential victims to be protected from the yoke of their autocratic sovereigns.[67] Thus, these French intellectuals modified the Cold War logic of a division of the globe along ideological lines, yet the world was still divided into two. They directly identified "the West" with Democracy and human rights: the lands of the free were pitted against the global gulag, which had become a metaphorical description of the non-West *in toto*.[68]

Here, then, is a crucial difference between this view of the Third World in the late 1970s and 1980s and the Biafran campaign: at least initially, the Biafran government had acquired the sympathies of activists around the globe. Yet these hopes were to be frustrated. What was left after Biafra was a principal distrust of *any* governmental actors – at least in the Third World. According to this increasingly popular view of a postcolonial world in crisis, non-Western states became borderless "spaces of victimhood" and thus, in effect, spheres requiring intervention.[69] The logic of emergency prevents the assumption of the complex task of understanding a crisis; what remains are calls for immediate actions, possibly military. This new humanitarian interventionism had thus assumed some of the characteristics of its colonial predecessor.[70]

[64] Brauman, ed., *tiers-mondisme*; Davey, "Famine." [65] Davey, "Famine."
[66] Ross, "Ethics." [67] See e.g. Julliard, "Le tiers monde."
[68] Ross, *May '68*, 160–1. [69] Debrix, "Deterritorialised Territories."
[70] Some contemporaries observed this, see Garnier and Lew, "Wretched of the Earth"; Lacoste, *Contre les anti tiers-mondistes*; Liauzu, "Le tiersmondisme."

The turn to human rights and interventionism was thus deeply intertwined with a re-affirmation of the West and what is described as "Western values." Leading the way toward the affirmation of the *self* were organizations devoted to the help of the *other* – MSF in particular. Writers like the French philosopher Pascal Bruckner, also an associate of the *nouveaux philosophes* and LSF, urged Westerners to embrace their Western identity. In his "Le sanglot de l'Homme blanc," a philippic directed against leftist Third Worldism, he plays on the title of Rudyard Kipling's call on America to take on "The White Man's Burden" and to assume the responsibility of acting as a colonial power even if this selfless act will not be met with the due thankfulness.[71] For Bruckner, human rights were a universal value that was "without borders," but of distinctly Western – and indeed French – origin. In such texts, the previously seemingly dead idea of Western "civilization" was resurrected – rhetoric that strongly echoed that of the Biafran campaign.[72] In the writings of Bruckner and others, France, Western civilization and universal values became interchangeable. However, as a stark contrast to the virulent traditions of anti-Americanism in French thought – especially on the left – these intellectuals also viewed American power with increasing sympathy, as the most recent incarnation of Western civilization.[73]

Conclusion

Despite the increasingly intense debate, international law and politics were still far away from forging effective instruments of intervention in the early 1970s, at least according to the assessments of the lawyers at Charlottesville. And indeed, this program did not come to full fruition before the last two decades of the past century. Initially, these discussions were mostly limited to the American scene, at least within the more clearly defined limits of international legal discourse. Yet *sans-frontiérisme* later flowed into the project of a "law of humanity" that lawyers on the other side of the Atlantic were promoting; in the closing decades of the twentieth century, these two currents merged and flowed into the increasingly powerful stream of international human rights politics.

In its legal form, the French debate about *sans-frontiérisme* took off in the 1980s. Writing in the middle of the decade, Bernard Kouchner wrote that his goal was to "complete the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the name of a moral of extreme emergencies. The right to humanitarian intervention must be added to the Universal

[71] Bruckner, *sanglot*. On Kipling and the historical context see Kramer, *Blood*, esp. 11–12.
[72] Ross, *May '68*, 166. [73] See Judaken, "Alain Finkielkraut."

Declaration of Human Rights."[74] That, of course, never happened. Yet still, a shift toward recognizing such a right can be found in a number of UN resolutions that included the "duty" or "right to intervene."[75] That this "movement" was increasingly influential is also indicated by the list of participants at a conference on the topic in Paris in 1987: a number of human rights advocates, philosophers and other academics, as well as high-profile politicians from across the political spectrum in France, took part.[76]

The rise of *sans-frontiérisme* can be interpreted as a hint toward the transformations within the field of international human rights since the 1970s. Non-state actors became increasingly influential in international politics. Activists aligned in transnational networks promoting a politics of emotion going beyond the control of nation-states. However, the Paris conference also needs to be seen as evidence that this transformation cannot be reduced to a simplistic move toward transnationalization. This model, a popular one in recent historical literature, falls short of explaining the complexities of the multiple moments of the emergence of human rights. It does not sufficiently grasp the variegated coalitions between a myriad of actors that defined human rights politics, and downplays the role of geopolitical power in determining the actions of various states. Yet for the success of human rights and humanitarian politics, national governments are crucial – at least Western governments are. Without the support of national governments, translating human rights advocacy into human rights policy is near impossible, as evinced by Whitehall's policy line during the Biafran War: the Wilson government did not change its position decisively in spite of severe criticism for supporting an allegedly genocidal regime.

The French case was unique right from the start of the Biafran crisis. France was the only Western government that supported the Biafran cause. Accordingly, there was space in France for understanding Biafra as a *political* cause. With the possible exception of Ireland, France was the only case where Biafra marked a definite caesura in human rights politics.[77] Translating a distinctly French universalism into a postcolonial age, French republicanism was the hotbed of these ideas, which could include both the belief in a right to self-determination and a right of others to intervene. If human rights are interpreted as the new – and indeed last – utopia in a post-utopian age,[78] the disillusionment produced by Biafra must be a critical piece of the narrative. The failed

[74] Kouchner, "Préface: Le devoir d'ingérence," 10.
[75] Allen and Styan, "Right to Interfere?" [76] Betatti and Kouchner, eds., *devoir*.
[77] See O'Sullivan, *Ireland*, ch. 5. [78] See e.g. Brauman, "Le tiers-mondisme," 12.

Biafran campaign for self-determination was one of the last major efforts to keep anticolonialism as a "rights of man" movement alive. Yet in the political environment of postcolonial Africa, this political position was impossible to maintain. Since then, movements that have framed their projects in terms of postcolonial self-determination "fell outside the pale of empathy."[79] The Biafran failure put one of the final nails in the coffin of the anticolonial rights of man.

Connected with the decline of the idea of self-determination, at least in the West, the Biafran civil war was also an indicator of – and indeed a catalyst for – a wider loss of trust in postcolonial states and in international institutions like the United Nations. These IOs – fundamentally transformed by the new cast of actors on the postcolonial world stage – were increasingly difficult to control for the Western powers that had designed them in the final stages of colonial rule.[80] Yet the project of human rights began to flourish exactly at that historical moment when imperial rule had come to an end and postcolonial governments flooded into the UN General Assembly. The weakening of national sovereignty in a postcolonial world is characterized by a deep North-South divide: the postcolonial states are under much higher pressure to conform to these rules. The humanitarian work of NGOs like Oxfam is thus often seen as the postcolonial equivalent to the colonial "civilizing mission."[81]

At the same time, the talk of genocide, rights, and humanitarianism points to a shift in Western understandings of the Third World, which was, again, increasingly seen as a sphere of potential intervention. Even if no Western nation-states were willing to intervene on behalf of the Biafran population, growing numbers of humanitarian activists and non-state organizations were; and their funding, to a substantial degree, came from governmental sources. The cases reviewed in this chapter are thus part of a new host of non-state groups and organizations that began to populate an increasingly complex landscape of international politics in which Western states and their confederates nevertheless still held the strings.

Other organizations that emerged during Biafra could be added here. In Ireland, the NGO Concern translated the networks created by missionaries into a humanitarian NGO. In Germany, the Aktion Biafra-Hilfe developed into the Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker. Driven by a conviction that threatened non-Western minorities needed protection from modernity, which, at least for such peoples, wielded a genocidal

79 Moyn, *Last Utopia*, 173.
80 On the colonial origins of the UN, see Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*.
81 See Brauman, "Indigènes," and Wallerstein, *European Universalism*.

potential, the group, in many ways, retained an outsider status within the international community of NGOs. Yet its history emphasizes the pervasiveness of collective rights that underlies the notion of individual human rights. The aim to protect the right to life of entire groups is still present in the project of humanitarian intervention, a project that not only aims at saving individual bodies, but also whole populations, bodies of peoples, often thought of along ethnic lines.

Even so, with the ascendance of human rights the Western gaze at the Third World was fundamentally transformed. The resurrection of the international legal norm of humanitarian intervention was connected with a questioning of postcolonial sovereignty. Along similar lines, some journalists interpreted the calamitous crisis in Biafra as a result of the British withdrawal from empire.[82] Accordingly, the question of power – and of empire – needs to be borne in mind in any history of human rights. The hierarchical relationships that structure human rights politics are not only the divides between those with state power and those without it. The coalition forged between non-governmental organizations and global financial and governmental power means that human rights politics are hardly disconnected from state interests. Running an NGO demands financial resources and skills that are neither distributed equally within a society, nor within the global community of mankind. Think tanks and foundations – most of them from the West – also further this project through the substantial financial power they have amassed, and thus promote the realization of their vision of the world modeled primarily on their particular image of capitalist democracy. The examples of LSF and the Carnegie Endowment, which financed the Charlottesville conference, are cases in point. Speaking the languages of human rights, democracy and "good governance," these non-state organizations are part of a network of states, IOs, NGOs, and academia (in particular international law, social and political sciences) that bolsters Western power.[83]

In Cold War times, American support was decisive for the human rights success story. For the American empire, the idea was useful, as it helped to project a benign global image of American power in a world after Vietnam. The breakthrough of humanitarian intervention as an international political idea and practice, however, only occurred in post-Cold War times, when it was freed of strong associations with

[82] Arthur Bryant, "Destroying Wind," *The Illustrated London News*, August 3, 1968, 16.
[83] Guilhot, *Democracy Makers*. On how for instance the Ford Foundation began to embrace human rights since the 1970s see also Korey, *Taking on the World's Repressive Regimes*.

Realpolitik interventionism.[84] But intervention it remained – and now it was propped up militarily as well.[85] The hour of human rights was thus also the hour of American empire.[86] Paradoxically, the acme of globalization after the fall of the Berlin Wall, was also the moment when US power was, at least for a moment, as uncontested as never before in the "American century." Human rights were globally advocated by a myriad of different voices, from the Third World as well as different Western states. But that this language had become a leitmotiv of global politics would not have been conceivable without the activities of its US support base.

In post-Cold War global order, the politics of human rights and humanitarian intervention entered a closer relationship than ever before. The new coinage of a "responsibility to protect" was the conceptual vessel in which a plethora of ideas associated with human rights and humanitarianism merged to give expression to what was presented as a benign form of interventionism. This "responsibility to protect" also aimed at Third World governments, which should thus be bound to respect their populations' human rights. Yet if they failed to follow through on this demand, the way toward intervention was now free, the obstacle of the principle of non-intervention removed.[87] The end of the Cold War was not the end of history. But, so it seemed, it was the end of the fight for interpretational sovereignty over human rights – now, in a globalized world, they were again quite firmly in the hands of the West.

[84] For an internal critique of US interventionism during the Cold War see for instance Gurtov, *The United States Against the Third World*.

[85] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, ch. 9.

[86] On the US as Empire, see Maier, *Among Empires*.

[87] Orford, *International Authority*.

Conclusion

> Harrowing photographs do not inevitably lose their power to shock. But they are not much help if the task is to understand. Narratives can make us understand. Photographs do something else: they haunt us.
>
> (Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 89)

In her essay *On Revolution*, Hannah Arendt delineates the emergence of a politics of pity, which is based on the observation of the suffering "by those who were exposed to the spectacle of the people's suffering, which they themselves did not share." The distance between those who suffer and those who do not is constitutive for this politics. Here, Arendt makes the important distinction between compassion and pity: compassion is linked to presence, whereas pity can be felt and experienced from a distance.[1] This distinction can be helpful for understanding what was new about the Biafran famine. To some degree, similar images from humanitarian crisis zones were already familiar to contemporary viewers. At the end of World War II, millions of refugees roamed the shattered landscape of Europe, inciting a global campaign for humanitarian relief and economic reconstruction. Children were numerous among them, and the adoption of war orphans was one of the major aid strategies.[2] This gave rise to an iconography of children as innocent victims of war that built on longer traditions of humanitarian image-making.[3] However, following Arendt's distinction between compassion and pity through closeness and distance, this was compassion, not pity. The quick transformation of American postwar representation of Germans is helpful to underline the difference. Within a short timespan, Germans – former enemies – were imagined as innocent victims of war, represented photographically by rubble women and children. Cold War matrixes of identification with the new allies were crucial here: the

[1] Arendt, *On Revolution*, 65. For a sociological discussion of the implications of Arendt's thought for the politics of humanitarianism see Boltanski, *Distant Suffering*, here esp. ch. 1.

[2] Zahra, *Lost Children*.

[3] Fehrenbach, "Children."

Soviets, by then, appeared as the greater threat. Germans became objects of American compassion because they were engaged in a common cause.[4]

The distinction between compassion and pity along the lines of distance was also crucial for the difference between the "Third World" of the radical left and that of their post-revolutionary successors. The New Left had entered a "shared space of imagination, communication, and action" with liberation movements across the globe. The protests on the streets of Paris and the guerrilla wars in the Vietnamese jungle were understood as the "'same combat,' whose actors were partaking in nothing less than a joint 'world revolution'."[5] Like American compassion for the plight of postwar Germans, this identification was conditioned by the perception to be engaged in a common cause, a shared struggle. While the transatlantic alignment between Americans and Germans after World War II was defined by the threat of spreading communism, this fight was for the spread of world revolution. Yet in both cases, those who suffer and those who act to alleviate the suffering are united in action.

Here, Biafra is indicative of a major change: watched through the humanitarian lens, the Third World again became a faraway place of suffering – distant suffering. During the Biafran crisis, humanitarianism again became something that happens elsewhere, ending postwar Europe's close association with the concept. As we have seen, forms of empathic – maybe even compassionate – identification with the Biafrans were also present among Biafra activists, for instance in the latter's imagination as "civilized Africans" or fellow Christians. However, there is a crucial difference: on the whole the humanitarian activists did not feel they were engaged in a shared struggle. The positions in these campaigns were entirely different: the humanitarians were primarily acting on behalf of victimized others, not alongside them. Moreover, this distance was even further for the distant observers of this suffering, who witnessed it not only from afar, but through Western eyes. In the media reports, agency was the privilege of Western subjects, of journalists and activists who worked in the crisis zone and helped audiences "at home" to see the suffering. The Biafrans in contrast were no individuals with a voice and a history; instead they were turned into the representatives of universal victimhood.

In the case of transnational relationships and imaginations fostered by postcolonial humanitarianism, globalization did not simply eliminate distance. In contrast, it also reintroduced it. Part of these forms of imagined closeness and distance were also other techniques of distancing; colonial traditions of representation – using a visual imagery that was

[4] Hoffmann, "Gazing." [5] Kalter, "Shared Space," 32.

much more graphic than what had been seen of "white" victims of post-war Europe, for instance – were particularly important here. The humanitarian vision of Biafra was a postcolonial re-enactment of the colonial imagination of Africa as a land of childhood, a continent in need of paternal help. In this regard, Biafra also points back to the interventions of the colonial era; in this imagery as well as in the language of civilization, the Biafran campaign shares motifs with the colonial civilizing mission and interventions in the Ottoman Empire – a connection that can also be made because of the important role of missionaries and religious bonds of empathy in all these cases.[6]

Despite the quick dissolution of the transnational network of Biafra protest, the campaign had lasting effects. The images of starving Biafrans that haunted contemporaries have not disappeared after Biafra's breakdown. The photographs that Caron, McCullin and their peers took in Biafra have been republished again and again, forming part of the visual culture of humanitarianism and human rights that has emerged since then.[7] Moreover, they also seem to re-emerge elsewhere: their revenants appear in reports about Ethiopia, Somalia or Sudan – or wherever else Africa's next humanitarian crisis happens. The iconography of suffering established during the Biafran famine created a new visual genre that characterizes representations of humanitarian campaigns since; up to this day, the African child iconically encapsulates the pain of the Third World for the Western observer.

This process was not necessarily the outcome of media "revelations" or moral "revolutions." Rather, the revolution that produced these new spectacles was decolonization. By shaping the form of postcolonial societies and states to a large degree, colonial rule partly precipitated the conflicts that began after the exit of the colonizers when many of the jerry-rigged colonial constructions they left behind began to disintegrate. Control over governmental positions was increasingly viciously contested, the postcolonial political arena turned into a battlefield of ethnicized political conflict – and, in many cases, civil war. Colonial rule and its legacy thus also produced the sights of suffering captured by the humanitarian gaze at the world.

The Biafran War stands amidst different caesuras in the international history of the late twentieth century, right on the verge of a nascent postcolonial world. The conflict is situated between the anticolonial version of human rights as self-determination and the postcolonial version of human rights connected with Western interventionism. In some

[6] See Hoffmann, "Human Rights," who has called on human rights historians to reconsider the nineteenth century, as well as Green, "Humanitarianism" and Rodogno, *Against Massacre*.

[7] See e.g. McCullin, *Anyone*.

ways, the Nigerian Civil War was a conflict that was still of the era of decolonization. In the late colonial period, very different futures were imaginable for Africans.[8] The Biafran case is evidence that, some years into independence, the political space opening up in the moment of imperial dissolution was not entirely closed, at least not in terms of political imagination: Biafra was a community imagined somewhere in between the Nigerian nation and the ethnic collective of the Igbos. However, this case also testifies to the limitedness of this political imagination: the Biafran program was entirely dependent on the notion of the nation. The Biafran secessionists themselves inscribed their project into the tradition of self-determination as the first human right, an idea that had witnessed its global heyday during the high era of decolonization. Yet in the ensuing decades, it was relegated to an increasingly lower status.

Accordingly, the main reasons for the emergence of postcolonial humanitarian crisis as a new genre of media events have to be searched on the plane of global order. In postcolonial times, self-determination was restricted to anticolonial projects: once independence was won from colonial powers, the new state's sovereignty should remain untouched. Even if this was not foreseeable, decolonization universalized the principle of the nation-state: the major revolution was not the universalization of the rights of man, but of the nation-state as the supposed guarantor of rights, whether it fulfilled these duties or not. The international order which resulted out of decolonization curtailed the political prospects of secessionist movements; the creation of new states became increasingly difficult. Biafra was an indicator that, at that historical moment, no further secessions – in Africa – would gain sufficient international support. Internationally, self-determination and secession were and still are thinkable in Europe.[9] But this is not the case in Africa, where minority rights are deemed dangerous: deeply embedded in colonial stereotypes and politics, African ethnic groups are mostly perceived as tribes rather than nations.[10] Balkanization may be okay for the Balkans, but not for Africa: The territorial borders of the postcolonial nation-state have become almost sacrosanct.[11]

The political sovereignty of postcolonial states, however, was about to erode. National sovereignty's north–south divide, going back to the colonial age, was being reconfigured under new auspices. Biafra was a moment when the nation-state, or perhaps more precisely the postcolonial sub-Saharan African nation-state, failed in protecting the human

[8] See Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint."
[9] Fisch, *Selbstbestimmungsrecht*. [10] Amselle and M'Bokolo, eds., *coeur de l'ethnie*.
[11] Whether the independence of South Sudan in 2011 initiated a reversal of this trend remains to be seen.

rights of a part of its population. But in this case, the formation of a new nation-state was not a viable option. The closure of this political space, of secession as a viable alternative to the conditions of African nation-states, also opened up new spaces for political claim making. In a world of nations that did not leave space for the emergence of new nations, the global, or the international, became increasingly attractive as entities called on as guarantors of the rights of individuals. With the international sphere of states not receptive to such claims, the Biafrans – and similar movements since then – have appealed to "humanity." Also because of this language, the Biafran claims resonated much more vibrantly in the sphere of non-state actors.

However, this sphere is not entirely free of the influence of states. Governments increasingly adopted the language of human rights and humanitarianism for the formulation of their international policy. The international politics of human rights are no sphere of morally unambiguous *Moralpolitik*. They can also be *Realpolitik*. In postcolonial times, conflicts like the Nigerian Civil War contributed to the rise of a new form of moral interventionism, for which official colonial annexation was not needed. This language was embraced by Western non-state actors and states alike. Without colonial possessions, the latter did not have to fear human rights' possible negative effects on their colonial empires. The history of European colonialism is essentially a history of an interventionism legitimized by the rhetoric of a "civilizing mission."[12] Decolonization crucially changed the preconditions. Now, the new nation-states of the "Third World" were independent, formally sovereign members of the United Nations. The potential to intervene was immensely limited under these conditions; the principles of sovereignty had to be reformulated if these practices were to be kept up.[13] The universalism of the global is widely defined by the West. Through its influence in IOs and in the world of NGOs – most of which have their headquarters in Western capitals – the late-twentieth-century rise of human rights is intimately tied to Western financial and political power. The support of Western governments is thus crucial for human rights campaigns; without it, they remain toothless.

Western media also embraced the language of human rights and the humanitarian optic. Bound by the logic of aiming to raise attention, they tend to represent humanitarian crises as showcases of spectacular suffering, rather than as complex political conflicts. The humanitarian sector is dependent on donations and other forms of funding, for

[12] Barth and Osterhammel, eds., *Zivilisierungsmissionen*; Conklin, *Mission*.
[13] See Anghie, *Imperialism*.

instance through governments, which can be moved to finance humanitarian operations through lobbying. Thus NGOs have a direct interest in fueling media campaigns. Accordingly, in the West, humanitarian organizations and the media have entered a mutually beneficial relationship – and, to a large degree, Western governments partake in this venture as well, forming a triangular politics of human rights.

Still, the story of a move toward "humanitarian intervention" is certainly not only one of Western intervention unasked for. The reality of postcolonial crises has led groups within Third World states to question the practices of their governments and to formulate alternative political programs, often by using the language of rights, at least within the international sphere. However, in the specific context of Biafra, a moment of humanitarian crisis, the emancipatory potential of self-determination as a human right was lost completely: how would anybody expect a people represented by the icon of starving children to build a sovereign state? The bitter irony in this story is that African actors, the Biafran leadership, themselves formed the perception of "Biafra" as a humanitarian problem and thus contributed to the depoliticization of their cause and the rise of non-state actors taking up the issue. Yet it was exactly this new transnational regime of human rights that advanced the rise of a quasi-colonial Western interventionism.[14] This process also contributed to the transformation of leftist thinking in Western societies. When Third World governments turned toward authoritarianism, many of their erstwhile sympathizers in the West were disappointed. With the hopes for postcolonial liberation buried under the flags of Third World regimes, anticolonial revolution lost its utopian allure – and so did the ethos of revolution *tout court*. Only when this project forfeited its political momentum could human rights claim their status as a major force in political thinking.[15]

Although the media event "Biafra" was a moment of humanitarianism that provoked a proliferation of discourses about rights across national borders, once these borders were crossed, these discourses were inscribed into national traditions and contexts. The emergence of NGOs such as MSF contributed to the reinvention of a distinctly French universalism, which has become particularly powerful because it found support among high-ranking politicians. A comparable case can be found on the other side of the Atlantic. The presence of American scholars and practitioners is striking in legal discussions about humanitarian intervention since Biafra. Reflections on the implementation of human rights

[14] Some contemporaries noted this early. See Renard, *Biafra*, 9.
[15] On the New Left's Third Worldism see Kalter, *Discovery*.

into foreign policy agendas were particularly pertinent in the United States. These discussions may be seen as marking the onset of a search for a new moral justification for an American empire that lost its credibility in Vietnam.[16] Commentators in Germany felt moved to reflect about Auschwitz and German "guilt." Comparisons to Nazi extermination policies were thus a catalyst for the emergence of "Holocaust consciousness" not only in Germany, though with a distinct resonance in that post-National Socialist society. In postcolonial Britain, the Biafran crisis was particularly relevant for individuals with intimate ties to the crisis zone; these Britons often entertained business interests or marital relationships with Biafrans – both types of relations were the result of ties forged during British colonial rule in Nigeria.

During the Biafran War, a number of loosely connected concepts were invoked to raise awareness of the plight of starving Biafrans: human rights, humanity, genocide, and comparisons to the Holocaust most prominent among them. These notions could be intertwined because they are always in motion. Human rights, at least as they were invoked during the Biafran crisis, lacked the conceptual clarity they are lent in portrayals of their breakthrough, which is often sketched as a move toward essentially individual human rights.[17] However, the borders between individual and collective rights were never clear-cut. The Biafran campaign also attests to the tenacity of collective human rights at a time when the interwar minority rights regime had been long buried under the postwar turn to – mostly individual – human rights under UN auspices.[18] The close association between human rights and humanitarianism underlines the fact that these are the histories of distinct, but closely related currents of thought and action – in particular in postcolonial global order, as the ascent of *sans-frontiérisme* evinces.

The meaning of human rights is never clear-cut. Human rights are per se open to divergent conceptions.[19] The Biafran War was a moment in which different actors invoked different notions of human rights: Biafran secessionists and Western activists both used the language of human rights, but meant quite different things. The war marks the moment when the demise of one of these versions of human rights, the right to self-determination, and the rise of another notion, the right to intervention, interconnected.[20] It was a moment of disjuncture, a humanitarian

[16] Morgan, "Seventies"; Keys, *Reclaiming*; Sargent, *Superpower*.
[17] See esp. Moyn, *Last Utopia*.
[18] Mazower, "Strange Triumph." [19] See Hoffmann, "Introduction."
[20] The idea of self-determination did not completely disappear from human rights thinking, also because some territories, such as Namibia, were still under colonial or quasi-colonial rule. See e.g. Umozurike, *Self-Determination*.

moment that contributed to the rise of the contemporary human rights regime characterized by mass media mobilization and non-state actors' advocacy. Yet that does not mean that an "era of human rights" ended or began in that moment. That would mean to privilege one or the other version. Different ideas – for instance self-determination during decolonization, humanitarian interventionism in the late twentieth century – were leading principles of human rights in history at a certain point in time and within a certain context. These ideas can also be connected with invocations of the Holocaust – and, since Biafra, they frequently are. Holocaust memory during the Biafran War was still rather diffuse: it was yet to become the memory of the "Holocaust," a concept which did not come into being before the late 1970s. In the years before Biafra, references to the genocidal past of postwar societies had increased in Germany, Israel and elsewhere, but this cultural memory was still much more open. Parallel to this, the idea of genocide was also slowly on the rise, a relatively open category, the boundaries of which would be redrawn in the following years by the domination of the Holocaust.

The semantic shifts which define the connected trajectories of these entangled concepts are conditioned by a deeper structural transformation: decolonization. This underlying realignment of global political structures – the end of a colonial world order and the emergence of an entirely new society of states after the end of Empire – generated new forms of political imagination, which translated colonial forms of interventionism into a postcolonial era. This is also why these processes were continued and fortified after the end of the Cold War: this was the fall of another Empire, the Soviet Union, and the emergence of new nation-states amidst its ruins, also in its former sphere of influence, most prominently in the Balkans. In this post-imperial scenario, ethnic strife, and civil war were once more the unexpected contemporaries of promises for democratic participation and self-determination – a conjuncture quite similar to that which precipitated the Biafran crisis. Now, the humanitarian intervention it prompted could muster the military support of NATO states, in spite of its extralegal character and lack of UN support.[21]

In late August 1968, in one of the letters on Biafra to reach the United Nations, a petitioner from San Francisco bemoaned the ambivalent effects of the extensive media coverage devoted to the humanitarian crisis in Biafra. "[T]he mass media is capable of giving us a crutch," she explained. Unfortunately, however, "this crutch allows us to see a theatrical performance and not the reality of war."[22] The reality she had in

[21] Fassin and Pandolfi, eds., *Contemporary States*; Hoffmann, "Human Rights"; Pandolfi, "Laboratory."

[22] Letter to Secretary-General U Thant, August 26, 1968 (UNOG, UNCHR, SO 215/1 NIGE Part F).

mind was, as it seems, the reality of innocent suffering in wars like in Nigeria and Biafra, which are not made for hero stories. However, the Biafran War marks the emergence of exactly that kind of international media event: postcolonial humanitarian crisis as spectacle of suffering. Through the work of activists and media representatives, humanitarian crises are turned into objects of consumption for the gaze of Western witnesses – in the field, as well as at home. Through photojournalism and television reports, the alleged "reality" of Third World conflicts becomes accessible to audiences around the globe. These reports do not necessarily produce sustained knowledge about these conflicts. Usually, postcolonial conflicts are far more complex than such images can convey. They only work by rendering more complex political, economic and social relationships invisible. These images are calls to action: to see is to know, and to know is to have to act. The knowledge of the distant suffering creates the plea to act. In the global village, everybody has become a spectator.

Through its Latin etymology, "spectacle" refers to the visual sense – this connection is still highly evident in its second denotation in the plural, a synonym for eyeglasses. It is not only that non-Western conflicts are turned into spectacles of suffering. The spectacles of suffering are also the lenses through which the West observes the postcolonial world. Bespectacled with the humanitarian lens, Third World societies only become visible in the Western gaze if they display a suffering which seems to be of a different quality than that in primarily political conflicts. However, this decontextualization misconstrues the issues at stake: focusing in so closely on the suffering, the political and economic dimensions of such conflicts merely provide the blurred background of the picture. Audiences in the global North are widely sparred the confrontation with the more painful analyses of the complex causes of Third World conflicts. Frequently, the economic and political dependencies and inequalities of our world order are determining factors – and people across the global North profit from these inequalities. Yet in these media reports, Westerners feature mostly only in the role of the "savior," the protagonists in a story of the alleviation of the suffering of others. In effect, complex political conflicts in the postcolonial states are turned into spectacles of suffering – or they remain invisible.

Bibliography

I. MANUSCRIPT AND ARCHIVAL SOURCES

A. ARCHIVES

Ethiopia
African Union Archives, Addis Ababa.

France
Centre des Archives Diplomatiques La Courneuve (CAD)
Afrique-Levant, sous-série Nigéria, 1966–72.

Germany
Archiv der sozialen Demokratie Bonn (AdsD)
Depositum Egon Bahr, Box 399.
Willy-Brandt-Archiv A 11.4, 31.
Willy-Brandt-Archiv A 3, 317.
Willy-Brandt-Archiv A 11.1, 4.
Willy-Brandt-Archiv A3, 282.
Archiv des Erzbistums Köln (AEK)
Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 I.
Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 II.
Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 IV.
Nigeria-Biafra Menschenrechte Schriftwechsel, 10–331/40–010 VI.
Archiv Deutsches Rotes Kreuz (ADRK)
4.8.1.1. Afrika, 11.
Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik, *Sankt Augustin (ACDP)*
Nachlass Fritz Burgbacher, 025/3.
Nachlass Gerstenmaier, 083.
AKV, 013/2.
Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin (EZA)
EZA 87/1118.
EZA 2/2157.
EZA 2/2158.
EZA 2/2159.
EZA 634/466.
Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker, Göttingen Archives
Biafra allgemein 1968–78.
Dokumentation: Komitee Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 1968–71.

Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin (PA AA)
Afrika südlich der Sahara, Referat I B 3.
B 34/710.
B 34/713.
B 34/741.
B 34/742.
B 34/743.
B 34/744.
B 34/747.

Switzerland

United Nations Organisation Geneva Archives (UNOG)
Commission on Human Rights.
SO 215/1 NIGE Part A-H.
World Council of Churches Archives, Geneva (WCCA)
WCC Assembly Uppsala 1968, 34.6./5bis2.
WCC Assembly Uppsala 1968, 34.6./5bis3.
WCCA, 42.3.007, WCC General Secretariat, Nigeria/Biafra, 1.
WCCA, 42.3.007, WCC General Secretariat, Nigeria/Biafra, 2.
WCCA, 42.3.007, WCC General Secretariat, Nigeria/Biafra, 3.

United Kingdom

Churchill College Archives, University of Cambridge (CCA)
FEBR 219a, Fenner Brockway Papers.
NBKR 4/41, Philipp Noel-Baker Papers.
NBKR 4/42, Philipp Noel-Baker Papers.
National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew (NA)
Cabinet: Memoranda (CP and C Series)
CAB/129/140.
Records of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and predecessors (FCO)
FCO 25/232, Secession of Eastern Region, Biafra.
FCO 26/299, Nigeria: publicity and propaganda about Biafra and civil war.
FCO 26/300, Nigeria: publicity and propaganda about Biafra and civil war.
FCO 26/305, BBC news reporting on Biafra with claims of inaccuracies and bias.
FCO 38/262, Holy See Interest, Vatican and Biafra.
FCO 65/208, Lord Brockway's Committee for Peace in Nigeria: correspondence with Committee and request for deputation to see the Secretary of State.
FCO 65/227, Group Captain Leonard Cheshire and Hanning visit to Biafra and subsequent efforts to mediate in civil war.
FCO 65/249, Britain-Biafra Association: Her Majesty's Government's policy.
FCO 65/250, Britain-Biafra Association: Her Majesty's Government's policy.
FCO 65/269, France: military support of Biafra and effect on Anglo-French relations.
FCO 65/441, UK propaganda on civil war.

FCO 65/446, Comments by journalists covering Biafra war.
FCO 65/453, Detention of Wole Soyinka, Nigerian author.
FCO 95/225, Nigeria: "Markpress" news feature service involvement with Biafra.
Prime Minister's Office: Correspondence and Papers, 1964–1970
PREM 13/1949.
Oxfam Archives, Bicester, Oxfordshire (OA)
Africa Field Committee, Oct. 1966–Nov. 1969.
Catalogued non-project files on the Nigerian Civil War/Biafra
COM 3/1/1: Confidential Papers on Nigeria/Biafra 1968–70.
COM 3/3/1: Nigeria/Biafra Appeal.
DIR/2/3/2/32, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 1.
DIR/2/3/2/33, OA/14: Nigeria/Biafra, vol. 2.
DIR/2/3/2/35: Nigeria/Biafra.
Nigeria Civil War Box 2209, file 3: Relief on the Secessionist side "Biafra").
Nigeria Civil War Box 2210, File Review of Oxfam Aid, July 1967–August 1970.
Nigeria Civil War Box 2210, file 2: Bennett, Nigeria 1968.
Nigeria Civil War Box 2214: Gans file.
Rhodes Library, University of Oxford (RL)
MSS.Afr.S. 2399, Britain-Biafra Association.
MSS.Brit.Emp.s. 517.6, Sir Miles Clifford Papers, United Nigeria Group.
School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)
Movement for Colonial Freedom, Committee for Peace in Nigeria.
Co-ordinating Committee for action on Nigeria/Biafra.
Manuscripts MCF/14/16.

United States

American Jewish Committee Archives Blaustein Library
Interreligious Affairs 1968, Biafra, Box 71.
Interreligious Affairs 1968, Biafra, Box 72.
Interreligious Affairs 1969, Ba-Biafra, Box 86.
Library of Congress Washington D.C.
Nigeria, Politics and Government: Civil War.
National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (NARA)
NARA RG 59 General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files
Political Aff. & REL Biafra-NIG, Box 1872.
Pol Aff. & Rel Biafra – U.
Pol 12 Biafra.
Pol 27 Biafra – Nigeria.
Pol 27–9 Biafra – Nigeria.
NARA RG 200 National Archives Gift Collection, Records of the American National Red Cross 1965–1979
Box 65, DR-900.02 Cooperation with Other Agencies.
Box 70, DR-900.02: AID Nigerian Conflict 1968.
DR-900.02 Lutheran Church Mission Synod.

New York University Archives
Papers of the Albert Schweitzer Chair in the Humanities.
Conor Cruise O'Brien Files, box 7, folder 8.
Schomburg Center for Research on Black Culture, New York
Maxwell T. Cohen Papers.
Biafra War Collection (1966–1970), MG 788.
Swarthmore College Peace Collection (SCPC)
Clearing House for Nigeria/Biafra Information Records, 1968–1970, DG 168.
United Nations Archives and Records Management Section, New York (UN ARMS)
S-0198–0004–03: Human Rights – Nigerian War – Biafra, 8011.8.
S-303–0005–02 Countries – Nigeria/Biafra – Biafra.
Yale University Library, Manuscripts and Archives
Myres S. McDougal Papers.
Manuscript Group Number 1636, Accession 94-M-59.

B. OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS AND EDITED GOVERNMENTAL SOURCES

Biafra/Eastern Region of Nigeria

Government of the Republic of Biafra, *Introducing Biafra* (Port Harcourt, 1967).
Markpress News Feature Service Biafran Overseas Press Division, *An Emergency Session of both Houses of the British Parliament* (Geneva, 1968).
Ministry of Information Eastern Nigeria, *Crisis '66: Eastern Nigeria Viewpoint Nigerian Crisis*, vol. I, (Enugu, 1966).
Ministry of Information Eastern Nigeria, *Nigerian Pogrom: The Organized Massacre of Eastern Nigerians*, Nigerian Crisis, vol. 3 (Enugu, 1966).
Ministry of Information Eastern Nigeria, *The North and Constitutional Developments in Nigeria*, Nigerian Crisis, vol. V (Enugu, 1966).
Ministry of Information Republic of Biafra, *The Concept of Territorial Integrity and the Right of Biafrans to Self-Determination* (Enugu, 1967).
Ministry of Information Republic of Biafra, ed., *Genocide Breaks up Nations: Sow Genocide, Reap Disintegration, Genocide Broke up Nigeria* (Enugu, 1968).
Ojukwu, Emeka. *The Ahiara Declaration: The Principles of the Biafran Revolution* (Geneva, 1969).
Republic of Biafra, *Nigeria and Biafra: The Parting of the Ways*, Nigerian Crisis, vol. 8 (Enugu, 1967).

France

Documents diplomatiques Français 1968: Tome II (2 Juillet–31 Décembre) (Brussels, 2010).
La France et le Biafra, ed. *Ministère des affaires etrangères* (Paris, 1969).

Germany

Blasius, Rainer A., ed., *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1967, vol. III: 1. September bis 31. Dezember 1967* (Munich, 1998).
Blasius, Rainer A., ed., Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, *1968, vol. II: 1. Juli bis 31. Dezember* 1968 (Munich, 1999).
Brandt, Willy, *Reden und Interviews 1968–1969* (Bonn, 1969).

Wintzer, Joachim, ed., *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss des deutschen Bundestages: Sitzungsprotokolle 1965–69*, vol. II: Januar 1968 bis August 1969 (Düsseldorf, 2006).

Nigeria

Arikpo, Okoi, *A Testimony of Faith* (Apapa, 1968).
Committee of Ibo Intellectuals, *Ojukwu's "Self-Determination": A Reappraisal in the Light of International Politics* (Apapa, 1969 [?]).
Federal Ministry of Information, *The Struggle for One Nigeria* (Lagos, 1967).
Federal Ministry of Information, *The Collapse of a Rebellion: And Prospects of Lasting Peace* (Lagos, 1968).
Nigeria demain, 1969.
United Nigeria, 1968.
Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Unity in Diversity* (Lagos, 1967).
International Observer Team to Nigeria, *No Genocide: Final Report of Observer Team to Nigeria. From: 1. Organization of African Unity 2. Britain, Canada, Poland, Sweden* (Lagos, 1968).

United Kingdom

Hansard Commons, 1967–70.
Hansard Lords, 1967–70.
"'Nigeria': Memorandum for Cabinet Colonial Policy Committee by Mr. Lennox Boyd on Forthcoming Constitutional Conference," in Ronald Hyam and William Roger Louis, eds., *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1957–1964, Part 1: High Policy, Political and Constitutional Change* (London, 2000), British Documents on the End of Empire, Series A, Vol. 4, 339–43.

United Nations

Official Records of the General Assembly, 22nd Session, Plenary Meetings, Verbatim Records of Meetings, vol. I, New York: UN Office of Information 1971.

United States

Department of State, Office of the Historian, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1969–1976.
Volume E–5, Part 1, Documents on Sub-Saharan Africa, 1969–72.
Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.

C. PERIODICALS

Periodicals and Newsletters Published by Biafra Lobby Groups and other Activists

Biafra: Bulletin du comité d'action pour le Biafra, ed. by F. Toulet for Comité d'action pour le Biafra, 1969.
Biafra. Le journal des damnés, ed. by F. Toulet for Comité d'action pour le Biafra, 1969.
Biafra Lifeline, 1968–69, ed. by ACKBA.
Biafra-Nachrichten, 1970.

Biafra: Nouvelle Série, ed. by F. Toulet for Comité d'action pour le Biafra, 1969–70.
Bulletin de Liaison du CEDETIM, 1968–69.
Intercaritas, 1968.
International Conscience in Action (1970).
Le courrier du Biafra, ed. by Association France-Biafra, 1969.
Peace Corps Volunteer, 1967–69.
Peace News, 1969.
Pogrom, 1970–71.

Newspapers, News Magazines and Other Press Releases

Africa Report, 1968–69.
Bild, 1968.
Boston Globe, 1960, 1967–70.
Chicago Tribune, 1967–70.
Christian Century, 1968.
Christ und Welt, 1968.
Das Diakonische Werk, 1969.
Der Spiegel, 1967–70.
Die Welt, 1968.
Die Zeit, 1967–70.
Eléments, 1968.
epd: Evangelischer Pressedienst, 1968.
Esprit, 1968–70.
FAZ, 1960–61, 1967–70.
Financial Times, 1968.
France Soir, 1968.
Frankfurter Rundschau, 1968.
Hamburger Abendblatt, 1968.
Konkret, 1968–70.
La Croix, 1968–69.
Le Monde, 1968–70.
La Nation, 1969.
Le Nouvel Observateur, 1968–70.
Les Temps Modernes 1967–70.
L'Express, 1967–70.
Life, 1968.
Los Angeles Times, 1967–70.
Monthly Review, 1967–70.
National Review, 1967–68.
New Left Review, 1967–72.
New York Times, 1960, 1967–70.
Notre Republique, 1968–70.
Paris-Match, 1968.
Quick, 1968.
Rheinischer Merkur, 1968.
Spectator, 1968–69.

Stern, 1968.
The Christian Science Monitor, 1968–70.
The Daily Mirror, 1968.
The Daily Telegraph Magazine, 1968.
The Economist, 1968.
The Guardian, 1960, 1966–70.
The Illustrated London News, 1968.
The Nation, 1969.
The News and Courier, 1969.
The New York Review of Books, 1967–70.
The Observer, 1960, 1967–70.
The Sun, 1968.
The Sunday Times, 1968–69.
The Times, 1897, 1967–70.
The Washington Post, 1960, 1967–70.
Time, 1968.
Tribune, 1968.
West Africa, 1962, 1968.

D. OTHER PUBLISHED SOURCES

Sources in Edited Collections

"Azikiwe on Ojukwu's 'April Fool'," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume II: July 1967–January 1970* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]) 414–16.
"Biafran Memorandum Circulated to Heads of States at O.A.U. Meeting, Kinshasa, September 1967," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume II: July 1967–January 1970* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 168–71.
"Biafran Memorandum on Proposed Future Association," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume II: July 1967–January 1970* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 163–8.
Biafra Union of Great Britain and Ireland, "Statement on British Arms Supplies," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume II: July 1967–January 1970* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 150–1.
"Brockway and Griffiths Visit Ojukwu," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume II: July 1967–January 1970* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 340–2.
"Decree No. 8 of 1967," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966–July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 401–2.
"Dr. Azikiwe Holds Press Conference in Paris," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966–July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 205–6.
"Enahoro's Press Conference in London," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966–July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 147–8.

"Gowon's Broadcast to the Nation, dividing Nigeria into Twelve States," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966–July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 444–9.

"Major Okonkwo Announces Establishment of the Republic of Benin," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966–July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 160–2.

"Major Okonkwo's Address to Mid-West," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966–July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 159–60.

"OAU Charter," in Gino J. Naldi, ed., *Documents of the Organization of African Unity* (London, 1992), 3–10).

"Ojukwu's Address to the Eastern Consultative Assembly, 26 May 1967," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966–July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 427–44.

"Ojukwu's Call from Exile," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume II: July 1967–January 1970* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 455.

"Ojukwu's Interview with Britain-Biafra Association Delegates," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume II: July 1967–January 1970* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 213–15.

"Ojukwu's Mandate from the People of the East, 31 August 1966," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966-July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 216.

"Ojukwu Secedes and Declares the 'Republic of Biafra'," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966-July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 451–3.

"Resolution of Eastern Consultative Assembly, 7 October 1966," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966-July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 256–8.

"Statement on British Arms Supplies," Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume II: July 1967-January 1970* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 150–2.

"Tanzania Recognizes Biafra," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume II: July 1967-January 1970* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 206–11.

"The Atlantic Charter," in Douglas Brinkley and David R. Facey-Crowther, eds., *The Atlantic Charter* (New York, 1994), xvii–xviii.

"The Churches' Call for Peace," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume II: July 1967-January 1970* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 201.

"'The Regions are Abolished: Ironsi's Broadcast to the Nation banning Political Parties and introducing Decree No. 34, 24 May 1966," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966-July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 174–7.

"'The Republic of Biafra': Resolution by the Eastern Region Consultative Assembly," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966-July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 449–50.

"'Why We Recognized Biafra' – President Nyerere," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume II: July 1967-January 1970* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 211–13.

Other Published Sources

Achebe, China, *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*, London: Allen Lane 2012.

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (London, 2009 [2006]).

Akpan, Ntyieong Udo, *The Struggle for Secession, 1966–1970: A Personal Account of the Nigerian Civil War* (London, 1976 [1972]).

"An African Tragedy," *Transition* 36 (1968), 26–44.

Antonello, Paola et al., *Nigeria gegen Biafra? Falsche Alternativen oder über die Verschärfung der Widersprüche im Neokolonialismus: Mit zwei Aufsätzen von Obi Egbuna und Alex Chima* (Berlin, 1969).

"Appell des Hannoverschen Bischofs Dr. Hanns Lilje an alle Pfarrer seiner Landeskirche am 9. April 1968," in Paul Gerhard Eberlein, ed., *Nigeria/Biafra: Eine Dokumentation* (Informationsdienst des Diakonischen Werkes, 1968), 36.

Armand, Captain, *Biafra vaincra* (Paris, 1969).

"Augenzeugenbericht einer jungen katholischen Schwester aus Europa zu den Massakern der Bundestruppen im Mittelwesten (Mid-West-Nigeria)," in Tilman Zülch and Klaus Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben? Dokumente – Berichte – Analysen – Kommentare* (Berlin, 1969), 106.

"Auschwitz und Treblinka in Afrika," *Aufwärts* 10 (1968), 2.

Awolowo, Obafemi, *Path to Nigerian Freedom* (London, 1966 [1947]).

Azikiwe, Nnamdi, *My Odyssey: An Autobiography* (London, 1970).

Baker, Ross K., "The Emergence of Biafra: Balkanisation or Nation-Building," *Orbis: A Quarterly Journal of World Affairs* 12 (Summer 1968), No. 2, 518–33.

Balewa, Abubakar Tafawa, "Independence Day," in Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, *Mr Prime Minister: A Selection of Speeches Made by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa* (Apaba, 1964), 47–9.

Baxter, R. R. et al., "The Legal Consequences of the Unlawful Use of Force Under the Charter," *Proceedings of the American Society of International Law at Its Annual Meeting* 62 (April 1968), 68–83.

Becher, Herbert, "Völkermord heute! – Was kann dagegen getan werden?," *Zeitschrift für Caritasarbeit und Caritaswissenschaft* 70 (January 1969), 19–23.

Benn, Tony, *Office without Power: Diaries 1968–1972*, London et al.: Hutchinson 1988.

Bentley, Eric, ed., *The Storm over the Deputy: Essays and Articles about Hochhuth's Explosive Drama*, New York: Grove Press 1964.

Bergès, Yves-Guy, "J'ai vu agoniser le Biafra," in Henri Amouroux, ed., *Grands reportages: Les quarante prix Albert-Londres (1946–1986)*, (Paris, 1986), 295–307.

Betatti, Mario and Bernard Kouchner, eds., *Le Devoir d'Ingérence: Peut-on les laisser mourir?* (Paris, 1987).

Biafra: bilan d'une sécession. Avec une contribution de N. Weinstock (Lausanne, 1970).

Birch, Geoffrey and Dominic St. George, *Biafra: The Case for Independence* (London, 1968).

Bortolotti, Dan, *Hope in Hell: Inside the World of Doctors Without Borders* (Buffalo, NY, 2006).

Bothe, Michael, "Rechtsprobleme humanitärer Hilfsaktionen zugunsten der Zivilbevölkerung bei bewaffneten Konflikten," in Dieter Fleck, ed., *Beiträge zur Weiterentwicklung des humanitären Völkerrechts für bewaffnete Konflikte* (Hamburg, 1973, 24–80).

Brauman, Rony, ed., *Le tiers-mondisme en question* (Paris, 1986).

Brauman, Rony, "Ni tiers-mondisme, ni cartiérisme," in Rony Brauman, ed., *Le tiers-mondisme en question* (Paris, 1986), 11–19.

Brauman, Rony, *Humanitaire le dilemme: Entretien avec Philippe Petit* (Paris, 1996).

Braumann, Randolph, "Am 9. Oktober 1968 während eines Biafra-Referates in Hameln: Es wird massakriert," in Tilman Zülch and Klaus Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben? Dokumente – Berichte – Analysen – Kommentare* (Berlin, 1969), 119–21.

"Brief von Bischof Dr. Kurt Scharf an alle Superintendenten, Pfarrer, Pastorinnen, Hilfsprediger in West-Berlin (Auszug)," in Paul Gerhard Eberlein, ed., *Nigeria/Biafra: Eine Dokumentation* (Informationsdienst des Diakonischen Werkes, 1968), 37.

Bruckner, Pascal, *Le sanglot de l'homme blanc: Tiers-monde, culpabilité, haine de soi* (Paris, 1983).

Buckley, William Jr., *United Nations Journal* (London, 1974).

Bühler, Jean, *Biafra: Tragödie eines begabten Volkes* (Zürich, 1968).

Bühler, Jean, *Tuez-Les Tous! Guerre de Sécession au Biafra* (Paris, 1968).

Bunting, Reginald, "Nigeria," in Helen Kitchen, ed., *The Educated African: A Country-by-Country Survey of Educational Development in Africa* (London, 1962), 380.

Burguière, André, ed., *Le tiers monde et la gauche* (Paris, 1979).

Carl, Beverly May, "American Assistance to Victims of the Nigeria-Biafra War: Defects in the Prescriptions on Foreign Disaster Relief," *Harvard International Law Journal* 12, No. 2 (1971), 191–259.

Castle, Barbara, *The Castle Diaries 1964–1970* (London, 1984).

Cau, Jean, "Un camp de concentration où des kapos noirs assassinent des juifs noirs," in Alexandre Sosnowsky, ed., *Biafra: Proximité de la mort continuité de la vie* (Paris, 1969).

Centre d'information et de documentation Moyen-Orient, eds., *Biafra: Une lecon à méditer* (Brussels, 1970).

Centre national de la photographie, ed., *Gilles Caron*, Photo Poche 81 (Arles, 2006).

Chaliand, Gérard, *Mythes révolutionnaires du tiers monde: Guérillas et socialismes* (Paris, 1976).

Chegwe, Andreas Olie, ed., *Biafra: Ein Volk stirbt und die Welt sieht zu* (Wiesbaden, 1968).

Chima, Alex, *Future Lies in a Progressive Biafra* (London, 1968).

"Chinua Achebe on Biafra," *Transition* 36 (1968), 31–8.

Chomsky, Noam, *American Power and the New Mandarins* (New York, 1969).

Cohn-Bendit, Daniel et al., "Kopfschrott oder Gefühlsheu? Eine Diskussion über Internationalismus," *Kursbuch* 57 (October 1979), 199–221.

Comité International de Lutte contre le Génocide au Biafra, ed., *Biafra: Temoignages – prises de position* (Paris, 1969).

Cronje, Suzanne, *The World and Nigeria: The Diplomatic History of the Biafran War 1967–1970* (London, 1972).

Crossman, Richard, *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister, Volume Three: Secretary of State for Social Services 1968–1970* (London, 1977).

Czaja, Herbert, "Die Menschenrechte und die deutsche Frage," *Deutschland-Union-Dienst*, October 17, 1968, 1–5.

Czaja, Herbert, *Ausgleich mit Osteuropa: Versuch einer europäischen Friedensordnung* (Stuttgart, 1969).

Davis, John A., "Black Americans and United States Policy toward Africa," *Journal of International Affairs* 23 (1969), No. 2, 236–49.

"Dazu kann man nicht schweigen," *Union in Deutschland*, 01.08.1968, 1.

Debré, François, *Biafra, an II* (Paris, 1968).

Dike, Chijioke, "Le Nigeria: La guerre des clichés," *Problemes Politiques et Sociaux: Articles et Documents d'Actualité Mondiale* 7 (February 13, 1970), 30–2.

"Diskussion: Autoritäten und Revolution," in Soziologisches Lektorat, ed., *ad lectores 8: Eduard Reifferscheid zum 16. Mai 1969* (Neuwied, 1969), 19–60.

"Dr. Akanu Ibiam besucht Deutschland," in Paul Gerhard Eberlein, ed., *Nigeria/Biafra: Eine Dokumentation* (Informationsdienst des Diakonischen Werkes, 1968), 31–2.

Du Bois, W.E.B., *Colonies and Peace: Color and Democracy* (Oxford, 2007).

Eberlein, Paul Gerhard, ed., *Nigeria/Biafra: Eine Dokumentation* (Informationsdienst des Diakonischen Werkes, 1968).

Egbuna, Obi B., *The Murder of Nigeria: An Indictment* (London, 1968).

Eleazu, Uma Oke, "Nigeria, Biafra and the Organization of African Unity: Self-Determination versus Territorial Integrity." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association in Montreal, Canada, October 1969, 14–20.

Emerson, Rupert "The Fate of Human Rights in the Third World," *World Politics* 27 (1975), No. 2, 201–26.

"Eyewitness Report from Biafra: Medicine versus Starvation," *Medical World News*, February 28, 1969, front page.

Fanon, Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York, 2004 [first edn in French, Paris 1961]).

Farer, Tom J., "Humanitarian Intervention: The View from Charlottesville," in Richard B. Lillich, ed., *Humanitarian Intervention and the United Nations* (Charlottesville, VA, 1973), 149–64.

Fitch, Bob and Mary Oppenheimer, "Biafra: Let Them Eat Oil," *The Black Dwarf*, September 22, 1968, 7.

Foccart, Jacques, *Foccart parle: Entretiens avec Philippe Gaillard*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1995–97).

Forsyth, Frederick, *The Biafra Story* (Harmondsworth, 1969).

Forsyth, Frederick, *The Making of an African Legend: The Biafra Story* (Harmondsworth, 1977).

Forsyth, Frederick, "Foreword," in Tony Byrne, *Airlift to Biafra: Breaching the Blockade* (Dublin, 1997), 7–9.

Fürstenberg, Elimar Freiherr von and Helmut Ruppert, *Der Südsudan in Sklavenketten* (Regensburg, 1969).

Gans, Bruno, "A Biafran Relief Mission," *The Lancet*, March 29, 1969, 660–5.

Garnier, Jean-Pierre and Roland Lew, "From the Wretched of the Earth to the Defence of the West: An Essay on Left Disenchantment in France," *Socialist Register* (1984), 299–323.

Garrett, Tom, "Genocide – or Merely the Murder of Biafran Elite?" *Church Times*, October 18, 1968, 11.

Gaulle, Charles de, *Mémoires de Guerre: L'Appel 1940–1942* (Paris, 1954).

Gaulle, Charles de, "Du prestige," in Charles de Gaulle, *Lettres, Notes et Carnets 1919–Juin 1940* (Paris, 1980), 255–7.

Geiss, Imanuel, "Nigeria: Zur Vorgeschichte und Geschichte," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte B8/67*, 22.02.1967, 3–22.

Geiss, Imanuel, "Der Krieg zwischen Nigeria und Biafra," in Tilman Zülch and Klaus Guercke, eds., *Biafra: Todesurteil für ein Volk?* (Berlin, 1968), 17–28.

Geiss, Imanuel, "Pan-Africanism," *Journal of Contemporary History* 4 (1969), No. 1, 187–200.

Geiss, Imanuel, *Die Rechtsopposition und ihr Kampf gegen die Ostverträge* (Munich, 1972).

Germani, Hans, *Weiße Söldner im schwarzen Land: Ein Erlebnisbericht* (Frankfurt a.M., 1966).

Gol, Jean, "En guise d'introduction: Le Biafra et Israel," in Centre d'information et de documentation Moyen-Orient, eds., *Biafra: Une lecon à méditer* (Brussels, 1970), 1.

Goodall, Norman, ed., *Bericht aus Uppsala 1968: Offizieller Bericht über die Vierte Vollversammlung des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen Uppsala 4.–20. Juli 1968* (Geneva, 1968).

Graham-Douglas, Nabo B., *Ojukwu's Rebellion and World Opinion* (London, 1969).

Grass, Günter, "Über die angelesene Revolution," *Frontal* 46 (July 1968), 6–11.

Gray, Alan, "Quarterly Chronicle," *African Affairs* 60 (January 1961), No. 238, 5.

Gurtov, Melvin, *The United States Against the Third World: Antinationalism and Intervention* (New York, 1974).

Hamon, Hervé, and Patrick Rotman, *Génération, Volume II: Les années de poudre* (Paris, 1988).

Hanbury, H. G., *Biafra: A Challenge to the Conscience of Britain* (London, 1968).

Hanning, Hugh, "Lessons from the Arms Race," *Africa Report* 13, No. 2 (1968), 42–7.

Hatch, Alden, *Pope Paul VI: Apostle on the Move* (New York, 1966).
Hazzard, Shirley, *Defeat of an Ideal: A Study of the Self-Destruction of the United Nations* (London, 1973).
Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction: Reason in History* (Cambridge, 1975).
"Hilfe für Biafra," *Union in Deutschland*, 03.10.1968.
Hilton, Bruce, *Highly Irregular: A Documentary of Four Modern-Day Don Quixotes in a Twenty-Year-Old War-Surplus Airplane Smuggling Food to Starving Biafra* (London, 1969).
Hobson, Harold, *The Pearl of Days: An Intimate Memoir of the Sunday Times 1822–1972* (London, 1972).
Hochhuth, Rolf, *Der Stellvertreter: Ein christliches Trauerspiel* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1967 [1963]).
Howe, Peter R., ed., *Shooting under Fire: Images and Stories from Combat Photographers on the Front Line* (New York, 2002).
Hunt, David, *Memoirs: Military and Diplomatic* (London, 2006 [1966/1975]).
Huyssen, Ulrich, *Gefährliche Mission in Biafra* (Fürth im Odenwald, 1969).
Ike, Vincent Chukwuemeka, *University Development in Africa: The Nigerian Experience* (Ibadan, 1976), 12–18.
"Interview with Gilles Caron," *Zoom* 2 (March/April 1970): 112–127.
Julliard, Jacques, "Le tiers monde et la gauche," in Burguière, ed., *Le tiers monde et la gauche* (Paris, 1979), 39–40.
Kahn, Cynthia, "The O.A.U.: Hurrying Nowhere?," *Africa Today* 15 (1968), No. 5, 1–2.
Kirk-Greene, Anthony H. M., ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966–July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]).
Kirk-Greene, Anthony H. M., ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume II: July 1967–January 1970* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]).
Kissinger, Henry, *White House Years* (Boston, 1979).
Knapp, George, *Aspects of the Biafran Affair: A Study of the British Attitudes and Policy towards the Nigerian–Biafran Conflict* (London, 1968).
Kouchner, Bernard, "Biafra et Moyen-Orient," in Centre d'information et de documentation Moyen-Orient, eds., *Biafra*, first published in *Eléments* (1969), No. 2–3, 24–6.
Kouchner, Bernard, *Charité Business* (Paris, 1986).
Kouchner, Bernard, "Préface: Le devoir d'ingérence," in Mario Betatti and Bernard Kochner, eds., *Le Devoir d'Ingérence: Peut-on les laisser mourir?* (Paris, 1987), 9–12.
Kouchner, Bernard, *Le malheur des autres* (Paris, 1991).
Lacoste, Yves, *Contre les anti tiers-mondistes et contre certains tiers-mondistes* (Paris, 1985).
La Mort du Biafra: Photographies de Gilles Caron. Présentation de F. de Bonneville (Paris, 1968.
Liauzu, Claude, "Le tiersmondisme des intellectuels en accusation: Le sens d'une trajectoire," *Vingtième Siècle* 12 (1986), 73–80.
Lillich, Richard B., "Intervention to Protect Human Rights," *McGill Law Journal* 15 (1969), 205–19.

Lillich, Richard B., ed., *Humanitarian Intervention and the United Nations* (Charlottesville, VA, 1973).
Mann, Golo, "Geleitwort," in Tilman Zülch and Klaus Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben? Dokumente – Berichte – Analysen – Kommentare* (Berlin, 1969), 9–10.
Marienstras, Richard, "Un *génocide* très contrariant," *Les Nouveaux Cahiers* 15 (1968), pp. 6–10.
McCullin, Don, *Unreasonable Behaviour: An Autobiography* (London, 1990).
McCullin, Don, *Sleeping with Ghosts: A Life's Work in Photography* (London, 1994).
McCullin, Don, *Is Anyone Taking Any Notice? A book of photographs and comments by Donald McCullin with phrases drawn from the 1970 Nobel Lecture by Alexander Solzenitsyn* (Cambridge, MA, 1973).
Mok, Michael, *Biafra Journal* (New York, 1969).
Morris, Roger, *Uncertain Greatness: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1977).
"Nigeria/Biafra: Armed Conflict with a Vengeance," *Review of the International Commission of Jurists* 2 (June 1969), 10–14.
Niven, Sir Rex, "Modern Nigeria," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 118, (Dec. 1969), No. 5161, 34–42.
Niven, Sir Rex, *The War of Nigerian Unity 1967–1970* (Ibadan, 1970).
Nixon, Charles R., "Self-Determination: The Nigeria/Biafra Case," *World Politics* 24 (1972), No. 4, 473–97.
Nkrumah, Kwame, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London, 1965).
Nwankwo, Arthur Agwuncha and Samuel Udochukwu Ifejika, *The Making of a Nation: Biafra* (London, 1969).
Nwankwo, Nehe, *The Truth about Biafra and Nigeria* (New York, 1969).
O'Brien, Conor Cruise, "Genocide and Discretion," *The Listener*, 30.01.1969, 129–31.
O'Brien, Conor Cruise and Feliks Topolski, *The United Nations: Sacred Drama* (London, 1968).
Ojukwu, C. Odumegwu, *Biafra, Volume I: Selected Speeches* (New York, 1969).
Ojukwu, C. Odumegwu, *Biafra, Volume II: Random Thoughts* (New York, 1969).
Panter-Brick, S. K., "The Right to Self-Determination: Its Application to Nigeria," *International Affairs* 44 (1968), No. 2, 254–66.
Parise, Goffredo, *Biafra* (Milan, 1968).
Parish, Margot, "Impressions of Biafra," *Labour Monthly*, June 1968, 269–72.
Post, K. W. J., "Is There a Case for Biafra?," *International Affairs* 44 (1968), No. 1, 26–39.
Pottle, Mark, ed., *Daring to Hope: The Diaries and Letters of Violet Bonham Carter 1946–1969* (London, 2000).
Raddatz, Fritz J., ed., *Summa iniuria oder Durfte der Papst schweigen? Hochhuths 'Stellvertreter' in der öffentlichen Kritik* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1963).
Raffelberg, J. M., "Dies ist das grösste Leichenhaus der Welt," reprinted from *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, August 24, in Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra*

überleben? Dokumente – Berichte – Analysen – Kommentare (Berlin, 1969), 115–17.

Rahner, Karl, "Hungern für Biafra," in Karl Rahner, *Kritisches Wort: Aktuelle Probleme in Kirche und Welt* (Freiburg, 1970), 160–7.

Reisman, Michael and Myres S. McDougal, "Humanitarian Intervention," in Richard B. Lillich, ed., *Humanitarian Intervention and the United Nations* (Charlottesville, VA, 1973), 167–95.

Renard, Alain, *Biafra: Naissance d'une Nation?* (Paris, 1969).

Robert, Maurice, *'Ministre' de l'Afrique: entretiens avec André Renault* (Paris, 2004).

Rösemann, Harm and Margarete Rösemann, *Heidelberg, Hilf Biafra: Bleib nicht stehen bei einer Gewissensberuhigung durch Wohltätigkeit, versuch eine Politik wahrhaftiger Humanität* (Heidelberg, 1969).

Rosen, Carl Gustaf von, *Le Ghetto Biafrais: Tel que je l'ai vu* (Paris, 1969 [1st edn in Swedish, Stockholm, 1969]).

Rousset, David, *L'univers concentrationnaire* (Paris, 1965 [1946]).

Samuels, J. W., "Humanitarian Relief in Man-Made Disasters: International Law, Government Policy and the Nigerian Experience," *The Canadian Yearbook of International Law/Annuaire Canadien de Droit International* 10 (1972), 3–39.

Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Situations, vol. V: colonialisme et néo-colonialisme* (Paris, 1964).

Sartre, Jean-Paul, "Orphée noir," in Léopold Sédar Senghor, ed., *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française* (Paris, 1972 [1948]), IX–XLIV.

Scharf, Kurt, "Vorwort," in Kirchenkanzlei der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, eds., *Die Lage der Vertriebenen und das Verhältnis des deutschen Volkes zu seinen östlichen Nachbarn: Eine evangelische Denkschrift* (Hannover, 1965), 5–6.

Schoenberner, Gerhard, *Der gelbe Stern: Die Judenverfolgung in Europa 1933–1945* (Hamburg, 1961 [1960]).

Scholl-Latour, Peter, "Solidarität mit Biafra," *Publik* 12 (1968), 5.

Schott, Stephen C., "United States Relief to Civilian Victims of the Biafra-Nigeria War," in John M. Paxman and George T. Boggs, eds., *The United Nations: A Reassessment. Sanctions, Peacekeeping, and Humanitarian Assistance* (Charlottesville, VA, 1973), 105–13.

Sedgwick, Peter, "The Appalling Silence," *Socialist Worker*, July 10, 1969, 2.

Seeburg, Gustav, *Die Wahrheit über Nigeria/Biafra: Vorgeschichte und Hintergründe des Konfliktes* (Bern, 1969).

"Self-Determination and Settlement of the Arab-Israeli Conflict," *Proceedings of the American Society of International Law* 65 (1971), No. 4, 40–70.

Shepperson, George, "Pan-Africanism and 'Pan-Africanism': Some Historical Notes," *Phylon* 23 (1962), No. 4, 346–58.

Soyinka, Wole, *Poems from Prison* (London, 1969).

Soyinka, Wole, *The Man Died: Prison Notes of Wole Soyinka* (New York, 1988 [1971]).

Sosnowsky, Alexandre, ed., *Biafra: Proximité de la mort continuité de la vie* (Paris, 1969).

Stewart, Michael, *Life and Labour: An Autobiography* (London, 1980).
St. Jorre, John de, *The Nigerian Civil War* (London, 1972).
Sullivan, John R., *Breadless Biafra* (Dayton, OH, 1969).
Tenhumberg, Heinrich, "Massenmord trotz Völkerrecht? Zur Problematik Nigeria/Biafra," in Zülch and Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben? Dokumente – Berichte – Analysen – Kommentare* (Berlin, 1969), 226–30.
Uwechue, Raph, *Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War: A Call for Realism* (London, 1969).
"Vertriebene und Flüchtlinge in der ganzen Welt: Forschungsgesellschaft für das Weltflüchtlingsproblem tagte," *Das Ostpreußenblatt*, 30.09.1967, 4.
Vonnegut, Jr., Kurt, "Biafra: A People Betrayed," in Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Wampeters, Foma & Granfalloons (Opinions)* (London, 1975), first published in *McCall's* 97 (April 1970), 68–9, 134–8.
Waugh, Auberon, *Britain and Biafra: The Case for Genocide* (London, 1969).
Waugh, Auberon and Suzanne Cronjé, *Biafra: Britain's Shame* (London, 1969).
Whiteman, Kaye, "The Passionate Whites," *Venture* 21 (July/August 1969), No. 7, 37–9.
Wienbruch, Anny, "Geleitwort," in Huyssen, *Gefährliche Mission in Biafra* (Fürth im Odenwald, 1969), 5–6.
Wilson, Harold, *The Labour Government 1964–1970: A Personal Record* (London, 1971).
Wodie, Francis, "La sécession du Biafra et le droit international public," *Revue Générale de Droit International Public* 73, No. 4 (1969), 1018–60.
Wolf, Jean and Claude Brovelli, *La guerre des rapaces: La vérité sur la guerre du Biafra* (Paris, 1969).
Zülch, Tilman, "Plädoyer für die Republik Biafra," in Tilman Zülch and Klaus Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben? Dokumente – Berichte – Analysen – Kommentare* (Berlin, 1969), 11–18.
Zülch, Tilman, and Klaus Guercke, eds., *Biafra: Todesurteil für ein Volk?* (Berlin, 1968).
Zülch, Tilman, and Klaus Guercke, eds., *Soll Biafra überleben? Dokumente – Berichte – Analysen – Kommentare* (Berlin, 1969).

E. OTHER MEDIA

Documentary Film

Shravan Vidyarthi, dir., and Randy Bell, ed., "African Lens: The Story of Priya Ramrakha," 2008.

Digitized Sources

Abram, Morris B. to Participants in American Jewish Emergency Effort for Biafran Relief, 26.09.1968, www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/650.PDF (accessed February 22, 2013).
"A Protest Against Genocide: Biafra Rally, Statement by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum," www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/649.PDF (accessed February 22, 2013).

"A Year Later: Summary of the American Jewish Emergency Effort for Biafran Relief, July 1968–July 1969, 08.08.1969, www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/659A.PDF (accessed February 22, 2013).
"Firing Line #143: Vietnam and the Intellectuals," New York City, 03.04.1969, transcript (Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Library and Archives), 20, 19, 18–19, hoohila.stanford.edu/firingline/programView2.php?programID=163 (accessed April 2, 2013).
"Firing Line – Program #167: Biafra and British Foreign Policy," New York City, 22.09.1969, transcript (Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Library and Archives) hoohila.stanford.edu/firingline/programView2.php?programID=188 (accessed April 7, 2013).
Kühn, Heinz, "Realistische Reformen gegen radikale Utopien," *Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst: Tagespolitik – Kommentare – Auslandsberichte*, 11.03.1969, 1–3, library.fes.de/spdpd/1969/690311.pdf (accessed February 3, 2009).

Web pages

www.archive.worldpressphoto.org/search/layout/result/indeling/detailwpp/form/wpp/start/1/q/ishoofdafbeelding/true/trefwoord/year/1968/trefwoord/category/Photo%20Stories?id=wpp%3Acol1%3Adat4253 (accessed February 27, 2013).
www.archive.worldpressphoto.org/search/layout/result/indeling/detailwpp/form/wpp/start/2/q/ishoofdafbeelding/true/trefwoord/year/1968 (accessed February 12, 2013).
www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&STID=2S5RYDYCM21V (accessed February 12, 2013).

II. SECONDARY LITERATURE

Abun-Nasr, Jamil M., "Muslime im Nationalstaat Nigeria," in Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, ed., *Muslime in Nigeria: Religion und Gesellschaft im politischen Wandel seit den 1950er Jahren* (Münster, 1993), 1–18.
Addison, Paul, *No Turning Back: The Peacetime Revolutions of Post-War Britain* (Oxford, 2010).
Adeleye, R. A., *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1804–1906: The Sokoto Caliphate and its Enemies* (London, 1972).
Adeleye, R. A. and C. C. Stewart, "The Sokoto Caliphate in the Nineteenth Century," in J. F. A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder, eds., *History of West Africa, vol. 2* (Harlow, 1987), 86–131.
Afigbo, A. E., *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect rule in Southeastern Nigeria 1891–1929* (London, 1972).
Ageron, Charles-Robert, *La décolonisation française* (Paris, 1994 [1991]).
Ahazuem, Jones O., "Perceptions: Biafra, Politics, and the War," in Axel Harneit-Sievers et al., eds., *A Social History of the Nigerian Civil War: Perspectives from Below* (Enugu, 1997), 15–45.
"AHR Conversation: The Historical Study of Emotions," *AHR* 117 (2012), No. 5, 1487–1531.

"AHR Forum: The International 1968, Part I," *AHR* 114 (2009) No. 1.

"AHR Forum: The International 1968, Part II," *AHR* 114 (2009) No. 2.

Ajayi, J. F. A., "Aftermath of the Fall of Old Oyo," in J. F. A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder, eds., *History of West Africa, vol. 2* (Harlow, 1987), 174–214.

Ajayi, J. F. A. and Michael Crowder, eds., *History of West Africa, vol. 2* (Harlow, 1987).

Ajibola, William A., *Foreign Policy and Public Opinion: A Case Study of British Foreign Policy over the Nigerian Civil War* (Ibadan, 1978).

Akinyemi, A. B., "The British Press and the Nigerian Civil War," *African Affairs* 71 (1972), 408–426.

Akuchu, Gemuh E., "The Organization of African Unity Peacemaking Machinery and the Nigerian-Biafran Conflict," PhD Dissertation University of Denver 1974.

Akuchu, Gemuh E., "Peaceful Settlement of Disputes: Unsolved Problem for the OAU (A Case Study of the Nigeria-Biafra Conflict)," *Africa Today* 24 (1977), No. 4, 39–58.

Akyeampong, Emmanuel, "Africans in the Diaspora: The Diaspora and Africa," *African Affairs* 99 (2000), 183–215.

Alexander, Jeffrey C., "The Social Construction of Moral Universals," in Jeffrey C. Alexander et al., *Remembering the Holocaust: A Debate* (Oxford, 2009), 3–102.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. et al., *Remembering the Holocaust: A Debate* (Oxford, 2009).

Allen, Tim and David Styan, "A Right to Interfere? Bernard Kouchner and the New Humanitarianism," *Journal of International Development* 12 (2000), 825–42.

Allimadi, Milton, *The Hearts of Darkness: How White Writers Created the Racist Image of Africa* (New York, 2002).

Amrith, Sunil and Glenda Sluga, "New Histories of the United Nations," *Journal of World History* 19 (2008), No. 3, 251–74.

Amselle, Jean-Loup, "Ethnies et espaces: pour une anthropologie topologique," in Jean-Loup Amselle and Elikia M'Bokolo, eds., *Au coeur de l'ethnie: Ethnies, tribalisme et État en Afrique* (Paris, 1999), 11–48.

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1991 [1983]).

Anderson, Carol, *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (Cambridge, 2003).

Andrew, John A., *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1997).

Anghie, Antony, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge, 2005).

Anthony, Douglas A., *Poison and Medicine: Ethnicity, Power, and Violence in a Nigerian City, 1966 to 1986* (Portsmouth, NH, 2002).

Anthony, Douglas A., "'Resourceful and Progressive Blackmen': Modernity and Race in Biafra, 1967–1970," *Journal of African History* 51 (2010), 41–61.

Anthony, Douglas A., "'Ours Is a War of Survival': Biafra, Nigeria and Arguments about Genocide, 1966–70," *Journal of Genocide Research* 16 (2014), No. 2–3, 205–25.

Arendt, Hannah, "Understanding and Politics (The Difficulties of Understanding)," in Hannah Arendt, *Essays in Understanding 1930–1954* (New York, 1994), 307–27.

Arendt, Hannah, *On Revolution* (New York, 2006).

Ariès, Philippe, *L'homme devant la mort* (Paris, 1977).

Armitage, David, "The Contagion of Sovereignty: Declarations of Independence since 1776," *South African Historical Journal* 52 (2005), 1–18.

Armitage, David, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge, MA, 2007).

Armitage, David, "Civil War and Revolution," *Agora* 44 (2009), No. 2, 18–22.

Arthur, Paige, *Unfinished Projects: Decolonization and the Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre* (New York, 2010).

Austen, Ralph A., *Trans-Saharan Africa in World History* (Oxford, 2010).

Austen, Ralph A. and Woodruff D. Smith, "Images of Africa and British Slave-Trade Abolition: The Transition to an Imperialist Ideology, 1787–1807," *African Historical Studies* 2 (1969), 69–83.

Ayandele, E. A., *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842–1914* (London, 1966).

Ayandele, E. A., The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria 1870–1918," in O. U. Kalu, ed., *The History of Christianity in West Africa* (London, 1980), 133–58.

Baar, Fabian, "Von der Abendunterhaltung zum Leitmedium – vom Familienzentrum zur Geräuschkulisse," in Werner Faulstich, ed., *Die Kultur der 60er Jahre* (Munich, 2003), 231–40.

Bach, Daniel, "Le Général de Gaulle et la guerre civile au Nigeria," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 14, No. 2 (1980), 259–72.

Badom, Ted Gogote, *Foreign Intervention in Internal Wars: The Case of the Nigerian Civil War 1967–1970* (Lund, 1997).

Bailkin, Jordanna, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley, 2012).

Bailyn, Bernard, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, 1967).

Bamisaiye, Adepitan, "The Nigerian Civil War in the International Press," *Transition* 44 (1974), 30–2, 34–5.

Bancel, Nicolas et al., *La République coloniale* (Paris, 2003).

Barnes, Andrew E., "'Evangelization Where It Is Not Wanted': Colonial Administrators and Missionaries in Northern Nigeria during the First Third of the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 25 (1995), No. 4, 412–41.

Barnett, Michael, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, 2011).

Barnouw, Dagmar, *Germany 1945: Views of War and Violence* (Bloomington, 1996).

Barth, Boris, *Genozid: Völkermord im 20. Jahrhundert. Geschichte – Theorien – Kontroversen*, (Munich, 2006).

Barth, Boris and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Zivilisierungsmissionen: Imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Konstanz, 2005).

Barth, Volker, "Medien, Transnationalität und Globalisierung 1830–1960: Neuerscheinungen und Desiderata," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 51 (2011), 717–36.

Barthes, Roland, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (London, 2000, first edn in French, Paris 1980).

Barthes, Roland, "The Reality Effect," in Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language* (Berkeley, 1989, first edn in French, Paris 1984), 141–8.

Barthes, Roland, "Writing the Event," in Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language* (Berkeley, 1989, first edn in French, Paris 1984)149–54.

Bass, Gary J., *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (New York, 2008).

Bat, Jean-Pierre, *Le syndrome Foccart: La politique française en Afrique, de 1959 à nos jours* (Paris, 2012).

Baughman, James L., *The Republic of Mass Culture: Journalism, Filmmaking, and Broadcasting in America since 1941* (Baltimore, MD, 2006 [1992]).

Baulin, Jacques, *La politique africaine d'Houphouët-Boigny* (Paris, 1980).

Bauman, Zygmunt, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, 1991 [1989]).

Bayart, Jean-Francois, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London, 1993, first edn in French, Paris 1989).

Bayly, Christopher A., *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA, 2004).

Bensimon, Doris, *Les juifs de France et leurs relations avec Israël: 1945–1988 (*Paris, 1989).

Benthall, Jonathan, *Disasters, Relief and the Media* (London, 1993).

Benz, Wolfgang, *Ausgrenzung, Vertreibung, Völkermord: Genozid im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2006).

Berger, John, *About Looking* (New York, 1991 [1980]).

Berman, Bruce J., "Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism," *African Affairs* 97 (1998), 305–41.

Berman, Paul, *Power and the Idealists: Or, The Passion of Joschka Fischer, and its Aftermath* (Brooklyn, NY, 2005).

Bersselaar, Dmitri van den, "Imagining Home: Migration and the Igbo Village in Colonial Nigeria," *The Journal of African History* 46 (2005), No. 1, 51–73.

Bessel, Richard and Dirk Schumann, eds., *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge, 2003).

Best, Antony et al., *International History of the Twentieth Century* (London, 2004).

Betts, Raymond F., *Decolonization* (London, 1998).

Biess, Frank and Robert G. Moeller, eds., *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe* (New York, 2010).

Bitterli, Urs, *Golo Mann: Instanz und Aussenseiter. Eine Biographie* (Zürich, 2004).

Black, Maggie, *A Cause for Our Times: Oxfam, the First 50 years* (Oxford, 1992).

Bloxham, Donald and Devin O. Pendas, "Punishment as Prevention? The Politics of Punishing Génocidaires," in Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses, eds., *The Oxford Handbook on Genocide Studies* (Oxford, 2010).

Boltanski, Luc, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics* (Cambridge, 1999, first ed. in French Paris, 1993).

Bösch, Frank, *Die Adenauer-CDU: Gründung, Aufstieg und Krise einer Erfolgspartei 1945–1969*, (Stuttgart, 2001).

Bösch, Frank and Manuel Borutta, "Medien und Emotionen in der Moderne: Historische Perspektiven," in Frank Bösch and Manuel Borutta, eds., *Die Massen bewegen: Medien und Emotionen in der Moderne* (Frankfurt a.M., 2006), 13–41.

Bourdieu, Pierre, *Les règles de l'art: Genèse et structure du champ littéraire* (Paris, 1992).

Bourg, Julian, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought* (Montreal, 2007).

Bourke, Richard, "Languages of Conflict and the Northern Ireland Troubles," *The Journal of Modern History* 83 (September 2011), No. 3, 554–5.

Boutet, Rémy, *L'effroyable guerre du Biafra* (Paris, 1992).

Bouthillon, Fabrice, *La naissance de la Mardité: Une théologie politique à l'âge totalitaire, Pie XI (1922–1939)* (Strasbourg, 2001).

Branch, Taylor, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–1968* (New York, 2006).

Braudel, Fernand, *La Méditerranée et le Monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris, 1949).

Brauman, Rony, "Indigènes et Indigents: De la 'Mission Civilisatrice' coloniale à l'action humanitaire," in Pascal Blanchard et al., eds., *La Fracture Coloniale: La Société Française au Prisme de l'heritage colonial* (Paris, 2005), 169–76.

Bredekamp, Horst, *Theorie des Bildakts* (Frankfurt a.M., 2010).

Brink, Cornelia, *Ikonen der Vernichtung: Öffentlicher Gebrauch von Fotografien aus nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern nach 1945* (Berlin, 1998).

Brink, Cornelia, "Bildeffekte: Überlegungen zum Zusammenhang von Fotografie und Emotionen," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 37 (2011), 104–29.

Brown, Callum, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800–2000* (London, 2009 [2001]).

Brown, Christopher Leslie, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2006).

Bruder, Edith, *The Black Jews of Africa: History, Religion, Identity* (Oxford, 2008).

Bruder, Edith, "The Proto-History of Igbo Jewish Identity from the Colonial Period to the Biafra War, 1890–1970," in Edith Bruder and Tudor Parfitt, eds., *African Zion: Studies in Black Judaism* (Newcastle, 2012), 31–64.

Buchanan, Tom, "'The Truth Will Set You Free': The Making of Amnesty International," *Journal of Contemporary History* 37 (2002), No. 4, 575–97.

Buettner, Elizabeth, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford, 2004).

Buettner, Elizabeth, "'We Don't Grow Coffee and Bananas in Clapham Junction You Know!': Imperial Britons Back Home," in Robert Bickers, ed., *Settlers and Expatriates: Britons over the Seas* (Oxford, 2010), 302–28.

Bull, Hedley and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford, 1984).

Bulliet, Richard W., ed., *The Columbia History of the 20th Century* (New York, 1998).
Burke, Roland, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights* (Philadelphia, 2010).
Burkett, Jodi, "Re-defining British Morality: 'Britishness' and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 1958–68," *Twentieth Century British History* 21 (2010), No. 2, 184–205.
Burman, Erica, "Innocents Abroad: Western Fantasies of Childhood and the Iconography of Emergencies," *Disasters* 18 (1994), No. 3, 238–53.
Burman, Erica, *Developments: Child, Image, Nation* (London, 2008), 151–4.
Büschel, Hubertus and Daniel Speich, eds., *Entwicklungswelten: Zur Globalgeschichte der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 2009).
Campbell, David, "The Iconography of Famine," in Geoffrey Batchen et al., eds., *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis* (London: 2012), 79–91.
Cannadine, David, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire* (London, 2002).
Cell, John W., "Colonial Rule," in Judith M. Brown, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire Vol. IV: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1999), 232–54.
Chadwick, Owen, *Michael Ramsey: A Life* (Oxford, 1990).
Chaigneau, Pascal, *La politique militaire de la France en Afrique* (Paris, 1984).
Chalaby, Jean K., *The de Gaulle Presidency and the Media: Statism and Public Communications* (Basingstoke, 2002).
Chappell, David L., *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004).
Christiansen, Samantha and Zachary A. Scarlett, eds., *The Third World in the Global 1960s* (New York, 2013).
Christofferson, Michael S., *French Intellectuals Against the Left: The Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970s* (New York, 2004).
"Civility in History: Concept, Discourse and Social Practice," *European Review of History – Revue européenne d'histoire* 18 (2011), No. 3, special issue.
Clapham, Christopher, "The *longue durée* of the African state," *African Affairs* 93 (1994), 433–9.
Clapham, Christopher, *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* (Cambridge, 1996).
Clarke, P. B., "The Methods and Ideology of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Eastern Nigeria 1885–1905," in O. U. Kalu, ed., *The History of Christianity in West Africa* (London, 1980), 36–62.
Clavin, Patricia, "Time, Manner, Place: Writing Modern European History in Global, Transnational and International Contexts," *European History Quarterly* 40 (2010), No. 4, 624–40.
Cmiel, Kenneth, "The Emergence of Human Rights Politics in the United States," *The Journal of American History* 86 (1999), No. 3, 1231–50.
Cmiel, Kenneth, "The Recent History of Human Rights," *AHR* 109 (2004), No. 1, 117–35.
Cobbs, Elizabeth A., "Decolonization, the Cold War, and the Foreign Policy of the Peace Corps," *Diplomatic History* 20 (1996), No. 1, 79–105.

Coggins, Richard, "Wilson and Rhodesia: UDI and British Policy towards Africa," *Contemporary British History* 20 (2006), No. 3, 363–81.

Cohen, Robin, *Labour and Politics in Nigeria 1945–71* (London, 1974).

Coleman, James S., *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley, 1963 [1958]).

Colson, Elizabeth, "African Society at the Time of the Scramble," in L. H. Gann and Peter Duignan, eds., *Colonialism in Africa 1870–1914, Vol. I: The History and Politics of Colonialism 1870–1914* (Cambridge, 1969) 27–65.

Conklin, Alice L., *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford, 1997).

Conklin, Alice L., "Colonialism and Human Rights, A Contradiction in Terms? The Case of France and West Africa, 1895–1914," *AHR* 103 (1998), No. 2, 419–42.

Connelly, Matthew, "Taking off the Cold War Lens: Visions of North–South Conflict During the Algerian War for Independence," *AHR* 105 (2000), No. 3, 739–69.

Connelly, Matthew, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford, 2002).

Conrad, Sebastian, *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Cookman, Claude, "Gilles Caron's Coverage of the Crisis in Biafra," *Visual Communication Quarterly* 15 (2008), No. 4, 226–42.

Cooper, Frederick, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, 1996).

Cooper, Frederick, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, 2002).

Cooper, Frederick, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, 2005).

Cooper, Frederick, "Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective," *The Journal of African History* 49 (2008), No. 2, 167–96.

Cooper, Frederick, "Reconstructing Empire in British and French Africa," *Past & Present* 210 (2011), supplement 6, 196–210.

Cooper, Frederick, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton, NJ, 2014).

Cooper, Frederick and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, 1997).

Cooper, John, *Raphael Lemkin and the Struggle for the Genocide Convention* (New York, 2008).

Corbin, Alain, *Le miasme et la jonquille: L'odorat et l'imaginaire social, XVIIIe–XIXe siècles* (Paris, 1986 [1982]).

Crawford, James, *The Story of Nigeria* (London, 1978).

Crawford, James, *The Creation of States in International Law* (Oxford, 1979).,

"The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonization," in James Crawford, ed., *The Cambridge History of Africa Volume 8. From c. 1940 to 1975* (Cambridge, 1984), 8–51.

Crawford, James, "Whose Dream Was It Anyway? Twenty-five Years of African Independence," *African Affairs* 86 (1987), 7–24.

Cunningham, Hugh, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (London, 1995).

Curtin, Philip D., *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780–1850* (London, 1965).

Curtin, Philip D., *Disease and Empire: The Health of European Troops in the Conquest of Africa* (Cambridge, 1998).

Darwin, John, *The End of the British Empire: The Historical Debate* (Oxford, 1991).

Darwin, John, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830–1970* (Cambridge, 2009).

Daughton, J.-P., "Behind the Imperial Curtain: International Humanitarian Efforts and the Critique of French Colonialism in the Interwar Years," *French Historical Studies* 34, No. 3 (2011), 503–28.

Davey, Eleanor, "Famine, Aid, and Ideology: The Political Activism of Médecins sans Frontières in the 1980s," *French Historical Studies* 34 (2011), No. 3, 529–58.

Davey, Eleanor, "Beyond the 'French Doctors': The Evolution and Interpretation of Humanitarian Action in France," HPG Working Papers, 30 October 2012, www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7874.pdf (accessed July 13, 2013).

Davies, Howard, *Sartre and 'Les Temps Modernes'* (Cambridge, 1987).

Davis, Belinda et al., eds., *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the US in the 1960s* (Oxford, 2010).

Davis, Morris, "Audits of International Relief in the Nigerian Civil War: Some Political Perspectives," *International Organization* 29 (1975), No. 2, 501–12.

Davis, Morris, *Interpreters for Nigeria: The Third World and International Public Relations* (Urbana, 1977).

Dayan, Daniel and Elihu Katz, *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History* (Cambridge, MA, 1992).

Debord, Guy, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York, 1994, first edn, French, Paris 1967).

Debrix, François, "Deterritorialised Territories, Borderless Borders: The New Geography of International Medical Assistance," *Third World Quarterly* 19, No. 5 (1998), 827–46.

DeGroot, Gerard, *The 60s Unplugged: A Kaleidoscopic History of a Disorderly Decade* (London, 2008).

Delany, Paul, *Bill Brandt: A Life* (London, 2004).

Demshuk, Andrew, *The Lost German East: Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945–1970* (Cambridge, 2012).

Demshuk, Andrew, "What Was the 'Right to the Heimat'? West German Expellees and the Many Meanings of Heimkehr," *Central European History* 45 (2012), No. 3, 523–56.

Dent, Martin J., "The Military and the Politicians," in S. K. Panter-Brick, *Nigerian Politics and Military Rule: Prelude to the Civil War* (London, 1970), 78–93.

Dent, Martin J., "The Nigerian Civil War," in Alison Smith and Mary Bull, eds., *Margery Perham and British Rule in Africa* (London, 1991), 201–11.

Derix, Simone, *Bebilderte Politik: Staatsbesuche in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1949–1990* (Göttingen, 2009).

Desgrandchamps, Marie-Luce, "Revenir sur le mythe fondateur de Médecins Sans Frontières: les relations entre les médecins français et le CICR pendant la guerre du Biafra (1967–1970)," *Relations internationals* 146 (2011), No. 2, 95–108.

Desgrandchamps, Marie-Luce, "Entre coopération et concurrence: CICR, Unicef et organisations religieuses au Biafra," *Relations internationales* 152, No. 4 (2012), 51–62.

Diamond, Larry, *Class, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria: The Failure of the First Republic* (Syracuse, NY, 1988).

Di-Capua, Yoav, "Arab Existentialism: An Invisible Chapter in the Intellectual History of Decolonization," *AHR* 117 (2012), No. 4, 1061–91.

Dike, Kenneth Onwuka, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830–1885: An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria* (Oxford, 1966 [1956]).

Dogan, Mattei, "How Civil War Was Avoided in France," *International Political Science Review* 5 (1984), No. 3, 245–77.

Dorey, Peter, "The Social Background of Labour MPs Elected in 1964 and 1966," in Peter Dorey, ed., *The Labour Governments 1964–1970* (Abingdon, 2006), 24–33.

Doron, Roy, "Marketing Genocide: Biafran Propaganda Strategies during the Nigerian Civil War, 1967–70," *Journal of Genocide Research* 16 (2014), No. 2–3, 227–46.

Doss, Erika, "Looking at Life: Rethinking America's Favorite Magazine, 1936–1972, in Erika Doss (ed), *Looking at Life Magazine* (Washington, DC, 2001), 1–21.

Douglas, Lawrence, *The Memory of Judgment: Making Law and History in the Trials of the Holocaust* (New Haven, 2001).

Duara, Prasenjit, "Historicizing National Identity, or Who Imagines What and When," in Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., *Becoming National: A Reader* (Oxford, 1996), 151–77.

Dudley, B. J., *Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria* (London, 1968).

Dülffer, Jost and Wilfried Loth, eds., *Dimensionen internationaler Geschichte* (Munich, 2012).

Duranti, Marco, *The Conservative Human Rights Revolution: European Identity, Transnational Politics, and the Origins of the European Convention* (Oxford, 2017).

Durotoye, Adeolu, *Nigerian–German Relations: The Role of Political Culture* (Hamburg, 2001).

Dworkin, Dennis, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the Origins of Cultural Studies* (Durham, NC, 1997).

Eckel, Jan, "Utopie der Moral, Kalkül der Macht: Menschenrechte in der globalen Politik seit 1945," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 49 (2009), 437–84.

Eckel, Jan, "Human Rights and Decolonization: New Perspectives and Open Questions," *Humanity* 1, 2010, www.humanityjournal.org/humanity-volume-1-issue-1/human-rights-and-decolonization-new-perspectives-and-open-questions (accessed July 22, 2013).

Eckel, Jan, "'Under a Magnifying Glass': The International Human Rights Campaign against Chile in the Seventies," in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2011), 312–42.

Eckel, Jan, *Die Ambivalenz des Guten: Menschenrechte in der internationalen Politik seit den 1940ern* (Göttingen, 2014).

Eckel, Jan, and Claudia Moisel, eds., *Universalisierung des Holocaust? Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik in internationaler Perspektive* (Göttingen, 2008).

Eckel, Jan, and Samuel Moyn, eds., *Moral für die Welt? Menschenrechtspolitik in den 1970er Jahren*, (Göttingen, 2012).

Eckel, Jan, and Samuel Moyn, eds., *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s* (Philadelphia, 2014).

Eckert, Andreas, "Die Verheißung der Bürokratie: Verwaltung als Zivilisierungsagentur im kolonialen Westafrika," in Boris Barth and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Zivilisierungsmissionen: Imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Konstanz, 2005), 269–83.

Eckert, Andreas, "Bringing the 'Black Atlantic' into Global History: The Project of Pan-Africanism," in Sebastian Conrad and Dominic Sachsenmaier, eds., *Competing Visions of World Order: Global Moments and Movements, 1880s–1930s* (New York, 2007), 237–57.

Eckert, Andreas, "African Nationalists and Human Rights, 1940s–1970s," in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2011), 283–300.

Eckert, Andreas and Albert Wirz, "The Scramble for Africa: Icon and Idiom of Modernity," in Olivier Pétré Grenouilleau, ed., *From Slave Trade to Empire: Europe and the Colonisation of Black Africa 1780s–1880s* (London, 2004), 133–53.

Eitler, Pascal, "Konziliare Aufbrüche und kontestative Umbrüche: Die Politisierung des Kahtholizismus um 1968 – eine diskurshistorische Perspektive," in Klaus Fitschen et al., eds., *Die Politisierung des Protestantismus: Entwicklungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland während der 1960er und 70er Jahre* (Göttingen, 2011), 249–71.

Ekechi, F. K., *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857–1914* (London, 1972).

Ekundare, Richard Olufemi, *An Economic History of Nigeria, 1860–1960* (London, 1973).

Ekwe-Ekwe, Herbert, *The Biafra War: Nigeria and the Aftermath* (Lewiston, NY, 1990).

Ekwe-Ekwe, Herbert, *Biafra Revisited* (Dakar, 2007).

Eleazu, Uma O., *Federalism and Nation-Building: The Nigerian Experience 1954–1965* (Ifracombe, 1977).

Ellis, Stephen, "Writing Histories of Contemporary Africa," *Journal of African History* 43 (2002), No. 1, 1–26.

Engel, Ulf and Hans-Georg Schleicher, *Die beiden deutschen Staaten in Afrika: Zwischen Konkurrenz und Koexistenz 1949–1990* (Hamburg, 1998).
Engerman, David C. and Corinna R. Unger, "Introduction: Towards a Global History of Modernization," *Diplomatic History* 33 (2009), No. 3, 375–85.
English, Richard and Joseph Morrison Skelly, "Ideas Matter," in Richard English and Joseph Morrison Skelly, eds., *Ideas Matter: Essays in Honour of Conor Cruise O'Brien* (Lanham, 2000), 19–22.
Esedebe, Olisanwuche, *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and the Movement 1776–1963* (Washington, DC, 1982).
Evans, Martin, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford, 2012).
Fabian, Johannes, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York, 2002 [1983]).
Fabry, Mikulas, *Recognizing States: International Society and the Establishment of New States since 1776* (Oxford, 2010).
Fafowora, Oladapo Olusola, *Pressure Groups and Foreign Policy: A Comparative Study of British Attitudes and Policy towards Secessionist Moves in the Congo (1960–63) and in Nigeria (1966–69)* (Ibadan, 1990).
Falola Toyin, *Economic Reforms and Modernization in Nigeria, 1945–1965* (Kent, OH, 2004).
Falola Toyin, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria* (Bloomington, 2009).
Falola Toyin, and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge, 2008).
Farber, David R., *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism: A Short History* (Princeton, NJ, 2010).
Fasehun, Orobola, "Nigerian Politics and the Roles of Nigeria in the Organization of African Unity, 1963–1967," PhD Dissertation Rutgers University (1979).
Fassin, Didier, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present* (Berkeley, 2012).
Fassin, Didier and Mariella Pandolfi, *Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions* (New York, 2010).
Faught, C. Brad, *Into Africa: The Imperial Life of Margery Perham* (London, 2012).
Fehrenbach, Heide, "Children and Other Civilians: Photojournalism and Humanitarian Image-Making," in Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno, eds., *Humanitarian Photography: A History* (Cambridge, 2015), 165–99.
Fehrenbach, Heide and Davide Rodogne, eds., *Humanitarian Photography: A History* (Cambridge, 2015).
Ferguson, Niall et al., eds., *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 2010).
Fermaglich, Kirsten, *American Dreams and Nazi Nightmares: Early Holocaust Consciousness and Liberal America, 1957–1965* (Waltham, MA, 2006).
Fink, Carole et al., eds., *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge, 1998).
Finucane, Aengus, "The Changing Roles of Voluntary Organisations," in Kevin M. Cahill, ed., *A Framework for Survival: Health, Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance in Conflict and Disasters* (London, 1999), 245–56.

Fisch, Jörg, *Die europäische Expansion und das Völkerrecht*, Stuttgart: Steiner 1984.
Fisch, Jörg, *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Völker: Die Domestizierung einer Illusion* (Munich, 2010).
Fischer, Fritz, *Making Them Like Us: Peace Corps Volunteers in the 1960s* (Washington, DC, 1998).
Flichy, Patrice, *Tele: Geschichte der modernen Kommunikation* (Frankfurt a.M., 1994, first edn, French, Paris, 1991).
Förster, Stig et al., eds., *Bismarck, Europe, and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference 1884–1885 and the Onset of Partition* (Oxford, 1988).
Forsythe, David P., *Humanitarian Politics: The Internationale Committee of the Red Cross* (Baltimore, MD, 1977).
Forsythe, David P., *The Humanitarians. The International Committee of the Red Cross* (Cambridge, 2005).
Foucault, Michel, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris, 1969).
Foucault, Michel, *L'ordre du discours: Leçon inaugurale au Collège de France prononcée le 2 décembre 1970* (Paris, 1972).
Foucault, Michel, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" in Michel Foucault, *Dits et Écrits, vol. I: 1954–1969*, ed. by Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris, 1994), 789–821.
Fyfe, Christopher, "Race, Empire and the Historians," *Race & Class* 33 (April 1992), 15–30.
Gaag, Nikki van der and Cathy Nash, *Images of Africa: The UK Report* (Oxford, 1987).
Gaines, Kevin, "From Colonization to Anti-colonialism: Lincoln in Africa," in Richard Carwardine and Jay Sexton, eds., *The Global Lincoln* (Oxford, 2011), 259–71.
Garavini, Giuliano, "The Colonies Strike Back: The Impact of the Third World on Western Europe, 1968–1975," *Contemporary European History* 16, No. 3 (2007), 299–319.
Garavini, Giuliano, *After Empires: European Integration, Decolonization, and the Challenge from the Global South* (Oxford, 2012).
Gassert, Philipp et al., *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955–1975* (New York, 2006).
Geiss, Imanuel, *The Pan-African movement: A History of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe, and Africa* (New York, 1974, first edn, German, Frankfurt a.M., 1968).
Gellately, Robert, Ben Kiernan, eds., *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, 2003).
Genette, Gérard, *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré* (Paris, 1982).
Geyer, Michael and Charles Bright, "World History in a Global Age," *AHR* 100, No. 4 (1995), 1034–60.
Ghosh, Amitav, "The Global Reservation: Notes toward an Ethnography of International Peacekeeping," in *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (1994), No. 3, 412–22.
Gibbs, David N., *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money, and U.S. Policy in the Congo Crisis* (Chicago, 1991).
Gildea, Robert, *The Past in French History* (New Haven, CT, 1994).

Gillis, John R., "The Birth of the Virtual Child: A Victorian Progeny," in Willem Koops and Michael Zuckerman, eds., *Beyond the Century of the Child: Cultural History and Developmental Psychology* (Philadelphia, 2003), 82–95.

Gilman, Nils, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore, MD, 2003).

Gilroy, Paul, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA, 1992).

Gitlin, Todd, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley, 1980).

Gitlin, Todd, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (Toronto, 1987).

Givoni, Michal, "Des victimes pas comme les autres: Réactions israéliennes face a la catastrophe du Biafra," William Ossipow, ed., *Israël et l'autre* (Geneva, 2005), 195–242.

Givoni, Michal, "Beyond the Humanitarian/Political Divide: Witnessing and the Making of Humanitarian Ethics," *Journal of Human Rights* 10, No. 1 (2011), 55–75.

Glasenapp, Jörn, "Titelschwund und Politisierung: Zur Illustriertenlandschaft der sechziger Jahre," in Werner Faulstich, ed., *Die Kultur der 60er Jahre* (Munich, 2003), 129–43.

Glendon, Mary Ann, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York, 2001).

Gniss, Daniela, *Der Politiker Eugen Gerstenmaier 1906–1986: Eine Biographie* (Düsseldorf, 2005).

Goedde, Petra, "Global Cultures," in Akira Iriye, ed., *Global Interdependence: The World after 1945* (Cambridge, MA, 2014), 535–678.

Goltz, Anna von der, "A Polarised Generation? Conservative students and West Germany's '1968'," in Anna von der Goltz, ed., *Talkin' 'bout my Generation: Conflicts of Generation Building and Europe's '1968'* (Göttingen, 2011).

Gong, Gerrit W., *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society* (Oxford, 1984).

Gosewinkel, Dieter, "Zivilgesellschaft – Bürgerlichkeit – Zivilität? Konzeptionelle Überlegungen zur Deutung deutscher Geschichte im 20. Jahrhundert," in Gunilla Budde et al., eds., *Bürgertum nach dem bürgerlichen Zeitalter: Leitbilder und Praxis seit 1945* (Göttingen, 2010), 29–52.

Gould, Michael, *The Struggle for Modern Nigeria: The Biafran War 1967–1970* (London, 2012).

Graf, William D., *The Nigerian State: Political Economy, State Class and Political System in the Post-colonial Era* (London, 1988).

Grant, Kevin O., *A Civilised Savagery: Britain and the New Slaveries in Africa, 1884–1926* (New York, 2005).

Gray, Peter, "Memory and the Commemoration of the Great Irish Famine," in Peter Gray and Kendrick Oliver, eds., *The Memory of Catastrophe* (Manchester, 2004), 46–64.

Grazia, Victoria de, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 2005).

Green, Abigail, "Humanitarianism in Nineteenth-Century Context: Religious, Gendered, National," *The Historical Journal* 57 (2014), No. 4, 1157–75.

Griffin, Christopher, "France and the Nigerian Civil War, 1967–1970," in: A. Dirk Moses and Lasse Heerten, eds., *Postcolonial Conflict and the Question of Genocide: The Nigeria-Biafra War, 1967–1970* (New York, forthcoming).

Groebner, Valentin, "Zeige deine Wunde! Gewaltbilder und ihre Betrachter – in historischer Perspektive," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, February 13, 2010.

Großbölting, Thomas, *Der verlorene Himmel: Glaube in Deutschland seit 1945* (Göttingen, 2013).

Grossmann, Atina and Carola Sachse, eds, Theme Issue "Human Rights, Utopias, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Europe," *Central European History* 44 (2011), No. 1.

Grubbs, Larry, "Bringing 'The Gospel of Modernization' to Nigeria: American Nation Builders and Development Planning in the 1960s," *Peace and Change* 31 (2006), No. 3, 279–308.

Grubbs, Larry, *Secular Missionaries: Americans and African Development in the 1960s* (Amherst, MA, 2009).

Guilhot, Nicolas, *The Democracy Makers: Human Rights and International Order* (New York, 2005).

Guisnel, Jean, "Derrière la guerre du Biafra, la France," in Faligot Roger and Guisnel Jean, eds., *Histoire secrète de la Ve République* (Paris, 2006), 147–54.

Gurock, Jeffrey S., *Jews in Gotham: New York Jews in a Changing City, 1920–2010* (New York, 2012).

Hall, Stuart, "The Spectacle of the 'Other'," in Stuart Hall, ed., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London, 1997), 223–90.

Halttunen, Karen, "Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture," *AHR* 100 (1995), No. 2, 303–34.

Hargreaves, John D., "Obituary: Yves Person, 1925–1982," *African Affairs* 82 (April 1983), 281–3.

Hariman, Robert and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago, 2007).

Harneit-Sievers, Axel, "Nigeria: Der Sezessionskrieg um Biafra. Keine Sieger, keine Besiegten – Eine afrikanische Erfolgsgeschichte?," in Rolf Hofmeier and Volker Matthies, eds., *Vergessene Kriege in Afrika* (Göttingen, 1992), 277–318.

Harneit-Sievers, Axel, *Constructions of Belonging: Igbo Communities and the Nigerian State in the Twentieth Century* (Rochester, NY, 2006).

Harneit-Sievers, Axel et al., eds., *A Social History of the Nigerian Civil War: Perspectives from Below* (Enugu, 1997).

Harnischfeger, Johannes, "Igbo Nationalism and Jewish Identities," in Edith Bruder and Tudor Parfitt, eds., *African Zion: Studies in Black Judaism* (Newcastle, 2012), 65–86.

Harper, Marjory and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire* (Oxford, 2010).

Harrison, Brian, *Seeking a Role: The United Kingdom 1951–1970* (Oxford, 2009).

Harrison, Paul and Robin Palmer, *News out of Africa: Biafra to Band Aid* (London, 1986).

Hastings, Adrian, *A History of African Christianity 1950–1975* (Cambridge, 1979).

Hazareesingh, Sudhir, *Political Traditions in Modern France* (Oxford, 1994).

Hazareesingh, Sudhir, *In the Shadow of the General: Modern France and the Myth of De Gaulle* (Oxford, 2012).

Hecht, Gabrielle, *The Radiance of France: Nuclear Power and National Identity after World War II* (Cambridge, MA, 2009).

Heerten, Lasse, "The Dystopia of Postcolonial Catastrophe: Self-Determination, the Biafran War of Secession and the 1970s Human Rights Moment," in Jan Eckel and Samuel Moyn, eds., *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s* (Philadelphia, 2014).

Heerten, Lasse, "'A' as in Auschwitz, 'B' as in Biafra: The Nigerian Civil War, Visual Narratives of Genocide, and the Fragmented Universalization of the Holocaust," in Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogne, eds., *Humanitarian Photography: A History* (Cambridge, 2015), 249–74.

Heerten, Lasse, and A. Dirk Moses, eds., Theme Issue "The Nigeria-Biafra War, 1967–1970: Postcolonial Conflict and the Question of Genocide, *Journal of Genocide Research* 16 (2014), No. 2–3.

Heidrich, Christian, *Carlo Bayer: Ein Römer aus Schlesien und Pionier der Caritas Internationalis* (Sigmaringen, 1992).

Heimann, Gadi, "From 'Irresponsible' to 'Immoral': The Shifts in de Gaulle's Perception of Israel and the Jews," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46 (2011), No. 4, 897–919.

Hein, Bastian, *Die Westdeutschen und die Dritte Welt. Entwicklungspolitik und Entwicklungsdienste zwischen Reform und Revolte 1959–1974* (Munich, 2006).

Helleiner, Gerald K., "The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947–61," *The Economic Journal* 74 (1964), No. 295, 582–610.

Hentsch, Thierry, *Face au Blocus: Histoire de l'Intervention du Comité International de la Croix-Rouge dans le Conflit de Nigéria, 1967–1970* (Geneva, 1973).

Herbst, Jeffrey, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton, NJ, 2000).

Hewitt, Nicholas, "The Birth of the Glossy Magazines: The Case of Paris-Match," in Brian Rigby and Nicholas Hewitt, eds., *France and the Mass Media* (Basingstoke, 1991), 111–28.

Hickethier, Knut, *Geschichte des deutschen Fernsehens* (Stuttgart, 1998).

Hijiya, James A., "The Conservative 1960s," *Journal of American Studies* 37 (2003), No. 2, 201–27.

Hilwig, Stuart J., "The Revolt against the Establishment: Students Versus the Press in West Germany and Italy," in Carole Fink et al., eds., *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge, 1998), 321–49.

Hiskett, Mervyn, *The Development of Islam in West Africa* (London, 1984).

Hobsbawm, Eric J., *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York, 1995).

Hobsbawm, Eric J. and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1992 [1983]).

Hodenberg, Christina von, *Konsens und Krise: Eine Geschichte der westdeutschen Medienöffentlichkeit 1945–1973* (Göttingen, 2006).

Hoffman, Elizabeth Cobbs, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA, 1998).

Hoffmann, Stefan-Ludwig, ed., *Moralpolitik: Geschichte der Menschenrechte im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 2010).

Hoffmann, Stefan-Ludwig, "Gazing at Ruins: German Defeat as Visual Experience," *Journal of Modern European History* 9 (2011), No. 3, 328–50.

Hoffmann, Stefan-Ludwig, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2011).

Hoffmann, Stefan-Ludwig, "Introduction: Genealogies of Human Rights," in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2011), 1–26.

Hoffmann, Stefan-Ludwig, "Human Rights and History" *Past & Present* 232 (2016), No. 1, 279–310.

Hölscher, Lucian, "Die Säkularisierung der Kirchen: Sprachliche Transformationsprozesse in den langen 1960er Jahren," in *Wilhelm* Damberg *et al.*, eds., *Soziale Strukturen und Semantiken des Religiösen im Wandel: Transformationen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1949–1989* (Essen, 2011), 203–14.

Hopgood, Stephen, *Keepers of the Flame: Understanding Amnesty International* (Ithaca, NY, 2006).

Hopkins, A.G., *An Economic History of West Africa* (New York, 1973).

Horkheimer, Max, "Die Juden und Europa," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* VIII (1939), 115–37.

Horn, Gerd-Rainer, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956–1976* (Oxford, 2007).

Horvath, Robert, "'The Solzhenitsyn Effect': East European Dissidents and the Demise of the Revolutionary Privilege," *Human Rights Quarterly* 29 (2007), No. 4, 879–907.

Howe, Stephen, *Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of Empire, 1918–1964* (Oxford, 2007 [1993]).

Hunt, Lynn, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (London, 2007).

Huzzey, Richard, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain* (Ithaca, NY, 2012).

Hyam, Ronald, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation, 1918–1968* (Cambridge, 2008).

Hyam, Ronald, "The Empire in Comparative Global Context, 1815–1914," in Ronald Hyam, *Understanding the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2010), 117–32.

Hyam, Ronald, "The Partition of Africa: Geopolitical and Internal Perspectives," in Ronald Hyam, *Understanding the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2010), 98–116.

Hyman, Paula E., *The Jews of Modern France* (Berkeley, 1998).

Ibhawoh, Bonny, *Imperialism and Human Rights: Colonial Discourses of Rights and Liberties in African History* (Albany, NY, 2007).

Ignatieff, Michael, *The Warrior's Honor. Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience* (New York, 1997).

Ijalaye, David A., "Was 'Biafra' at Any Time a State in International Law?" *The American Journal of International Law* 65 (1971), No. 3, 551–9.

Iliffe, John, *Africans: The History of a Continent* (Cambridge, 2007).

Iliffe, John, *Obasanjo, Nigeria and the World* (Oxford, 2011).

Imlay, Talbot C., "International Socialism and Decolonization during the 1950s: Competing Rights and the Postcolonial Order," *AHR* 18 (2013), No. 4, 1105–32.

Iriye, Akira, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley, 2002).

Iriye, Akira, "Internationalizing International History," in Thomas Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley, 2002), 47–62.

Iriye, Akira et al., eds., *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History* (New York, 2012).

Iser, Wolfgang, *Das Fiktive und das Imaginäre: Perspektiven literarischer Anthropologie* (Frankfurt a.M., 1991).

Isichei, Elizabeth, *A History of the Igbo People* (London, 1976).

Isserman, Maurice and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* (Oxford, 2000).

Jackson, Julian, "De Gaulle and May 1968," in Hugh Gough and John Horne, eds., *De Gaulle and Twentieth-Century France* (London, 1994), 125–46.

Jackson, Robert H., *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World* (Cambridge, 1990).

Jarausch, Konrad H., *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945–1995* (Oxford, 2006).

Jensen, Steven L. B., *The Making of International Human Rights: The 1960s, Decolonization, and the Reconstruction of Global Values* (Cambridge, 2016).

Joffrin, Laurent, *Mai 68: Histoire des Événements* (Paris, 1988).

Juchler, Ingo, *Die Studentenbewegungen in den Vereinigten Staaten und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland der sechziger Jahre: Eine Untersuchung hinsichtlich ihrer Beeinflussung durch Befreiungsbewegungen und –theorien aus der Dritten Welt* (Berlin, 1996).

Judaken, Jonathan, "Alain Finkielkraut and the Nouveaux Philosophes: French-Jewish Intellectuals, the Afterlives of May '68 and the Rebirth of the National Icon," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 32 (2006), No. 1, 193–223.

Judt, Tony, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London, 2005).

Judt, Tony, *Jean-Paul Sartre and the Jewish Question: Anti-antisemitism and the Politics of the French Intellectual* (Lincoln, NE, 2006).

Kalter, Christoph,"Das Eigene im Fremden: Der Algerienkrieg und die Anfänge der Neuen Linken der Bundesrepublik," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 55 (2007), No. 2, 142–61.

Kalter, Christoph, *The Discovery of the Third World: Decolonization and the Rise of the New Left in France, c. 1950–1976* (Cambridge, 2016).

Kalter, Christoph, "A Shared Space of Imagination, Communication, and Action: Perspectives on the History of the 'Third World'," in Samantha Christiansen and Zachary A. Scarlett, eds., *The Third World in the Global 1960s* (New York, 2013), 23–38.

Kamanu, Onyeonoro S., "Secession and the Right of Self-Determination: An O.A.U. Dilemma," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 12 (September 1974), No. 3, 355–76.

Kane, Ousmane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition* (Leiden, 2003).

Kastfelt, Niels, *Religion and Politics in Nigeria: A Study in Middle Belt Christianity* (London, 1994).

Kastner, Jens and David Mayer, eds., *Weltwende 1968? Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive* (Vienna, 2008).

Keane, John, *Global Civil Society?* (Cambridge, 2003).

Keck, Margaret E. and Kathryn Sikkink, eds., *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY, 1998).

Keenan, Catherine, "On the Relationship between Personal Photographs and Individual Memory," *History of Photography* 22 (1998) No. 1, 60–4.

Kelly, John D. and Martha Kaplan, *Represented Communities: Fiji and World Decolonization* (Chicago, 2001).

Kennedy, Liam, "'A Compassionate Vision': Larry Burrows's Vietnam War Photography," *Photography & Culture* 4 (July 2011), No. 2, 179–94.

Kennedy, Liam, "Framing Compassion," *History of Photography* 36, No. 3 (2012), 306–14.

Kenny, Kevin, "The Irish in the Empire," in Kevin Kenny, ed., *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2004), 90–122.

Kent, John, *America, the UN and Decolonisation: Cold War Conflict in the Congo* (London, 2010).

Keys, Barbara, *Reclaiming American Virtue: The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s* (Cambridge, MA, 2014).

Kiernan, Ben, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur*, (New Haven, 2007).

Kießling, Friedrich, "(Welt-)Öffentlichkei," in Jost Dülffer and Wilfried Loth, eds., *Dimensionen internationaler Geschichte* (Munich, 2012), 85–105.

Killingray, David and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Africa and the Second World War* (Basingstoke, 1986).

Kirk-Greene, Anthony H. M., "Who Coined the Name 'Nigeria'," *West Africa*, September 22, 1956, 1035.

Kirk-Greene, Anthony H. M., "Review: Biafra in Print," *African Affairs* 69 (April 1970), 180–3.

Kirk-Greene, Anthony H. M., *The Genesis of the Nigerian Civil War and the Theory of Fear* (Uppsala, 1975).

Kirk-Greene, Anthony H. M., "Coups and Aftermath: January 1966-July 1967," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966-July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 25–111.

Kirk-Greene, Anthony H. M., "January 1966: The Political Prologue," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume I: January 1966-July 1967* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 1–24.

Kirk-Greene, Anthony H. M., "War and Peace 1967," in Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed., *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Volume II: July 1967-January 1970* (Aldershot, 1993 [1971]), 1–22.

Klatch, Rebecca E., *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (Berkeley, 1999).

Klieman, Kairn A., "U.S. Oil Companies, The Nigerian Civil War, and the Origins of Opacity in the Nigerian Oil Industry, 1964–1971," *Journal of American History* 99 (2012), No. 1, 155–65.

Klimke, Martin, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton, NJ, 2010).

Klose, Fabian, *Menschenrechte im Schatten kolonialer Gewalt: Die Dekolonisierungskriege in Kenia und Algerien 1945–1962* (Munich, 2009).

Knapp, Andrew, *Gaullism since de Gaulle* (Aldershot, 1994).

Knoch, Habbo, *Die Tat als Bild: Fotografien des Holocaust in der deutschen Erinnerungskultur* (Hamburg, 2001).

Knoch, Habbo, "Mediale Trauer: Bildmedien und Sinnstiftung im 'Zeitalter der Extreme'," in Frank Bösch and Manuel Borutta, eds., *Die Massen bewegen: Medien und Emotionen in der Moderne* (Frankfurt a.M., 2006), 193–213.

Knoch, Habbo, ed., *Bürgersinn mit Weltgefühl: Politische Moral and solidarischer Protest in den sechziger und siebziger Jahren* (Göttingen, 2007).

Kogon, Eugen, *Der SS-Staat: Das System der deutschen Konzentrationslager* (Frankfurt a.M., 1964 [1946]).

Kopecek, Michal, "Human Rights Facing a National Past: Dissident 'Civic Patriotism' and the Return of History in East Central Europe, 1968–1989," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 38 (2012), No. 4, 573–602.

Kopytoff, Jean Herskovits, *A Preface to Modern Nigeria: The 'Sierra Leonians' in Yoruba, 1830–1890* (Madison, WI, 1965).

Korey, William, *Taking on the World's Repressive Regimes: The Ford Foundation's International Human Rights Policies and Practices* (New York, 2007).

Korieh, Chima J., ed., *The Nigeria-Biafra War: Genocide and the Politics of Memory* (Amherst, NY, 2012).

Koselleck, Reinhart, "Begriffsgeschichte and Social History," *Economy and Society* 11 (1982), No. 4, 409–27.

Koselleck, Reinhart, "'Erfahrungsraum' und 'Erwartungshorizont' – zwei historische Kategorien," in Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt, 1989 [1979]), 349–75.

Koselleck, Reinhart, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt, 1989 [1979]).

Koselleck, Reinhart, *Zeitschichten: Studien zur Historik* (Frankfurt a.M., 2000).

Koselleck, Reinhart, *Begriffsgeschichten: Studien zur Semantik und Pragmatik der politischen und sozialen Sprache* (Frankfurt a.M., 2006).

Koskenniemi, Martti, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of Modern International Law 1870–1960* (Cambridge, 2002).

Kott, Sandrine, "Par-delà la guerre froide: Les Organisations Internationales et les circulations Est-Ouest (1947–1973)," *Vingtième siècle* 109 (2011), 143–54.

Koven, Seth, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, 2004).

Kramer, Paul A., *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, & the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2006).

Kramer, Paul A., "Is the World Our Campus? International Students and U.S. Global Power in the Long Twentieth Century," *Diplomatic History* 33 (2009), No. 5, 775–806.

Kramer, Paul A., "*Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World*," *AHR* 116 (2011), No. 5, 1348–91.

Kruip, Gudrun, *Das "Welt"-"Bild" des Axel-Springer-Verlags: Journalismus zwischen westlichen Werten und deutschen Denktraditionen* (Munich, 1999).

Kunczik, Michael, *Die manipulierte Meinung: Nationale Image-Politik und internationale Public Relations* (Cologne, 1990).

Kundnani, Hans, *Utopia or Auschwitz: Germany's 1968 Generation and the Holocaust* (New York, 2009).

Kuper, Leo, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT, 1981).

Kuper, Leo, *The Prevention of Genocide* (New Haven, CT, 1985).

Kushner, Tony, "The Memory of Belsen," in Jo Reilly, ed., *Belsen in History and Memory* (London, 1997), 181–205.

Lachaise, Bernard, "La presse: le maillon faible du Gaullisme?" *Revue française d'histoire du livre* 129 (2008), 185–96.

Lagrou, Pieter, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945–1965* (Cambridge, 2000).

Lake, Marilyn and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Campaign for Racial Equality* (Cambridge, 2008).

Lamouchi, Noureddine, *Jean-Paul Sartre et le tiers monde: Rhétorique d'un discours anticolonialiste* (Paris, 1996).

Landau, Paul S., and Deborah D. Kaspin, eds., *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa* (Berkeley, 2002).

Langley, J. Ayodele, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa 1900–1945: A Study in Ideology and Social Classes* (Oxford, 1973).

Laqueur, Thomas W., "Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative," in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, 1989), 176–204.

Laqueur, Thomas W., "L'Homme, l'Humanitaire et la Catégorie de l'Humain au XVIII Siècle," in Claude Calame and Mondher Kilani, eds., *La Fabrication de l'Humain dans les Cultures et en Anthropologie* (Lausanne, 1999), 94–110.

Laqueur, Thomas W., "The Dead Body and Human Rights," in Sean T. Sweeney and Ian Hodder, eds., *The Body* (Cambridge, 2002), 75–93.

Laqueur, Thomas W., "Mourning, Pity, and the Work of Narrative in the Making of Humanity," in Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown, eds., *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy* (Cambridge, 2009), 31–57.

Last, Murray, *The Sokoto Caliphate* (London, 1977 [1967]).

Last, Murray, "Reconciliation and Memory in Postwar Nigeria," in Veena Das et al., eds., *Violence and Subjectivity* (Berkeley, 2000), 315–32.

Lauren, Paul Gordon, *Visions Seen: The Evolution of International Human Rights* (Philadelphia, 2003).

Lavoinne, Yves, "Médecins en guerre: Du témoignage au 'tapage médiatique'," *Le Temps des Médias* 1, No. 4 (2005), 114–26.

Law, Robin, *The Slave Coast of West Africa 1550–1750: The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on an African Society* (Oxford, 1991).

Law, Robin, ed., *From Slave Trade to 'Legitimate' Commerce: The Commercial Transition in Nineteenth-Century West Africa* (Cambridge, 1995).

Law, Robin and Kristin Mann, "West Africa in the Atlantic Community: The Case of the Slave Coast," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 56, No. 2 (1999), 307–34.

Lebow, Richard Ned et al., eds, *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* (Durham, NC, 2006).

Lepp, Claudia, "Helmut Gollwitzer als Dialogpartner der sozialen Bewegungen," in Siegfried Hermle et al., eds., *Umbrüche: Der deutsche Protestantismus und die sozialen Bewegungen in den 1960er und 70er Jahren* (Göttingen, 2007), 226–46.

Lepp, Claudia, "Zwischen Konfrontation und Kooperation: Kirchen und soziale Bewegungen in der Bundesrepublik (1950–1983)," *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 7 (2010), No. 3, www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Lepp-3–2010 (accessed April 21, 2013).

Levey, Zach, "Israel, Nigeria and the Biafra civil war, 1967–70," *Journal of Genocide Research* 16 (2014), No. 2–3, 263–80.

Levy, Daniel and Natan Sznaider, *Erinnerung im globalen Die Zeitalter: Der Holocaust* (Frankfurt a.M., 2001).

Lichtman, Allan J., *White Protestant Nation: The Rise of the American Conservative Movement* (New York, 2008).

Linfield, Susie, *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence* (Chicago, 2010).

Livi, Massimiliano et al., eds., *Die 1970er Jahre als schwarzes Jahrzehnt: Politisierung und Mobilisierung zwischen christlicher Demokratie und extremer Rechter* (Frankfurt a.M., 2010).

Loimeier, Roman, *Islamische Erneuerung und politischer Wandel in Nordnigeria: Die Auseinandersetzungen zwischen den Sufi-Bruderschaften und ihren Gegnern seit Ende der 50er Jahre* (Münster, 1993).

Louis, William Roger and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Decolonisation," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 22 (1994), No. 3, 462–511.

Luckham, Robin, *The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority & Revolt 1960–67* (Cambridge, 1971).

Ludes, Peter et al., eds., *Geschichte des Fernsehens in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, vol. 3: Informations- und Dokumentarsendungen* (Munich, 1994).

Ludwig, Frieder, "Unabhängigkeitsbestrebungen und Dekolonisationsprozesse: Zur Positionierung der Kirchen in Afrika und Asien," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 48 (2008), 73–98.

Lynn, Martin, *Commerce and Economic Change in West Africa: The Palm Oil Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1997).

Lynn, Martin, "'We Cannot Let the North Down': British Policy and Nigeria in the 1950s," in Martin Lynn, ed., *The British Empire in the 1950s: Retreat or Revival?* (Basingstoke, 2006), 144–63.

Lyons, Terrence, "Keeping Africa off the Agenda," in Warren I. Cohen and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, eds., *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy 1963–1968* (Cambridge, 1994), 274–6.

Magee, Gary B. and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850–1914* (Cambridge, 2010).

Maier, Charles S., "Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era," *AHR* 105 (2000), No. 3, 807–31.

Maier, Charles S., *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and its Predecessors* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).

Malkin, Irad, "Israël et Pierre Vidal-Naquet," in François Hartog et al., eds., *Pierre Vidal-Naquet, un historien dans la cité* (Paris, 1998), 199–218.

Malkki, Liisa, "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization," *Cultural Anthropology* 11 (1996), No. 3, 377–404.

Malkki, Liisa, "Children, Humanity, and the Infantilization of Peace," in Ilana Feldman and Miriam Ticktin, eds., *In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat and Care* (Durham, NC, 2010), 58–85.

Malley, Robert, *The Call from Algeria: Third Worldism, Revolution and the Turn to Islam* (Berkeley, 1996).

Mamdani, Mahmood, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ, 1996).

Mamdani, Mahmood, "The Politics of Naming: Genocide, Civil War, Insurgency," *London Review of Books*, 08.03.2007, 1–9.

Mamdani, Mahmood, *Saviours and Survivors: Darfur, Politics and the War on Terror* (New York, 2009).

Manela, Erez, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford, 2007).

Mann, Kristin, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City: Lagos, 1760–1900* (Bloomington, 2007).

Marchart, Oliver, "Umkämpfte Gegenwart: Der 'Zivilisationsbruch Auschwitz' zwischen Singularität, Partikularität, Universalität und der Globalisierung der Erinnerung," in Heidemarie Uhl, ed., *Zivilisationsbruch und Gedächtniskultur: Das 20. Jahrhundert in der Erinnerung des 21. Jahrhunderts* (Innsbruck, 2003), 35–65.

Martin, Waldo E., "'Nation Time!': Black Nationalism, The Third World, and the Jews," in Jack Salzman and Cornel West, eds., *Struggles In The Promised Land: Toward A History of Black-Jewish Relations in the United States* (Oxford, 1997), 341–55.

Marwick, Arthur, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958–c.1974* (Oxford, 1998).

Matory, J. Lorand, "The English Professors of Brazil: On the Diasporic Roots of the Yoruba Nation," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41 (1999), No. 1, 72–103.

Matusevich, Maxim, "Strange Bedfellows: An Unlikely Alliance between the Soviet Union and Nigeria during the Biafran War," in: A. Dirk Moses and Lasse Heerten, eds., *Postcolonial Conflict and the Question of Genocide: The Nigeria-Biafra War, 1967–1970* (New York, forthcoming).

Matusevich, Maxim, *No Easy Row for a Russian Hoe: Ideology and Pragmatism in Nigerian-Soviet Relations, 1960–1991* (Trenton, NJ, 2003).

Maul, Daniel Roger, *Menschenrechte, Sozialpolitik und Dekolonisation: Die Internationale Arbeitsorganisation (IAO) 1940–1970* (Essen, 2007).

Mausbach, Wilfried, "Wende um 360 Grad? Nationalsozialismus und Judenvernichtung in der 'zweiten Gründungsphase' der Bundesrepublik," in Christina von Hodenberg and Detlef Siegfried, eds., *Wo "1968" liegt: Reform und Revolte in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen, 2006), 15–47.

Mayall, James, "Nationalism," in Richard W. Bulliet, ed., *The Columbia History of the 20th Century* (New York, 1998), 172–202.

Mazower, Mark, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York, 1998).

Mazower, Mark, "The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, 1933–1950," *The Historical Journal* 47 (2004), No. 2, 379–98.

Mazower, Mark, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, NJ, 2009).

Mazower, Mark, "The End of Civilization and the Rise of Human Rights: The Mid-Twentieth Century Disjuncture," in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2010), 29–44.

Mazower, Mark, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London, 2012).

McLeod, Hugh, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (New York, 2008).

McNeil, Brian, "The Nigerian Civil War in History and Historiography," in Toyin Falola and Emily Brownell, eds., *Africa, Empire and Globalization: Essays in Honour of A.G. Hopkins* (Durham, NC, 2011), 546–7.

McNeil, Brian, "'And Starvation Is the Grim Reaper': the American Committee to Keep Biafra Alive and the Genocide Question during the Nigerian Civil War, 1968–70," *Journal of Genocide Research*, 16 (2014), No. 2–3, 317–36.

Midlarsky, Manus I., *The Killing Trap: Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2005).

Miers, Suzanne, *Britain and the Ending of the Slave Trade* (New York, 1975).

Miles, William F. S., "Third World Views of the Holocaust," *Journal of Genocide Research* 6 (2004), No. 3, 371–93.

Mitchell, Timothy, "The World as Exhibition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31 (1989), 21–36.

Moeller, Susan D., *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death* (New York, 1999).

Moeller, Susan D., "A Hierarchy of Innocence: The Media's Use of Children in the Telling of International News," *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 7 (2002), No. 1, 36–56.

Molden, Berthold, "Vietnam, the New Left and the Holocaust: How the Cold War Changed Discourse on Genocide," in Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad, eds., *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories* (Basingstoke, 2010), 79–96.

Moorehead, Caroline, *Dunant's Dream: War, Switzerland and the History of the Red Cross* (London, 1998).

Morgan, Kenneth O., *Britain Since 1945: The People's Peace* (Oxford et. al., 2001 [1990]).

Morgan, Michael Cotey, "The Seventies and the Rebirth of Human Rights," in Niall Ferguson et al., eds., *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 237–50.

Moses, A. Dirk, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* (Cambridge, 2007).

Moses, A. Dirk, "Raphael Lemkin, Culture, and the Concept of Genocide," Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses, eds., *The Oxford Handbook on Genocide Studies* (Oxford, 2010), 19–41.

Moses, A. Dirk, "The United Nations, Humanitarianism, and Human Rights: War Crimes/Genocide Trials for Pakistani Soldiers in Bangladesh," in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2010), 258–79.

Moses, A. Dirk, "Paranoia and Partisanship: Genocide Studies, Holocaust Historiography and the 'Apocalyptic Conjuncture'," *The Historical Journal* 54 (2011), No. 2, 553–83.

Moses, A. Dirk and Lasse Heerten, eds., *Postcolonial Conflict and the Question of Genocide: The Nigeria-Biafra War, 1967–1970* (New York, forthcoming).

Moyn, Samuel, "Two Regimes of Memory," *AHR* 103 (1998), No. 4, 1182–6.

Moyn, Samuel, *A Holocaust Controversy: The Treblinka Affair in Postwar France* (Waltham, MA, 2005).

Moyn, Samuel, "In the Aftermath of Camps," in Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller, eds., *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe* (New York, 2010), 49–64.

Moyn, Samuel, "Personalism, Community and the Origins of Human Rights," in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2010), 85–106.

Moyn, Samuel, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA, 2010).

Moyn, Samuel, "The International Law That Is America: Reflections on the Last Chapter of Martti Koskenniemi's *Gentle Civilizer of Nations*," *Temple International and Comparative Law Journal* 27 (2013), No 2, 399–415.

Moyn, Samuel, *Human Rights and the Uses of History* (London, 2014).

Moyn, Samuel, "On the Genealogy of Morals," in Samuel Moyn, *Human Rights and the Uses of History* (London, 2014), 1–18.

Moyn, Samuel, "Spectacular Wrongs: On Humanitarian Intervention," in Samuel Moyn, *Human Rights and the Uses of History* (London, 2014), 35–51.

Msiska, Mpalive-Hangson, *Postcolonial Identity in Wole Soyinka* (Amsterdam, 2007).

Msiska, Mpalive-Hangson, "Imagined Nations and Imaginary Nigeria: Chinua Achebe's Quest for a Country, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 16 (2014), No. 2–3, 401–19.

Murray, Rachel, *Human Rights in Africa: From the OAU to the African Union* (Cambridge, 2004).

Nafziger, E. Wayne, *The Economics of Political Instability: The Nigerian-Biafran War* (Boulder, CO, 1983).
Naldi, Gino J., *The Organization of African Unity: An Analysis of its Role* (London, 1989).
Nash, George A., *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945* (New York, 1976).
Neuberger, Benyamin, "The African Concept of Balkanisation," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 14 (1976), No. 3, 523–9.
Neuberger, Benyamin, *National Self-Determination in Postcolonial Africa* (Boulder, CO, 1986).
Njoku, Raphael Chijioke, *African Cultural Values: Igbo Political Leadership in Colonial Nigeria, 1900–1966* (New York, 2006).
Nolte, Hans-Heinrich, *Weltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 2009).
Nolte, Insa, *Obafemi Awolowo and the Making of Remo: The Local Politics of a Nigerian Nationalist*, (Edinburgh, 2009).
Northrup, David, *Trade without Rulers: Pre-Colonial Economic Development in South-Eastern Nigeria*, (Oxford, 1978).
Novick, Peter, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston, 1999).
Obiaga, Ndubisi, *The Politics of Humanitarian Organizations Intervention* (Lanham, 2004).
O'Connell, James, "The Ending of the Nigerian Civil War: Victory, Defeat and the Changing of Coalitions," in Roy Licklider, ed., *Stopping the Killing: How Civil Wars End* (New York, 1993), 189–203.
O'Hara, Glen and Helen Parr, "Introduction: The Fall and Rise of a Reputation," *Contemporary British History* 20 (2006), No. 3, 295–302.
Okonta, Ike, "'Biafra of the Mind': MASSOB and the Mobilization of History," *Journal of Genocide Research* 16 (2014), No. 2–3, 355–78.
Olusanya, Gabriel Olakunle, *The Second World War and Politics in Nigeria 1939–1953* (London, 1973).
Omenka, Nicholas Ibeawuchi, "Blaming the Gods: Christian Religious Propaganda in the Nigeria–Biafra War," *Journal of African History* 51 (2010), 367–89.
Onuoha, Godwin, *Challenging the State in Africa: MASSOB and the Crisis of Self-Determination in Nigeria* (Münster, 2011).
Orford, Anne, *International Authority and the Responsibility to Protect* (Cambridge, 2011).
Osaghae, Eghosa E., *Crippled Giant: Nigeria since Independence* (London, 1998).
O'Sullivan, Kevin, *Ireland, Africa and the End of Empire* (Manchester, 2013).
O'Sullivan, Kevin, "Humanitarian Encounters: Biafra, NGOs and Imaginings of the Third World in Britain and Ireland, 1967–70," *Journal of Genocide Research* 16 (2014), No. 2–3, 299–315.
Osterhammel, Jürgen, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 2009).
Osterhammel, Jürgen and Niels Petersson, *Geschichte der Globalisierung: Dimensionen, Prozesse, Epochen* (Munich, 2004).
Oyebade, Adebayo, "The Role of the Organization of African Unity in the Civil War," in Toyin Falola, ed., *Nigeria in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC, 2002), 413–24.

Pach Jr., Chester J., "Tet on TV: U.S. Nightly News Reporting and Presidential Policy Making," in Carole Fink et al., eds., *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge, 1998), 55–81.

Pandolfi, Mariella, "Laboratory of Intervention: The Humanitarian Governance of the Postcommunist Balkan Territories," in Mary-Jo Del Vecchio et al., eds., *Postcolonial Disorders* (Berkeley, 2008), 157–86.

Parfitt, Tudor, *Black Jews in Africa and the Americas* (Cambridge, MA, 2013).

Péan, Pierre, *L'homme de l'ombre: Élements d'enquête autour de Jacques Foccart, l'homme le plus mysterieux et le plus puissant de la Ve République* (Paris, 1991).

Péan, Pierre, *Le monde selon K.* (Paris, 2009).

Peel, J. D. Y., "The Cultural Work of Yoruba Ethnogenesis," in Elizabeth Tonkin et al., eds., *History and Ethnicity* (London, 1989), 198–215.

Peel, J. D. Y., *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington, 2000).

Pendas, Devin O., "Toward World Law? Human Rights and the Failure of the Legalist Paradigm of War," in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2010), 215–36.

Perham, Margery, *Lugard, Volume 1: The Years of Adventure 1858–1898*, London: Collins 1956.

Perham, Margery, *Lugard, Volume 2: The Years of Authority 1898–1945*, London: Collins 1960.

Perham, Margery, "Introduction to the Fifth Edition," in Lord Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, London: Frank Cass 1965 [1922], xxvii–xlix.

Phayer, Michael, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930–1965* (Bloomington, 2000).

Phayer, Michael, *Pius XII, the Holocaust, and the Cold War* (Bloomington, 2007).

Pinney, Christopher, *Photography and Anthropology* (London, 2011).

Plamper, Jan "The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns," *History and Theory* 49 (2010), 237–65.

Podair, Jerald E., *The Strike that Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis* (New Haven, 2002).

Poiger, Uta G., "Imperialism and Consumption: Two Tropes in West German Radicalism of the 1960s and 1970s," in Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried, eds., *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960–1980* (Oxford, 2006), 161–72.

Porter, Andrew, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire Vol. III: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1998).

Porter, Andrew, *Religion Versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester, 2004).

Preston, Andrew, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York, 2012).

Rabinbach, Anson, *Begriffe aus dem Kalten Krieg: Totalitarismus, Antifaschismus, Genozid* (Göttingen, 2009).

Raghavan, Srinath, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh* (Cambridge, MA, 2013).

Ranger, Terence, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1992 [1983]), 211–62.

Ranger, Terence, "The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa," in Terence Ranger and Olufemi Vaughan, eds., *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth-Century Africa: Essays in Honour of A. H. M. Kirk-Greene* (Basingstoke, 1993), 62–111.

Reddy, William M., *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001).

Redfield, Peter, *Life in Crisis: The Ethical Journey of Doctors Without Borders* (Berkeley, 2013).

Reid, Alastair J. and Henry Pelling, *A Short History of the Labour Party* (Houndmills, 2005 [1961]).

Reinhard, Wolfgang, "Dialektik des Kolonialismus: Europa und die Anderen," in Klaus J. Bade and Dieter Brötel, eds., *Europa und die Dritte Welt: Kolonialismus – Gegenwartsprobleme – Zukunftsperspektiven* (Hannover, 1992), 5–25.

Renan, Ernest, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? Et autres essais politiques* (Paris, 1992).

Reybrouck, David van, *Congo: Een Geschiedenis* (Amsterdam, 2010).

Rieff, David, *A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis* (London, 2002).

Rieffel, Rémy, *La tribu des clercs: Les intellectuels sous la Ve République, 1958–1990* (Paris, 1993).

Ritchin, Fred, "Zeitzeugen: Das Engagement des Fotojournalisten," in Michel Frizot, ed., *Neue Geschichte der Fotografie* (Cologne, 1998), 590–611.

Robbins, Keith, *The World since 1945: A Concise History* (Oxford, 1998).

Robinson, David, *Muslim Societies in African History* (Cambridge, 2004).

Rodgers, Daniel T., *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge, MA, 2011).

Rodogno, Davide, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815–1914* (Princeton, 2012).

Rose, Sonya O., "From the 'New Jerusalem' to the 'Decline' of the 'New Elizabethan Age': National Identity and Citizenship in Britain, 1945–56," in Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller, eds., *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe* (New York, 2010), 231–47.

Rosenblum, Naomi, *A World History of Photography* (New York, 2007 [1984]).

Rosenwein, Barbara H., "Worrying about Emotions in History," *AHR* 107 (2002), No. 3, 821–45.

Ross, Kristin, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago, 2002).

Ross, Kristin, "Ethics and the Rearmament of Imperialism: The French Case," in Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom et al., eds., *Human Rights and Revolutions* (Lanham, MD 2007, 2nd edn), 155–167.

Rothberg, Michael, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, 2009).

Rothermund, Dietmar, *Dehli, 15. August 1947: Das Ende kolonialer Herrschaft* (Munich, 1998).

Ruff, Mark Edward, "Die Auseinandersetzungen um Rolf Hochhuths 'Stellvertreter': Ein Historisierungsversuch," in Hubert Wolf, ed., *Eugenio Pacelli als Nuntius in Deutschland: Forschungsperspektiven und Ansätze zu einem internationalen Vergleich* (Paderborn, 2012), 111–23.

Rutschky, Michael, "Foto mit Unterschrift: Über ein unsichtbares Genre," in Barbara Naumann, ed., *Vom Doppelleben der Bilder: Bildmedien und ihre Texte* (Munich, 1993), 51–66.

Ryan, James R., *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (London, 1997).

Ryfman, Philippe, *Une histoire de l'humanitaire* (Paris, 2008).

Sackett, Robert, "Pictures of Atrocity: Public Discussion of *Der gelbe Stern* in Early 1960s West Germany," *German History* 24 (2006) No. 4, 526–61.

Saideman, Stephen M., *The Ties that Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy and International Conflict* (New York, 2001).

Sanderson, Michael, *The History of the University of East Anglia* (Norwich, 2002).

Sanneh, Lamin, *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa* (Cambridge, MA, 2001).

Sanyal, Debarati, *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance* (New York, 2015).

Sargent, Daniel J., *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s* (Oxford, 2015).

Sarr, Amadou Lamine, "Mai 68 im Senegal: Fortsetzung des Unabhängigkeitsprozesses in Afrika?" in Jens Kastner and David Mayer, eds., *Weltwende 1968? Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive* (Vienna, 2008), 130–42.

Sassen, Saskia, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton, 2001).

Scarry, Elaine, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford, 1985).

Schabas, William A., *Genocide in International Law: The Crimes of Crimes* (Cambridge, 2000).

Schildt, Axel and Detlef Siegfried, eds., *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960–1980* (Oxford, 2006).

Schmidhalter, Matthias, "Die Hilfsaktion für Biafra: Wendepunkt in der Auslandshilfe des Schweizerischen Caritasverbandes," *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte* 98 (2003), 171–82.

Schneider, Gregory L., *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right* (New York, 1999).

Schröder, Iris, "Die Wiederkehr des Internationalen: Eine einführende Skizze," *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 8 (2011), No. 3, www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/site/40209173/default.aspx (accessed October 16, 2012).

Schulman, Bruce J., *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics*, New York: Free Press 2001.

Schulte, Regina, "Käthe Kollwitz 'Opfer," in Regina Schulte, *Die verkehrte Welt des Krieges: Studien zu Geschlecht, Religion und Tod* (Frankfurt, 1998), 117–51.

Schwoch, James, *Global TV: New Media and the Cold War, 1946–1969* (Urbana, IL, 2009).

Segev, Tom, *1967: Israel, the War, and the Year that Transformed the Middle East* (New York, 2007, first ed. in Hebrew Jerusalem, 2005).

Seibert, Niels, *Vergessene Proteste: Internationalismus und Antirassismus 1964–1983* (Münster, 2008).

Shandler, Jeffrey, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (Oxford, 1999).

Shepard, Robert B., *Nigeria, Africa, and the United States: From Kennedy to Reagan* (Bloomington, 1991).
Shepard, Todd, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, NY, 2006).
Shipway, Martin, *Decolonization and its Impact: A Comparative Approach to the End of the Colonial Empires* (Malden, MA, 2008).
Siegelberg, Mira, "Unofficial Men, Efficient Civil Servants. Raphael Lemkin in the History of International Law," *Journal of Genocide Research* 15 (2013), 297–316.
Simpson, Brad, "The United States and the Curious History of Self-Determination," *Diplomatic History* 36 (2012), No. 4, 675–94.
Simpson, Brad, "The Biafran Secession and the Limits of Self-Determination," *Journal of Genocide Research* 16 (2014), No. 2–3, 337–54.
Skinner, Rob, "The Moral Foundations of British Anti-Apartheid Activism, 1946–1960," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35 (June 2009), 399–416.
Sklar, Richard L., *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation* (Princeton, NJ, 1963).
Sliwinski, Sharon, *Human Rights in Camera* (Chicago, 2011).
Slobodian, Quinn, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC, 2012).
Sluga, Glenda, "The Transformation of International Institutions: Global Shock as Cultural Shock," in Niall Ferguson et al., eds., *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 223–36.
Sluga, Glenda, "Editorial: The Transnational History of International Institutions," *Journal of Global History* 6 (2011), No. 2, 219–22.
Small, Melvin, *Covering Dissent: The Media and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1994).
Smith, Karen E., *Genocide and the Europeans* (Cambridge, 2010).
Smith, Karen E., "The UK and 'Genocide' in Biafra," *Journal of Genocide Research* 16 (2014), No. 2–3, 247–62.
Smith, Malcolm, *Britain and 1940: History, Myth and Popular Memory* (London, 2000).
Smith, Tony, *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA, 2000).
Smock, Audrey Chapman, "The N.C.N.C. and Ethnic Unions in Biafra," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 7 (1969), No. 1, 21–34.
Snyder, Sarah B., *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War* (Cambridge, 2011).
Solnit, Rebecca, "Words Can Kill: Haiti and the Vocabulary of Disaster," in Geoffrey Batchen et al., eds., *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis* (London, 2012), 17–23.
Sontag, Susan, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York, 2003).
Spigel, Lynn, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago, 1992).
Städter, Benjamin, *Verwandelte Blicke: Eine Visual History von Kirche und Religion in der Bundesrepublik 1945–1980* (Frankfurt a.M., 2011).

Staunton, Enda "The Case of Biafra: Ireland and the Nigerian Civil War," *Irish Historical Studies* 31(1999), No. 124, 513–35.

Stephanson, Anders, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right* (New York, 2000).

Stevens, Simon, "Why South Africa? The Politics of Anti-Apartheid Activism in Britain in the Long 1970s, in Jan Eckel and Samuel Moyn, eds., *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s* (Philadelphia, 2014), 204–25.

Steyn, Phia, "Oil Exploration in Colonial Nigeria, c. 1903–1958," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37 (2009), No. 2, 249–74.

Steyn, Phia, "Shell-BP and the Nigerian Civil War," in Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs, eds., *The Changing Worlds of Atlantic Africa: Essays in Honor of Robin Law* (Durham, NC, 2009), 425–43.

Stoler, Ann Laura and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, 1997), 1–56.

Stremlau, John J., *The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War 1967–1970* (Princeton, 1977).

Streng, Marcel, "'Hungerstreik': Eine politische Subjektivierungspraxis zwischen 'Freitod' und 'Überlebenskunst' (Westdeutschland, 1970–1990)," in Jens Elberfeld and Marcus Otto, eds., *Das schöne Selbst: Zur Genealogie des modernen Subjekts zwischen Ethik und Ästhetik* (Bielefeld, 2009), 333–65.

Struk, Janina, *Photographing the Holocaust: Interpretations of the Evidence* (London, 2004).

Sumner, David E., *The Magazine Century: American Magazines since 1900* (New York, 2010).

Suski, Laura, "Children, Suffering and the Humanitarian Appeal," in Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown, eds., *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy* (Cambridge, 2009), 202–22.

Taithe, Bertrand, "Reinventing (French) Universalism: Religion, Humanitarianism and the 'French Doctors'," *Modern & Contemporary France* 12 (2004), No. 2, 147–58.

Taiwo, Olufemi, "Reading the Colonizer's Mind: Lord Lugard and the Philosophical Foundations of British Colonialism," in Susan E. Babbitt and Sue Campbell, eds., *Racism and Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY, 1999), 157–86.

Tanner, Jakob, "Der Historiker und der Richter: Der Genozid an den Armeniern und die Genozidforschung aus rechtlicher und geschichtswissenschaftlicher Sicht," in Hans-Lukas Kieser and Elmar Plozza, eds., *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern, die Türkei und Europa*, (Zürich, 2006), 177–96.

Taylor, Richard, *Against the Bomb: The British Peace Movement 1958–1965* (Oxford, 1988).

Ther, Philipp, "Deutsche Geschichte als imperiale Geschichte: Polen, slawophone Minderheiten und das Kaiserreich als kontinentales Empire," in Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Das Kaiserreich transnational: Deutschland in der Welt 1871–1914* (Göttingen, 2004).

Thomas, Julia Adeney, "The Evidence of Sight," *History and Theory* 48 (December 2009), 151–68.

Thompson, Joseph E., *American Policy and African Famine: The Nigeria-Biafra War, 1966–1970* (New York, 1990).

Thorpe, Andrew, *A History of the British Labour Party* (Basingstoke, 2008 [1997]).

Thum, Gregor, "Mythische Landschaften: Das Bild vom 'Deutschen Osten' und die Zäsuren des 20. Jahrhunderts," in *Traumland Osten: Deutsche Bilder vom östlichen Europa im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 2006), 181–211.

Tignor, Robert L., *Capitalism and Nationalism at the End of Empire: State and Business in Decolonizing Egypt, Nigeria, and Kenya, 1945–1963* (Princeton, NJ, 1998).

Tijani, Hakeem Ibikunle, *Britain, Leftist Nationalists, and the Transfer of Power in Nigeria, 1945–1965* (New York, 2006).

Todorova, Maria, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford, 2009).

Tomlinson, B. R., "What Was the Third World?," *Journal of Contemporary History* 38 (2003), No. 2, 307–21.

Torrent, Mélanie, *Diplomacy and Nation-Building in Africa: Franco-British Relations and Cameroon at the End of Empire* (London, 2012).

Tripp, Sebastian, "Die Weltkirche vor Ort: Die Globalisierung der Kirchen und die Entstehung christlicher 'Dritte-Welt-Gruppen'," in *Wilhelm* Damberg *et al.*, eds., *Soziale Strukturen und Semantiken des Religiösen im Wandel: Transformationen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1949–1989* (Essen, 2011), 123–36.

Twomey, Christina, "Framing Atrocity: Photography and Humanitarianism," *History of Photography* 36, No. 3 (2012), 255–64.

Uche, Chibuike, "Oil, British Interests and the Nigerian Civil War," *Journal of African History* 49 (2008), 111–35.

Udo, E. A., "The Missionary Scramble for Spheres of Influence in South-Eastern Nigeria 1900–52," in O. U. Kalu, ed., *The History of Christianity in West Africa* (London, 1980), 159–81.

Ugochukwu, Françoise, *Biafra, la déchirure: Sur les traces de la guerre civile nigériane de 1967–1970* (Paris, 2009).

Ugochukwu, Françoise, "The Nigerian Civil War and its Media: Groping for Clues," *Media, War & Conflict* 3 (2010), No. 2, 182–201.

Umozurike, Umozurike Oji, *Self-Determination in International Law* (Hamden, CT, 1972).

Uzoigwe, Godfrey N., *Visions of Nationhood: Prelude to the Nigerian Civil War* (Trenton, NJ, 2009).

Vaillant, Janet G., *Black, French and African: A Life of Léopold Sédar Senghor* (Cambridge, MA, 1990).

Vaïsse, Maurice, *La grandeur: politique étrangère du général de Gaulle, 1958–1969* (Paris, 1998).

Valentino, Benjamin A., *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca, NY, 2004).

Vaughan, Olufemi, *Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890s–1990s* (Rochester, NY, 2000).

Vaughan, Olufemi, "Chieftaincy Politics and Communal Identity in Colonial Western Nigeria, 1893–1951," *Journal of African History* 44 (2003), 283–302.

Vernon, James, *Hunger: A Modern History* (Cambridge, MA, 2007).

Verschave, François-Xavier, *La Françafrique: Le plus long scandale de la République* (Paris, 2007).

Vickers, Rhiannon, *The Labour Party and the World, vol. 2: Labour's Foreign Policy since 1951* (Manchester, 2011).

Vogel, Jakob and Hélène Bourguignon, "Senghor et l'ouverture culturelle de la RFA en 68: Pour une histoire transnationale Allemagne: France: Afrique," *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'histoire* 94 (2007), 135–48.

Voßkamp, Sabine, *Katholische Kirche und Vertriebene in Westdeutschland: Integration, Identität und ostpolitischer Diskurs 1945 bis 1972* (Stuttgart, 2007).

Waal, Alex de, *Famine Crimes: Politics & the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa* (Oxford, 1997).

Wallerstein, Immanuel, *European Universalism: The Rhetoric of Power* (New York, 2006).

Walls, Andrew F., "Religion and the Press in 'the Enclave' in the Nigerian Civil War, in Edward Fasholé-Luke et al., eds., *Christianity in Independent Africa* (London, 1978), 207–15.

Wark, McKenzie, "Fresh Maimed Babies: The Uses of Innocence," *Transition* 65 (1995), 36–47.

Warner, Marina, *Managing Monsters: Six Myths of Our Time. The Reith Lectures* (London, 1994).

Waters, Ken, "Influencing the Message: The Role of Catholic Missionaries in Media Coverage of the Nigerian Civil War," *Catholic Historical Review* 90, No. 4 (2004), 697–718.

Webster, Wendy, *Englishness and Empire 1939–1965* (Oxford, 2005).

Weiler-Streichsbier, Doris, *Just a Moment . . . Fotografien von Stuart Heydinger*, ed. by Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Oldenburg (Bremen, 2007).

Weitbrecht, Dorothee, *Aufbruch in die Dritte Welt: Der Internationalismus der Studentenbewegung von 1968 in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Göttingen, 2012).

Weitz, Eric D., *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton, 2003).

Weitz, Eric D., "From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions," *AHR* 113 (2008), No. 5, 1313–43.

Wendell, Pritchett, *Brownsville, Brooklyn: Blacks, Jews, and the Changing Face of the Ghetto* (Chicago, 2002).

Wertheim, Stephen, "A Solution from Hell: The United States and the Rise of Humanitarian Interventionism, 1991–2003," *Journal of Genocide Research* 12 (2010) No. 3–4, 149–72.

Westad, Odd Arne, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, 2005).

Wheeler, Nicholas J., *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (Oxford, 2000).
Whitfield, Stephen J., "The Deputy: History, Morality, Art," *Modern Judaism* 30 (May 2010), No. 2, 153–71.
Wiener, Jon, *Come Together: John Lennon in his Time* (London, 2000 [1984]).
Wieviorka, Annette, *Era of the Witness* (Ithaca, NY, 2006, first ed. French, Paris 1998).
Wight, Martin, "International Legitimacy," in Martin Wight, ed., *Sytems of States* (Leicester, 1977), 153–73.
Wildenthal, Lora, "Human Rights Activism in Occupied and Early West Germany: The Case of the German League for Human Rights," *The Journal of Modern History* 80 (2008) No. 3, 515–56.
Wildenthal, Lora, "Rudolf Laun and the Human Rights of Germans in Occupied and Early West Germany," in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2010), 125–44.
Wildenthal, Lora, *The Language of Human Rights in West Germany* (Philadelphia, 2013).
Wildenthal, Lora, "Imagining Threatened Peoples: The Society for Threatened Peoples (Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker) in 1970s West Germany," in Susanne Kaul and David Kim, eds., *Imagining Human Rights* (Berlin, 2015), 101–17.
Williams, Philip M., *Wars, Plots and Scandals in Post-War France* (Cambridge, 1970).
Wilson, Richard Ashby and Richard D. Brown, eds., *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy* (Cambridge, 2009).
Wilson, Richard Ashby and Richard D. Brown, "Introduction," in Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown, eds., *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy* (Cambridge, 2009), 1–28.
Winock, Michel, *La siècle des intéllectuels* (Paris, 1997).
Winter, Jay, *Dreams of Peace and Freedom: Utopian Moments in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, 2006).
Winter, Jay and Antoine Prost, *René Cassin and Human Rights: From the Great War to the Universal Declaration* (Cambridge, 2013).
Wintzer, Joachim, "Einleitung," in Joachim Wintzer, ed., *Der Auswärtige Ausschuss des deutschen Bundestages: Sitzungsprotokolle 1965–69* (Düsseldorf, 2006), X–CVI.
Wirz, Albert, *Krieg in Afrika: Die nachkolonialen Konflikte in Nigeria, Sudan, Tschad und Kongo* (Wiesbaden, 1982).
Wiseberg, Laurie S., "The International Politics of Relief: A Case Study of the Relief Operations Mounted During the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970)," PhD dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles 1973.
Wiseberg, Laurie S., "Humanitarian Intervention: Lessons from the Nigerian Civil War," *Revue des Droits de l'Homme. Human Rights Journal* 7, No. 1 (1974), 61–98.
Wiseberg, Laurie S., "Christian Churches and the Nigerian Civil War," *Journal of African Studies* 2 (1975), No. 3, 297–331.

Wolf-Phillips, Leslie, "Why 'Third World'?: Origin, Definition and Usage," *Third World Quarterly* 9 (1987), No. 4, 1311–27.

Wolin, Richard, "From the 'Death of Man' to Human Rights: The Paradigm Change in French Intellectual Life," in Mark Bevir et al., eds., *Histories of Postmodernism* (New York, 2007).

Wolin, Richard, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s* (Princeton, 2010).

Young, Cynthia A. *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a U.S. Third World Left* (Durham, NC, 2006).

Young, John W., *The Labour Governments 1964–1970, Volume 2: International Policy* (Manchester, 2003).

Young, John W., *Twentieth-Century Diplomacy: A Case Study of British Practice, 1963–1976* (Cambridge, 2008).

Young, John W. and John Kent, *International Relations Since 1945: A Global History* (Oxford, 2004).

Zachernuk, Philip S., "Of Origins and Colonial Order: Southern Nigerian Historians and the 'Hamitic Hypothesis', c. 1870–1970," *Journal of African History* 35 (1994), 427–55.

Zachernuk, Philip S., *Colonial Subjects: An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas* (Charlottesville, VA, 2000).

Zahra, Tara, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families After World War II* (Cambridge, MA, 2011).

Zelizer, Barbie, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago, 1998).

Zelizer, Barbie, *About to Die: How News Images Move the Public* (Oxford, 2010).

Zertal, Idith, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood* (Cambridge, 2005, first edn in Hebrew, Tel Aviv, 2002).

Zieser, Gernot, "Die Propagandastrategie Biafras im nigerianischen Bürgerkrieg (1967–1970): Eine Modelluntersuchung zu interkulturellen Kommunikation zwischen Entwicklungs- und Industrieländern," *Publizistik* 16 (1971), No. 2, 181–93.

Zimmermann, Wolf-Dieter, *Kurt Scharf: Ein Leben zwischen Vision und Wirklichkeit* (Göttingen, 1992).

Index

Aba, 170
Abolitionism, 30
Achebe, Chinua, 12, 229, 238
ACKBA, *see* American Committee to Keep Biafra Alive
Adekunle, Benjamin, 280, 296
Africa
  as a place of death, 154–5
  regionalism in, 46, 53
African socialism, 289
African-American activism, 239–42
  relations to Jewish activists, 239–42
Aguiyi-Ironsi, Johnson, 48
airlift to Biafra, 116–18
  ecumenical, 84, 117, 298
  Red Cross, 118, 134, 298, 311
Aktion Biafra-Hilfe, 165, 168, 181, 193, 223, 225, 226, 227, 232, 233, 288, 310, 329
Algerian War, 79, 177, 201, 256, 257
American Committee to Keep Biafra Alive, 133, 136, 181, 192, 193, 242
American Jewish Committee, 175, 176, 239
Anglican Church
  position on Biafra, 216
anticolonialism, 38–9, 43–4, 54, 64–6, 79–81, 206, 329, 335
Arendt, Hannah, 10, 333
Asaba, 70
Auschwitz, 175, 179, 180, 184, 198, 204, 286–9, 339
Awolowo, Obafemi, 38, 43, 45, 70, 278
Azikiwe, Nnamdi, 39, 40, 43, 45, 47, 51, 58, 66, 91, 302

Bahr, Egon, 271, 277
Balewa, Abubakar, 25, 42, 44, 47, 48, 86
Balkanization of Africa, 28, 53, 78–9, 270, 336
Bangladesh Liberation War, 315
Banjo, Victor, 70, 72
Barthes, Roland, 143, 173, 286
BBA, *see* Britain–Biafra Association
Benin, Republic of, 71, 72
Bergen-Belsen, 175, 179, 181, 184, 186, 189, 198
Bergès, Yves-Guy, 127, 128, 140, 168, 169, 171
Berlin, 136, 223
Biafra
  as a global media event, 9, 11, 103, 128–9, 174, 294, 324, 336, 338, 341
  as a nation, 55–66, 79–82
  as a socialist revolution, 209, 290
  as humanitarian crisis, 9, 94, 103, 115, 120–9, 138–9, 140–67, 172–4, 177, 285, 334–5, 336, 340–1
  as watershed event, 3, 9
  collapse of, 293–4, 296–304
  end of global moment, 282–9, 304–10
  recognition of, 13, 95, 269
  secession of, 55–66, 67–72
Biafra Student Unions, 91, 92, 217, 223, 238
Biafran Declaration of Independence, 52, 55–7, 66
Biafrans
  as civilized Africans, 167, 169–72, 217, 227, 228, 247, 262, 290
  children, 2, 107, 109, 129, 138, 140, 141, 142, 144, 146–7, 152–4, 155–6, 158, 168, 172, 174, 179, 192, 203, 204, 247, 260, 266, 294, 296, 300, 306
  expatriates, 84, 93, 103, 109, 134, 147, 186, 206, 213, 217, 223, 238
  mothers, 142, 152, 161
Bongo, Albert-Bernard, 95, 254
Bonham Carter, Violet, 114, 146
Bonny Island, 68
Bourke-White, Margaret, 179, 286
Brandt, Willy, 220, 270, 271, 272, 273, 277, 298

Britain–Biafra Association, 111, 112, 184, 189, 210, 213, 214, 216, 217, 305
Brockway, Fenner, 99, 210, 211, 308
Buchenwald, 179, 181, 286
Buckley, William Jr., 217, 245, 246, 321
Buhler, Jean, 152, 153, 165, 166, 170

Cadogan, Peter, 189, 209, 210, 217
Cameroon, 32, 67
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 210
capitalism, 229–30, 326
Caritas
  German, 307, 309
  Internationalis, 83, 117, 131, 133, 225, 295
Caron, Gilles, 119, 123, 144, 150
Catholic activism, 83–4, 198, 215–17, 220–1, 222–3, 247, 248–50, 261
Catholic Church
  position on Biafra, 84, 100, 102
Cheshire, Leonard, 265, 266
Children
  in modern society, 155–6
  representations of Africans as children, 26
Chomsky, Noam, 246
Christian activism, 99–100, 218–20, 223–4, 227, 261–2, 271, 272, 279, 305, 307
civilization as a concept, 66, 168, 169, 170–2, 201, 227, 228, 262, 319, 327
civilizing mission, 8, 244, 335, 337; *see also* Biafrans as civilized Africans
Cold War, 12, 27, 54, 88, 92, 179, 196, 220, 237, 243, 255, 269, 313, 315, 320, 321, 326, 330, 333
Comité d'action pour le Biafra, 128, 140, 181, 250, 251, 252, 255–7, 322
Comité de lutte contre le génocide au Biafra, 2, 134, 286, 322
Committee to Combat the Genocide in Biafra, *see* Comité de lutte contre le génocide au Biafra
Commonwealth, 44, 48, 71, 94, 113, 274, 278, 280, 281, 290, 298
concentration camps
  liberation of, 176, 179, 181, 184, 202, 286
  photography of, 176, 179, 181, 184, 202, 286
Concern (NGO), 2, 97, 329
Congo, 26
  Congo Crisis, 52–3
  Katanga, 53, 78
Connet, Paul, 193, 242, 243, 310
conservative activism, 220–1, 223–4, 244–6, 271
Couve de Murville, Maurice, 274, 277
Czaja, Herbert, 221, 225, 226, 228, 229

Dachau, 181, 184, 248
de Gaulle, Charles, 137, 247, 251, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 259, 274, 277, 305
Debré, François, 127, 255
Debré, Michel, 253, 255, 257, 274, 277
decolonization, 53–4, 64–5, 78–81, 156, 205, 243
development aid, 42, 272
  development projects in Nigeria, 41–2
Diamond, Stanley, 237, 284
Doctors Without Borders, *see* Médecins Sans Frontières
donations, 2, 98, 107, 115, 129, 226, 267, 268, 337
Dönhoff, Marion Countess von, 179, 225, 235

empathy, 141, 142, 143, 161, 165, 167, 172, 174, 207
Enahoro, Anthony, 78, 112, 281, 299
Enugu, 51, 84, 89
ethnicity, 37, 40–1, 46–7, 58, 80
  in Nigeria, 38–47

famine, 266
  famine in Biafra, 1, 2, 3, 113, 116, 123, 131, 142, 143, 146–7, 152, 158, 176, 181, 266, 294, 304, 316
  famine in Ireland, 238
Federal Military Government, 50, 56, 67–72, 83, 279, 280, 281, 295, 297, 298, 311, 313
Foccart, Jacques, 254
Forsyth, Frederick, 97–8, 109, 127, 186, 187, 214
France
  French universalism, 258, 328, 338
  government position on Biafra, 137, 274, 277, 305
  postcolonial ties to Africa, 254–5
  pro-Biafran activism in, 137, 247–60, 321–7
Fraser, Hugh, 112, 216

Gabon, 13, 95, 254
Gaullism, 248, 249, 252, 255, 259, 267, 277, 278, 324
Gender
  gender representations of humanitarian aid, 161–3
Geneva, 90, 94, 193
genocide, 13–14, 64, 92–3, 103, 113, 176–81, 184, 189, 191–6, 202–4, 226, 254, 280–4, 285–90, 300, 307, 311, 340
  Armenian, 180
  of the Jews of Europe, *see* Holocaust
geography of pro-Biafran protest, 135–7, 222–3
Germany
  as a re-civilized nation, 227–8
  expulsion from Eastern Europe, 227, 228–9
  government position on Biafra, 270–4, 277, 279
  pro-Biafran activism in, 136, 187, 197–200, 218–35
Gerstenmaier, Eugen, 190, 284
Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker, 2, 226, 287, 310, 329
Ghana, 50
Gowon, Yakubu, 49, 50, 52, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73, 75, 89, 211, 275, 278, 293, 295, 296, 297, 302, 303, 308, 311
Grass, Günter, 146, 198, 225, 228, 231, 232

Haiti, 13
Hamburg, 136, 168, 187, 199, 223, 225, 232, 233, 288, 310
Hausa-Fulani, 30, 38, 42, 53, 60, 62, 70, 75, 86, 168, 169, 171, 302
Heenan, John, 133, 216
Hochhuth, Rolf, 200
Holocaust, 176, 177, 179–81, 201–4, 285
Holocaust comparison, 176, 184, 185–7, 200, 267, 285, 286, 288, 289, 299
Holocaust memory, 175, 176–7, 179–80, 185, 187–8, 191, 195, 196–7, 199, 201, 202, 203, 239, 250, 267, 285, 323, 340
Houphouët-Boigny, Félix, 95, 214, 215, 254
House of Commons, *see* United Kingdom, Parliament
human rights, 66, 76–7, 177–8, 187–8, 195, 261, 309, 327, 339–40
  and decolonization, 7–8, 337
  contemporary human rights regime, 2, 5, 335, 338, 340
  historiography of, 4, 5–6
  in postcolonial global order, 8–9, 313–14, 325, 327, 329, 331, 337
  relationship to humanitarianism, 6–7
humanitarian aid
  funding of, 2, 98, 107, 115, 129, 267, 268, 271, 272, 337
humanitarian field work, 99, 103, 116–18, 134, 161–6, 298, 311, 322, 324
humanitarian intervention as legal and moral concept, 191–2, 314, 315–21, 327, 330–1, 338
humanitarian narratives, 140–2, 143, 147, 174, 180
humanitarianism
  American humanitarianism, 235–7, 243, 246–7, 317, 320–1
  British humanitarianism, 115
  French humanitarianism, 322–7
  historiography of, 5
  power relations in humanitarianism, 163–7, 335, 337
  relationship to human rights, 6–7
  visual culture of, 126, 128–9, 140–2, 143–63, 173–4, 333, 341
Hunt, David, 58, 211, 274, 279

Ibadan, 33, 48
ICRC, *see* Red Cross
Igbos, 2, 27, 33, 37, 38, 39, 49, 50, 53, 58, 59, 62–4, 67, 69, 86, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 113, 137, 167, 168, 169, 171, 185, 192, 209, 213, 280, 282, 336
  as Jews of Africa, 27, 63–4, 76, 92–3, 101, 113, 176, 178, 179, 184–5, 186, 187, 197, 202, 204, 251, 259, 267, 289, 299
Ikeja, 48
Ikot Ekpene, 155
image acts, 176, 288
intergovernmental organizations, 54, 72–82, 268, 290, 329
international law, 177, 187–8, 192, 314, 315–21
international observer team, 281, 282, 289, 300
Islam, 29, 30–1, 34, 66, 85, 86, 167, 168, 169, 220, 226, 240, 251, 302
Israel, 63, 64, 68, 92, 93, 101, 184, 197, 202, 204, 217, 240, 241, 251, 271, 275, 284, 303, 340
Ivory Coast, 13, 95, 293, 306

JCA, *see* Joint Church Aid
Jewish activism, 239, 240–2, 261
  relations to African American activists, 239–42
Jews of Africa, *see* Igbos
Johnson, Lyndon B., 236, 268, 269
Joint Church Aid, 99, 107, 117, 268, 295

Kaduna, 48, 272
Kano, 33, 40, 48, 168
Kennedy, Edward, 236, 245
King, Martin Luther, 94, 239
Kirkley, H. Leslie, 131, 132, 137, 146
Kissinger, Henry, 269, 315
Koselleck, Reinhart, 108, 203
Kouchner, Bernard, 170, 197, 251, 260, 314, 322, 323, 324, 327

Lagos, 25, 26, 27, 32, 40, 44, 48, 70, 72, 74, 132, 149, 158, 213, 265, 273, 274, 278, 279, 293, 302
Laqueur, Thomas, 141, 159, 165, 174
Leftist politics
  American Left, 246
  British Left, 208–12, 218
  French Left, 247–52, 259–60
  German Left, 222, 229–35
Lemkin, Raphael, 180, 196, 284
Lincoln, Abraham, 275, 293, 303
Lisbon, 116–17
Liskofsky, Sidney, 239
London, 89, 90, 112–14, 132–3

Madaule, Jacques, 247, 248, 249
Marette, Jacques, 181, 252
massacre
  anti-Igbo massacres of 1966, 59–64, 86, 147, 165, 203
Mauthausen, 181
McCullin, Don, 1, 2, 120, 123, 144, 152
McDougal, Myres S., 192, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320
Médecins Sans Frontières, 2, 95, 322–5, 327
missionaries, 63–4, 87, 99, 102, 103, 142
  British Protestant missionaries, 31, 32
  catholic missionaries, 131
  Catholic missionaries, 85, 96–8, 103
  French missionaries, 301
  Irish missionaries, 84, 96, 97, 99, 109, 134, 238, 295
Movement for Colonial Freedom, 210
Moyn, Samuel, 5, 6
MSF, *see* Médecins Sans Frontières

New Left, 1, 201, 205–10, 221, 222, 223, 224, 227, 229–33, 234, 235, 245, 246, 247–52, 259–62, 325, 334
New York, 76, 89, 90, 91, 94, 133, 135, 136, 175, 181, 192, 193, 196, 241, 242
Nigeria
  British colonial rule, 31, 32–7, 38, 39–44, 86
  creation of name, 34
  decolonization of, 38–44
  ethnicity, *see* ethnicity
  independence of, 25–8
  regionalism, 42–3, 48–50, 71
  sovereignty of, 67–8, 71–2, 268, 297–8, 303, 305
Nigerian Civil War
  as a religious conflict, 84, 87, 88–9, 103, 113, 169, 221, 226, 238, 251, 302, 308
  military history, 67–72, 94–5
Nixon, Richard, 235, 236, 243, 268, 269, 270, 315
Nsukka, 68, 89, 213, 237
nuclear power, 256–7
Nyerere, Julius, 95, 289

O'Brien, Conor Cruise, 237, 238, 321
OAU, *see* Organization of African Unity
Obasanjo, Olusegun, 293, 296
Oboro, 163
Offroy, Raymond, 255, 256, 258, 277, 322
Ogoja, 68
oil, politics of in the conflict, 26, 31, 46, 50, 53, 68–9, 248–9, 297
Ojukwu, 17, 48, 49, 50, 51, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 69, 70, 71, 73, 87, 97, 98, 127, 209, 214, 253, 260, 265, 274, 289, 293, 294, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 308, 312
Onitsha, 70
Order of the Holy Ghost, 83, 84, 96, 97, 98, 107, 114, 131, 161, 175, 215
Organization of African Unity, 54, 66, 72–6, 77, 78, 81, 95, 101, 198, 209, 268, 272, 280, 282, 290, 291
  summit in Kinshasa, 72–3, 74–6
Owerri, 96, 293, 296
Oxfam, 115, 118, 131, 132, 137, 146, 162, 299, 307, 329

Pan-Africanism, 38, 43, 79, 95
Paris, 1, 91, 134, 137, 140, 247–8, 282, 302, 322, 325, 328, 334
Peace Corps, 242–4

Perham, Margery, 308
personalism, 249, 250
photography, 1, 140, 143–4, 146, 147, 150–2, 154, 173, 175, 176, 202, 266, 286
  interplay of captions and photos, 60, 144, 152, 160, 285
  interplay with television, 125, 128, 341
  photojournalism, 118–20, 123, 125, 126, 127–8, 140–2, 143–4
Pietà, 160–1
Pope Paul V, 297
Pope Paul VI, 83, 84, 100, 294, 305
Pope Pius XI, 200
Pope Pius XII, 200
Port Harcourt, 95, 103, 116, 272, 296
Portugal, 13, 205, 211, 295
post-Cold War era, 3, 177, 330, 331, 340
postcolonial global order, 65–6, 72–82, 291, 331, 335–7
postcolonial order, 8–9
postwar era, 53, 189, 194, 207, 225–8, 333
principle of non-intervention, 74, 113, 191, 246, 257, 261, 272, 291, 318, 320, 331
Protestant activism, 83–4, 100–1, 199, 216, 222–3, 261
Protestant Church
  position on Biafra, 102, 221, 225

radio, 50, 70, 113, 118, 125, 129, 148, 308, 323
Radio Biafra, 51, 52, 58, 148, 293
recognition of Biafra, *see* Biafra: recognition of
Red Cross, 132, 134
  French Red Cross, 1, 2, 118, 134, 295
  German Red Cross, 134, 272
  International Committee of the Red Cross, 2, 107, 116, 117, 118, 134, 162, 268, 295, 297, 298, 311, 322
  Nigerian Red Cross, 295
  Nordic Red Cross, 295
  Swedish Red Cross, 311
refugees in Biafra, 49, 121, 163, 165, 181, 226
Reisman, Michael, 192, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320
Rhodesia, 13, 44, 211, 295
Rosen, Count Carl Gustaf von, 163, 298

sans-frontiérisme, 4, 15, 260, 314, 322, 323, 327, 328, 339
São Tomé, 116
Sartre, Jean-Paul, 230, 249, 251, 325
Scharf, Kurt, 91, 99, 220, 223, 225
SDS, *see* Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund
secession
  Biafran secession, 55–66, 67–72
  in the United States, *see* United States of America: American Civil War
  relationship between secession and self-determination, 77–9, 81–2, 335–7
  secession in Africa, 52–3, 74, 81, 336–7
self-determination, 7, 53, 55–7, 64–6, 77, 78, 79, 80, 82, 137, 188, 190, 194, 204, 248, 253, 257–9, 289, 328, 329, 335–7, 338, 339
Senghor, Léopold Sédar, 230, 231, 232
Six-Day-War, 241, 251
Society for Threatened Peoples, *see* Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker
Sokoto, 33, 48, 86
  Sokoto Caliphate, 30
Sontag, Susan, 143, 150
South Africa, 13, 196, 209, 211, 295
sovereignty, 3, 4, 54, 55–7, 74, 80, 81–2, 113, 130, 190, 191, 194–5, 209, 289–92, 297–8, 311, 319, 320, 329, 330
Soviet Union, 313, 340
  government position to Biafra, 13, 88
Soyinka, Wole, 312, 313
Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233
Stewart, Michael, 114, 211, 274, 275, 283
Sudan, 29, 196, 218, 221, 226

Tanenbaum, Marc H., 175, 200, 239, 240
Tanzania, 13, 95, 278
television, 2, 103–4, 107, 118, 123, 125, 129, 131, 146, 173, 323
  interplay with photography, 125, 128, 341
territoriality, 28–9, 30–1, 32, 34
Third World, 3, 9, 206–7, 235, 261, 326, 329, 330, 334, 341
Treblinka, 198
Trotskyism, 209, 248

U Thant, 76, 77, 136, 190, 295
UDHR, *see* Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Uli airport, 118, 293, 301
Umuahia, 293

UN, *see* United Nations
United Kingdom
  British colonial rule in Nigeria, 31, 32–7, 38, 39–44, 86
  British Empire, 30, 31–5
  government position on Biafra, 58, 68, 69, 87–8, 112–14, 115, 265–6, 274–5, 276, 278, 280, 281
  Parliament, 112–14, 212, 281, 299
  postcolonial ties to Africa, 207, 212–14, 278
  postcolonial ties to Biafra, 218
  pro-Biafran activism in, 131–3, 134, 185–90, 208–18
United Nations, 8, 53, 54, 66, 75–8, 80–2, 92–5, 101, 130, 135, 136, 137, 178, 187, 188, 189, 190, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 198, 199, 211, 221, 226, 234, 242, 245, 280, 282, 284, 290, 302, 312, 314, 316, 318, 319, 320, 321, 328, 329, 337, 339, 340
United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 76, 195
United States of America
  Civil War, 275, 302, 303, 304
  Declaration of Independence, 55–7, 74, 244, 304
  government position on Biafra, 235–7, 267–70
  international law, 315–21
  pro-Biafran activism in, 94, 133, 136, 235–47
  Revolution of 30, 55, 322
universalism, 236, 243, 244–6
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 66, 74, 188, 194, 195, 320, 327
universalism
  American, 236, 243, 244–6
  French, 258, 328, 338
  Western, 156, 174, 337
Uwechue, Raph, 95, 302

Vietnam War, 119, 120, 129, 201, 205, 206, 208, 211, 218, 220, 227, 231, 234–5, 236, 247, 326

Waugh, Auberon, 111, 184, 186, 188, 190, 214, 216, 217, 305
WCC, *see* World Council of Churches
West, the
  as savior, 10, 161, 163, 171, 341
Western universalism, 156, 174, 337
Wilson, Harold, 44, 132, 187, 189, 211, 265, 275, 278, 303
witnessing, 10, 142, 144, 147–8, 149–52, 165–7, 174, 323
Wolff, Karl Dietrich, 230, 231
World Council of Churches, 84, 87, 88, 98, 99, 100, 101, 199, 225
World War I, 64, 79, 172
World War II, 38, 65, 177, 179, 186, 194

Yoruba, 27, 31, 38, 40, 50, 70, 86, 312
Yugoslavia, 3

Zambia, 13, 95, 278
Zülch, Tilman, 165, 225, 233