Postcolonial Conflict and the Question of Genocide

The Nigeria-Biafra War, 1967–1970

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and Lasse Heerten**

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Introduction

The Nigeria-Biafra war that raged between 1967 and 1970 made headlines around the world, above all for the major famine caused by the Nigerian state's (Federal Military Government, FMG) blockade of the self-proclaimed separatist region of Biafra in the country's east. The crisis drove prominent academics, activists and journalists to mobilize public opinion, prompted a major international relief operation to bring supplies to starving civilians and exercised the minds of statesmen and -women from the great powers to the United Nations (UN).[1] It was a genuinely global event. Whether in its estimated one to three million deaths, its implications for secessionist movements and political stability in Africa, its role as a crucible of contemporary humanitarianism or as subject matter for famous African novelists, the war was widely regarded as a watershed in the postcolonial global order.[2] Throughout the 1970s, scholars published energetically on the multifarious issues raised by the conflict, often comparing it with the bloody but successful secession of East Pakistan (Bangladesh) from Pakistan in 1971.[3] And yet, at least internationally, it was largely forgotten by the end of the decade, overtaken by the grotesque events in Cambodia and elsewhere.[4]

The war is relevant for genocide studies in four ways. In the first place, famine was intrinsic to the war's operational unfolding, and accusations of genocide-by-famine were elemental to the Biafran propaganda campaign, prompting an international debate about the application of the term. Second, two of the field's prominent figures—Leo Kuper and Robert Melson—observed the war as scholars of Africa and drew formative conclusions about the nature of genocide that effectively excluded the conflict from the canon of twentieth-century genocides. Third, just as many defeated Igbo claimed that their genocidal experiences were denied during the war, so they have campaigned since then for its recognition and inclusion in the genocide studies field and in popular consciousness.[5] Finally,

genocide studies have recently taken colonial and international 'turns' that draw attention to the (post)colonial, imperial and global contexts in which genocidal violence is embedded.[6]

In historiography more broadly, scholars working on postwar humanitarianism have rediscovered the Nigeria-Biafra war, using western-based archives of civil society organizations, states, the UN and International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva (ICRC).[7] Many are now focussing on the 1970s as the 'breakthrough' decade for human rights and humanitarianism, and the global concern about the war features as part of this research agenda.[8] The visual component of the global moment called 'Biafra' is also an important object of inquiry.[9] Still others are interested in the norms that guide the foreign policies of states in debates about humanitarian intervention in which Biafra figures as a divisive case study.[10] Recently, the Nigeria-Biafra war is beginning to rate a mention in surveys of postcolonial Africa.[11]

That the subject of Biafra and genocide is in the air is also indicated by the publication of Chinua Achebe's blend of memoir and history, *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*, a few months before he died in March 2013, two years after the death of the wartime Biafran leader, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. The famous novelist had worked for the Biafran cause during the war, and the genocide issue appears throughout the book. Commenting on Achebe's views, another famous Nigerian author, Wole Solyinka, whose imprisonment during the war by the FMG is recorded in *The Man Died* (1971), concurred that Biafrans had indeed been victims of genocide even though he did not support Biafran secession.[12] Literary signs of a renewed interest in the conflict were also discernible before the publication of the late Achebe's last book. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, a novel about the travails of a Biafran family during the war, won a major literary prize in 2007 and was the subject of a British-Nigerian co-produced motion picture.[13] The recent excision of the southern Sudan from the Republic Sudan also reawakened interest in the Nigeria-Biafra war by drawing attention to the stability of postcolonial Africa's borders and the possibility of secession.[14] These discussions tied in with a longer debate about postcolonial self-determination, in which the Eritrean national movement, leading to the state's independence from the Ethiopian federation in 1991, also featured prominently.[15] The rise of the northern Nigerian terrorist group Boko Haram also raised questions about Nigerian federalism and the legacy of the Nigeria-Biafra war.[16]

This resurgence of memorizations of the conflict in the literary and cultural sphere dovetails with the currently growing interest in issues of trauma and memory raised by the conflict. Nigerian scholars in particular have started working on its multiple legacies, many of whom are

personally affected by the conflict's consequences. If anything, memories of the war have recently gained in relevance in Nigerian politics, as underlined by the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), a Southeastern Nigerian secessionist movement founded in 1999.[17] Despite the growth of public and scholarly interest, however, sound and comprehensive primary source-based accounts of the history of the civil war are still lacking.[18]

For these reasons, and in view of the war's fiftieth anniversary in 2017, we decided it was timely to gather scholars working in these domains to contribute to this book. We present 19 chapters that we hope will stimulate the scholarly discussion about the war and genocide question, while maintaining sufficient distance from the hornets' nest of sensitivities that the war continues to generate. As already noted, the genocide claim remains as salient today as it was in the later 1960s.[19] All too often, the temptation to restage the war's propaganda campaigns—and express the accompanying emotion of outrage—seems difficult to resist, whether by Nigerians for or against Biafra, or by westerners sympathetic to one side or the other, leading to partisan advocacy rather than balanced analyses.[20] To that end, proving whether genocide took place is not the purpose of our undertaking, although we suggest alternative ways to conceptualize the issue. Our aim, to adapt the expression coined by the Australian historian Raymond Evans, is to write a book, not to catch a crook: we wish to historicize the discourse about genocide and Biafra.[21] Specifically, we are interested in mapping how contemporaries understood the humanitarian and criminal dimensions of the war, and how and why victims were constructed as objects of identification and empathy in relation to the emerging international archive of human catastrophe like the Holocaust. Moreover, in this chapter, we highlight the relevance of the Nigeria-Biafra war for genocide studies, and suggest how the assumptions dominating the field could be re-conceptualized in view of the issues raised by the conflict.

Intrinsic to the conflicting perceptions of the war was the 'politics of naming'.[22] There is a considerable semantic and political difference between labelling the conflict as an insurgency, as the FMG initially did, as a civil war or as genocide.[23] An understanding of the conflict as genocidal was principally promoted by the Biafrans and their supporters, and these claims have become elemental to Biafran constructions of national identity. Had the secessionists achieved their revolutionary project of national self-determination, we would probably call the conflict the Biafran war of liberation.[24] However, since Nigeria was, and remained, the recognized political entity within which the war was fought, the designation as 'Nigerian Civil War' gained the most currency, at least in the Anglophone world.[25] Here, we primarily use the term 'Nigeria-Biafra war' to reflect

that these were the two warring parties. Even if Biafra never became a recognized state in international law and politics, the internationalization of the conflict turned it into a recognized term for contemporaries around the globe. Moreover, for many living in the secessionist state, 'Biafra' began to signify the political entity within which they lived—and with which many identified—and still do.[26]

This book is an augmentation of a special issue of the *Journal of Genocide Research* published in 2014.[27] We solicited new chapters on the experience of Biafran women and girls in the war, on its traumatic impact, on the roles of Russia and France, and the reaction of West Germans and African-Americans. Even then, the book does not purport to offer comprehensive coverage of the war. With more time and space, we would have included contributions dealing in more detail with the war's prelude and the 1966 massacres against Igbos in northern Nigeria, on its military and social dimensions and further case studies on the role and impact of international actors. As it stands, this collection represents current historiography's focus on the conflict's international history and legacy.[28]

The Nigeria-Biafra War: Evolution and Course of Events

As a unified territory, Nigeria had been created in 1914 through the amalgamation of Britain's west African colonial possessions. After independence in 1960, Nigeria had widely been considered one of sub-Saharan Africa's most promising postcolonial states. The potential for development seemed boundless in the democracy of roughly 45 million people, where large amounts of high quality oil reserves had been discovered shortly before the end of colonial rule.[29] Two British legacies combined to impair the evolution of a stable political system and social relations, however; colonial rule divided the population along ethnic lines but incorporated the defined groups in a centrally governed federal state.[30] The territorial and ethnic borders that marked Nigerian colonial society were still in place when the country achieved independence. Established as a federation, postcolonial Nigeria was split up into three main regions, each dominated by one or two ethnic groups: Hausa-Fulani in the North, Yoruba in the West, and Igbos in the East; hundreds of other ethnic minorities of different size comprised the rest of the population. In 1963, the federation was separated into four states when the multiethnic Midwestern Region was carved out of parts of the Western State. Partly parallel with these political borders, what many perceived as a religious divide cut through the territory: the south was predominantly Christian, whereas the north was widely Islamic-dominated.[31]

The optimism of decolonization begun to crumble by the mid-1960s. Paradoxically, the growing participatory options for the population

weakened the postcolonial democracy. At the regional level, a system of patronage was created along ethnic lines. At the national level, the three 'mega-tribes' competed for state resources that had become increasingly lucrative, thanks to the revenues from oil and other commodities.[32] A deepening rift severed the north and the southern regions. The Eastern Region, geographically in the country's southeast, was increasingly isolated in particular. Federal and national elections developed into fiercely fought battles for power, and ballot rigging and other forms of manipulation were omnipresent.[33]

In January 1966, an Igbo-dominated putsch by a group of army officers initiated a series of coups and countercoups that led to the installation of military rule.[34] The first coup was forestalled after the rebellious officers killed a number of high-ranking officials, among them Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, one of the principle figures in the northern leadership. The remaining rump cabinet transferred state power to the highest-ranking officer, Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, General Commanding Officer of the Nigerian Army. The new head of state and most of his advisors were Igbo. Many in the north considered Ironsi's government as a continuation of the southern-instigated coup and, in the last days of July 1966, a group of northern officers and soldiers killed him in a countercoup. The remaining officers selected Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon as the new head of state. The coup d'état was a success—except in the Igbo-dominated Eastern Region, where military Governor General Ojukwu remained in power.[35]

Repeated outbursts of violence between June and October 1966 peaked in massacres against Igbos living in the *Sabon Gari*, the 'foreigners quarters' of northern Nigerian towns. These riots claimed the lives of tens of thousands according to estimates. Whether representatives of the Nigerian state systematically organized the killings remains disputed, the Nigerian government failed to halt the riots at the very least.[36] This violence drove a stream of more than one million refugees to the Eastern Region, the 'homeland' of the Igbos' diasporic community. The massacres were one of the key events in the unfolding of the civil war. Amidst rampant fears among the Igbos in particular, the Eastern Region began to call for more autonomy.[37] Ever since the end of colonialism had become imaginable, the leaderships of all regions had at times pondered secession.[38] Now, after failed negotiations, this dramatic step was finally taken. On 30 May 1967, the east's political leadership around Ojukwu declared its independence as the Republic of Biafra, named after the Bight of Biafra, a bay on the country's Atlantic coast. Hostilities erupted a few weeks later. On 6 July, the Nigeria-Biafra war began with the advance of federal troops into secessionist territory.[39]

The military power of both sides was limited because of lacking funds, personnel, discipline and education. The federal army was still better equipped even though the secessionist forces comprised a large part of the former Nigerian officer corps, which had been dominated by Igbo.[40] Despite spectacular offensives from both sides, the military situation was a stalemate for the most part.[41] The FMG's major strategic advantage was not its military force but its diplomatic status: internationally recognized statehood. That the FMG could argue that it was a sovereign government facing an 'insurgency' was decisive: foreign governments, in particular most of those organized in the Organization of African Unity (OAU), considered the conflict an internal matter. The regional organization principally responsible for mediation thus ensured that no step was taken that might be interpreted as recognizing the Biafran government. The latter, in turn, soon rejected any OAU intervention.[42]

Nigeria's secured diplomatic status was also crucial for the most significant development in the war's early stages: the FMG's decision to blockade the secessionist state. To cut off Biafra's lines of communication with the outside world, air- and seaports were blockaded, foreign currency transactions banned, incoming mail and telecommunication blocked and international business obstructed. Even with its limited resources, Nigeria was able to organize a successful blockade without gaping holes or long interruptions, mostly because other governments or companies were ready to acquiesce to Lagos handling the matter.[43] Moreover, as a recognized government, the Gowon regime also did not meet any substantial difficulties in obtaining weapons on international markets. Due to their 'rebel' status, by contrast, the Biafrans were forced to use black-market channels to buy arms. The secessionists' efforts were also hampered by Nigeria's overnight change of currency in early 1968, which rendered worthless millions of Nigerian pound notes in the Biafran treasury.[44]

The most important third party to the conflict was the United Kingdom (UK). As the former colonial power, Whitehall had usually supplied the federal army with weaponry. Even so, Her Majesty's Government (HMG) initially wavered in its decision about which side to support, leading the FMG to turn to the Soviet Union. Moscow, hoping to gain a foothold in a major west African state, began to supply the federal side with arms.[45] Now afraid of losing its influence, London began to dispatch arms deliveries.[46] Nigeria's oil—most of which lay within Biafran territory—played a significant role in the evolution of Whitehall's policy line. When war broke out in Nigeria, London was concerned about its oil supply because Arab states limited their oil shipments to states supporting Israel after the Six-Day War between Israel and Arab countries in 1967. Despite initial leanings towards Biafra, most oil companies preferred to continue dealing

with the federal government—and the HMG soon followed suit, firmly opting for a federal solution, not least because it expected that this would keep the oil flowing out of Nigeria.[47] The British position also effectively determined the policy of the Cold War superpower across the Atlantic. To secure their transatlantic 'special relationship', the US government, in particular the State Department, followed the British line, although not supplying arms to the FMG.[48]

Realizing their slim chances on the battlefield, the Biafran leadership moved the conflict into the propaganda domain.[49] However, the situation looked no more promising for Biafra's propagandists in the international sphere. Governments of the Global South were particularly hesitant: as many of them faced separatist movements at home, they were adamantly opposed to what they understood as illegitimate secession rather than as the legitimate exercise of the Biafrans' right to self-determination. As Brad Simpson argues in this volume, the Biafran campaign showcased the ambivalence about how the postcolonial international system dealt with self-determination projects, and left an equally ambivalent legacy. Since its inception in 1963 in the wake of the Congo crisis and the attempted secession of Katanga, the OAU's guiding principle was the rejection of separatism. With the defence of postcolonial sovereignty deeply ingrained into its fabric, the Biafran campaign fell on deaf ears in African inter-governmental circles with only a few exceptions.[50]

Accordingly, despite the secessionists' intensive efforts, the conflict did not engender much international interest during the first year of fighting even though casualties were substantial from the outset. Throughout the hostilities, federal aircraft shelled towns and other targets on Biafran territory, frequently inflicting numerous civilian casualties. The population in the war zone was particularly threatened in moments of instability produced by military advances and setbacks. In August 1967, Biafran forces launched a major offensive, crossed the Niger and marched through the Midwestern State towards Lagos. But, failing to capitalize on the momentum, the Biafrans came to a halt 100 km east of the capital and then withdrew after federal forces retaliated. Violence against civilians broke out in border towns that experienced double occupation. Ethnic minorities in Asaba, for example, considered themselves relatives of the Igbos and were treated as sympathizers of the 'rebels'; they became victims of massacres and rape by federal soldiers. As S. Elizabeth Bird and Fraser Ottanelli show in this volume, the memory of the Asaba massacres is still alive although the Nigerian state has repressed publication of the terrible events and its commemoration; for many in Asaba, the memory of the massacre remains painful and stands in the way of inter-ethnic reconciliation.[51]

Despite Nigeria's efforts to suppress reports about such events, the deepening humanitarian crisis of the Biafran population thrust the conflict into international spotlight. Already by the end of the year, the first signs were discernible that Biafra would be threatened by serious food shortage; the Biafran population was heading for a famine that could cost hundreds of thousands of human lives. Then, in early May 1968, Biafra's principal port town and remaining access to the sea, Port Harcourt, fell to federal forces. The secessionist state was turned into a landlocked enclave. With federal forces tightening the noose around the secessionist territory, the shrinking Biafran enclave soon encompassed only the heart of Igboland. At the same time, this territory had to absorb increasing numbers of people fleeing federal offensives. After a year of fighting, the rump state was overpopulated, its people impoverished, lacking supplies, food and medicine.[52] As Gloria Chuku shows in her chapter in this volume, Igbo women and girls were at the forefront of the struggle, which transformed gender relations in that society.[53]

By then, ever-more religious groups and humanitarian organizations were alerted to the conflict, due in large measure to the presence of western missionaries. These religious ties were conduits for the transnational networks through which the conflict would be turned into an object of international humanitarian concern. For many Christian clerics and laypeople, the war seemed to be a cosmic drama fought between a vulnerable Christian Biafra and a northern Muslim-dominated federal Nigeria. Their shared Christian religion was one of the main channels to empathize with the African 'Other' in the secessionist enclave.[54]

The growing international interest in the conflict generated by the humanitarian crisis became a major factor of change in political and military terms, seemingly representing a political gain for Biafra. In April 1968, Julius Nyerere's Tanzania recognized the secessionist state, citing humanitarian concerns as the ground for this decision. Gabon, Ivory Coast and Zambia followed in the ensuing months, a year later 'Papa Doc' Chevalier's Haiti. On morally ambiguous grounds, the *Estado Novo* dictatorship in Portugal and the South African and Rhodesian apartheid regimes clandestinely supported the Biafran secessionists as well, ostensibly to weaken one of sub-Saharan Africa's biggest states.[55] The De Gaulle government also backed Biafra. In Paris, postcolonial power politics conjoined with efforts to ride on the wave of domestic humanitarian concern. France delivered arms to Biafra, mostly channelled through Houphouët-Boigny's Ivory Coast. Projecting its postcolonial power through the ties of *Françafrique*, Paris aimed to weaken Nigeria, not only for its close British ties, but also because it was the largest and potentially most powerful state in France's principal sphere of influence in west Africa.[56] To a lesser degree,

Peking, a few years into the Sino-Soviet split, also supported Biafra, partly to oppose Russia.[57] The airlifts of aid to Biafra, partly used for humanitarian, partly for military purposes, prevented Biafra's fall for months.[58]

These various sources were also insufficient to tip the scale in favour of the secessionists. The military standoff remained for another one-and-a-half years after the increase of international interest in mid-1968. Breakthrough attempts were orchestrated by both sides. They invariably failed, at least until late 1969. By then, Nigerian strategic adjustments and changes in the military leadership ensured a successful final onslaught on the Biafran enclave.[59] In early 1970, Ojukwu and some of his followers fled to the Ivory Coast. After two and a half years of fighting, the remaining secessionist regime surrendered on 15 January 1970.[60]

The Relief Operation, Representations of Humanitarian Crisis and Third-World Suffering

In the summer of 1968, contemporaries around the globe witnessed the emergence of a new third world icon: the 'Biafran babies'. Readers and audiences in the West in particular were confronted with photographs of starving children in the secessionist Republic of Biafra, which made headlines for months.[61] For various commentators, the Biafran crisis marks the onset of a new age of humanitarian catastrophe broadcast by modern media: the 'age of televised disaster' began with the Biafran War.[62] As the 'first major disaster that was brought into the living rooms of the world by television . . . [it] challenged indifference to faraway suffering', explained Aengus Finucane, a founder of the Irish NGO Africa Concern.[63] The war was the first postcolonial conflict to engender a transnational wave of humanitarian concern. The ICRC, national Red Cross bodies and a number of religious organizations organized airlifts to bring relief supplies into Biafra.[64] 'Biafra committees' were founded across the West, raised funds for the humanitarian operation and lobbied governments and international organizations to intensify their relief efforts.[65]

Some of these committees evolved into NGOs that now feature in the prominent non-governmental sector of human rights politics. The most well-known example is the French *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF). The NGO developed from the *Comité de Lutte contre le Génocide au Biafra*, formed by a group of young French Red Cross volunteers during the conflict, which, in 1971, joined forces with the medical journal *Tonus* to send doctors to famine- and civil war-ridden East Pakistan—a re-run of Biafra, as many back then thought.[66] Making use of the channels of the mass media age, this new breed of activists believed in what became known as *témoignage*, the outspoken public disclosure of what humanitarians and

journalists had witnessed in the field. Accordingly, these ardent believers in the humanitarian cause had to break ranks with the organization that stood for humanitarian idealism since its inception a century before: the ICRC. With Biafra, a new era, the age of *sans-frontiérisme* had begun.[67]

The alleged rift between outspoken French doctors and an overly cautious ICRC has turned into a myth of origins of this new movement.[68] As Marie-Luce Desgrandchamps deftly shows in her contribution to this volume, these conflicts were based not only on diverging principals, but also different realms of experience: it was an entirely different matter whether these events were analyzed from a Genevan office or witnessed in a Biafran hospital. The humanitarian workers in the field directly experienced the situation, but lacked the general picture of international policy experts. However, contrary to what MSF mythology would have us believe, ICRC headquarters were not entirely reluctant to speak out against atrocities reported by their staff. But due to policy considerations and, in some instances, simply communications mismanagement, the organization's public statements about such instances were more cautious than those of more overtly partisan pro-Biafran organizations not bound to the ICRC's principles of neutrality. Yet, still, ICRC structures allowed for some leeway. The organization was not as clearly bound to the principal of nation-state sovereignty as the UN, for instance. In UN bodies, federal Nigerian sovereignty was not up for a discussion.[69]

The Biafran crisis was also connected to wider changes in the relief sector. In particular, it resulted in a massive spending increase through state funds and public donations, leading to the growth and proliferation of NGOs. As argued by Kevin O'Sullivan in his chapter here, the conflict accordingly needs to be situated within complex sets of historical change *and* continuity.[70] O'Sullivan's contribution also helps to inscribe the visual landscape of the Biafran crisis into longer strands of images of and paternalistic relationships with the third world—and their connection with transformations in humanitarian politics. As he argues, in the aid operation for Biafra, 'imperial responsibilities and care for far-off communities' were re-packaged for a postcolonial era: 'The vision of an inclusive "common humanity" the NGOs espoused was in practice rooted in a very Western understanding of humanitarian responsibilities and a very Western image of the third world'.[71]

As O'Sullivan also shows, humanitarian representations of the conflict led to a 'flattening out the complexity of Biafran and Nigerian society in favour of the moral imperative of humanitarian aid'.[72] Nonetheless, despite the dominant tendency to de-politicize understandings of the conflict, some of Biafra's international supporters formulated their activism along overtly political lines. Brian McNeil's chapter demonstrates that members of one

of the biggest ad hoc organizations that came to life during the Biafran crisis, the American Committee to Keep Biafra Alive, spoke out not only against genocide but also for Biafran self-determination. His close reading of the sources shows how intimately intertwined the notions of genocide and self-determination became in the committee's perception of the crisis. For them, any negation of a Biafran state amounted to genocide.[73] By contrast, according to James Farquharson's account in this volume, African-American leaders and commentators split on the issue, though most supported a united Nigeria while deploring intra-African violence.[74]

The spheres of a self-proclaimed apolitical moral concern and politics were much more blurred than many advocates of humanitarian intervention at the time would have admitted. Accordingly, Biafra needs to be situated within the complex histories of humanitarianism, ideas about sovereignty, genocide, human rights and the right to self-determination, as well as the rise of NGOs in the last decades of the twentieth century.

Biafra, Holocaust Analogies and the History of Genocide

After the 1966 massacres, allegations of genocide against federal Nigeria— in particular, casting Muslims as 'savages'—became the core of secessionist propaganda. Biafra's campaign aimed at its own population and at possible allies abroad. The Biafran leadership was confronted with the task of uniting the heterogeneous peoples of the secessionist state: the nation of 'Biafra' still had to be turned into an imaginable community.[75] Only roughly half of the 14 million inhabitants were Igbo, the rest belonging to different ethnic minorities. Roy Doron's detailed study of Biafran propaganda reconstructs how this message was formulated and tightly controlled by strict guidelines. In particular, political cartoons—reproduced here—played a crucial role in disseminating this message to a largely illiterate population.[76] Some foreign commentators observed that this fear of genocide to be authentically experienced, as Joseph C. McKenna wrote in *Foreign Affairs* in 1969:

> Unable now to feel secure away from their native soil, the Ibos saw themselves as the target of genocide. The trauma induced by the September [1966] riots, coming on the heels of the violence in May and July, cannot be overestimated. Secession had become almost inevitable.[77]

Further elevating the genocide reproaches, the Eastern, later the Biafran, leadership frequently made comparisons to the Holocaust to draw attention to their cause.[78] This analogy originated in ethnological genealogies that cast the Igbos as the 'Jews of Africa', even as one of Israel's

'lost tribes'. The Biafran leadership drew on this representation that many Eastern Nigerians had adopted as their self-perception. Combined with the genocide charge, the analogy was used by the leadership to secure the support of the population, and to build loyalty to Biafra by emphasizing the threat by a common enemy. The 'Jews of Africa' envisioned their state like an 'African Israel', a new nation born of genocidal violence.[79]

Soon, the growing cast of Biafra's supporters around the globe adopted this rhetoric, further elaborating it in the process. After the publication of images of starving Biafran children in the Western media, analogies and comparisons with the Holocaust abounded. Biafran refugee camps were described as 'the camp of Belsen at its liberation', 'Mauthausens of famine' or as a 'Buchenwald for children'.[80] Auschwitz, the most well-known site of mass annihilation, was repeatedly referenced, although the camps that had been liberated by Western allied troops were most frequently invoked. Photos of them had circulated in Western media since 1945. The connections between Biafra and the Holocaust were also a product of representation strategies. Biafran propagandists and many of the secessionists' sympathizers around the globe tried hard to secure what they deemed the 'right' interpretation of the 'facts'.[81] To a large degree, the connection between the humanitarian crises Biafra and the Holocaust was made on a visual level, at least in the eye of Western observers: contemporaries were reminded of the photos of the liberation of the camps, which they increasingly understood as denoting genocide, by the images of emaciated civil war victims.[82]

A symbiotic relationship of identification developed with Jewish activists and organizations, as it did for Bernard Kouchner, the figurehead of *sans-frontiérisme* whose grandfather was killed in Auschwitz.[83] These networks were vital for the establishment and coordination of transnational Biafra protest. Biafran linkages to Jews during the Holocaust were extended to contemporary Israelis. As Zach Levey demonstrates here, Biafrans identified closely with Israel as a similarly beleaguered modernizing nation surrounded by backward, Muslim neighbours. Inspiringly, it had won a stunning victory against them in the Six Days War in 1967. Biafran leader Ojukwu announced that 'Like the Jews . . . we saw in the birth of our young Republic the gateway to freedom and survival'. Many Israelis reciprocated, viewing the Biafrans in similar terms and pressuring their government to aid the secessionist struggle in various ways. They thought genocide was taking place.[84]

For many in West Germany, the genocidal past was an obligation to act in the present.[85] 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 Aus-
chwitz, 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.[86]

Many West German commentators agreed that 'after Auschwitz, to which
Biafra had been rightfully likened', the Federal Republic of Germany bore
'a special responsibility'.[87]

Many felt that this responsibility was not West Germany's alone. Bishop
Heinrich Tenhumberg, head of the Roman 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.[88] The international community
of states would need to react, the weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* argued as
well. The UN has 'defined what is happening in Biafra as criminally liable.
The Nazi genocide of the Jews prompted the world organisation in 1946
[sic] to declare genocide an international crime'. Yet the organization lacked
the instruments to enforce this norm in practice. Without an international
court, 'the genocide allegations against Nigeria would have to be judged
by a Nigerian court', commentators pointed out. The UN Convention on
the Punishment and Prevention of Genocide (UNCG) remained toothless.[89]
In view of Biafra, the lesson to be drawn from the Holocaust was to create
international norms to prevent similar crimes in the present and the future.

The associations with the Holocaust became especially virulent in the
United Kingdom. As Karen Smith notes in her chapter, because of the entan-
glements with the former British colony, discussions about the Nigeria-
Biafra war were particularly intensive in Britain. By summer 1968, Harold
Wilson's Labour government had come under heavy rhetorical fire.[90] Wil-
son's critics in the Biafra lobby, in the press and in the two Houses of
Parliament, accused Whitehall of complicity in genocide. In *Biafra Story*
(1969), which sold out in weeks, the staunchly pro-Biafran journalist and
later author of bestselling crime novels Frederick Forsyth explained that
Britain was culpable for supporting Nigeria's genocidal persecution of
the Biafrans that resembled the treatment of the Jews in World War II.[91]
Auberon Waugh argued that the 'mass starvation to death of innocent civil-
ians' was 'the most hideous crime against humanity in which England has
ever been involved'.[92] Wilson was taken aback by the criticism, and in his
memoirs expressed grudging admiration for the Biafran propaganda, writ-
ing that it 'secured a degree of moral control over Western broadcasting
systems, with a success unparalleled in the history of communications in
modern democratic societies'.[93]

So far, genocide studies scholars have not delved very deeply into the significance of the ideas of genocide and the Holocaust for the perception of other conflicts.[94] Scholars in the field have devoted more energy to identifying genocides in the past than in analyzing what historical effects the idea of genocide has had in the decades since its inception.[95] The Biafran case, which, according to a relatively widespread consensus, did not constitute genocide, hardly features in this scholarship, as we detail below. The conflict is also seldom commented upon in the vast historiography on the cultural memory of the Holocaust and its legacies.[96] Genocide allegations during the Nigeria-Biafra war—if mentioned at all—tend to be disregarded as irrelevant by arguing that they merely underline the weakness of genocide as a political and legal idea.[97] The salience of the cultural memory of the Holocaust in the internationalization of the humanitarian crisis in Biafra underlines that genocide studies should develop new methods to incorporate a diverse set of conflicts, even those that many nowadays would not understand to have constituted genocide, if only because many contemporaries thought they did.

Biafra and the Founding Assumptions of Genocide Studies

The field of genocide studies did not exist during the Nigeria-Biafra war. It started to crystallize only in the early 1980s and consolidated and developed in the 2000s, spurred by the wars of Yugoslav secession and the Rwandan genocide in 1994. The relevance of the war is that the field's founders were academics and graduate students at the time of its waging, and reflected on it in the later 1970s and 1980s as they debated definitions of genocide for social scientific research. In many ways, they were rowing against the tide, as these were also the decades when the Holocaust came into public and academic prominence as a supposedly singular or unique event. Engaging in comparative genocide studies, as the emerging field called itself, could be seen as heretical. Helen Fein recalls that her presentation about different national responses to Jewish persecution during the Holocaust, which included a comparison with the Armenian genocide, at the First International Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust in 1975, was regarded as 'radical' because 'the dominant position was that the Holocaust was unique, noncomparable and to some, nonexplicable as a historical event—viewed as a mystifying or transcendent event'. This was a position that the sober sociologist Fein could not share, despite her personal commitment to Holocaust research.[98] As late as 1992, Robert Melson felt compelled to preface his *Revolution and Genocide* with the statement that the book's pairing of the Holocaust and Armenian genocide 'does not spring from a desire to trivialize the Holocaust by

spuriously universalizing human suffering and denying its unique and perhaps unfathomable characteristics'.[99] How genocide would be defined in relation to the Biafran case had profound implications for the field and study of postcolonial genocides generally. As we will see, the Holocaust-as-prototype-of-genocide came to shape these scholars' moral and political imaginations.

Melson's reasoning is particularly revealing because he was a *bona fide* Nigeria expert, having spent 1964 and 1965 in the country for his doctoral research on its labour movement. News of a Biafran friend's murder brought back traumatic memories of the Holocaust, which he had barely survived as a child in Poland. 'I could not help but make the connection between their experience and my own'. Biafrans were being killed purely for their identity: it was 'as if the twenty-some years after the Second World War had been compressed into a few minutes. The Holocaust monster was on the prowl again, and it was no use trying to escape its implications in Africa or elsewhere'.[100] He consequently supported their secessionist campaign. This initial moment of empathetic recognition soon passed, though, when he saw that the FMG did not intend to exterminate all Biafrans after its victory in 1970, and indeed apparently sought to integrate them into the state. 'The Nigerians were not Nazis, and the Ibos were not Jews'.[101] This conflict could not be genocide because its messy script did not resemble the tidy dramaturgy of the Holocaust of utterly innocent victims and monstrous perpetrators bent on their total extermination.

Genocide, Melson intuited, needed to entail the attempt to destroy a group in its entirety. Accordingly, he criticized the UN genocide definition's criminalization of group destruction 'in whole or in part' for conflating what he called 'total' and 'partial genocides' (or 'genocides in part'). Unlike the Holocaust, Armenian and Cambodian genocides, which were cases of attempted total destruction by revolutionary regimes driven by redemptive ideologies, the Biafran and other cases were partial, meaning the aim was to 'coerce and alter' a group's identity and social status rather than to eliminate it, even though it exceeded massacres in scale and effect.[102] Thus although he acknowledged that 'over a million Biafrans starved to death as a result of the deliberate Nigerian policy of blockade and disruption of agricultural life', the policy could not be called genocidal because the FMG policies 'did not include extermination of the Ibos'.[103] Melson also implied another feature intrinsic to genocide. Igbos were not being killed for ideological reasons or purely for their identity but because they were a party to a secessionist civil war. Not the product of a global ideology of racism, the Nigerian violence was rather a territorially contained conflict of self-determination resulting from the tensions of postcolonial state-building and modern nationalist ideology.

As an expert on African politics and later genocide, Melson would have been aware of Leo Kuper, an older scholar who also moved from African studies to genocide studies. He came to stand for the thesis that postcolonial political instability was caused by these states' internal ethnic pluralism, one close to Melson's own approach to ethnic communalism, which he thought was intensified by modernization processes.[104] Kuper distinguished, on the one hand, between genocides caused by ideological fanaticism in which victims were largely passive objects of phobic hatreds, destroyed for who they were, like the Holocaust (non-political genocide) and, on the other hand, conflicts that erupted from the quotidian power struggles within shaky polities in which people were destroyed for what they did (political genocide).[105] In his influential *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (1981), Kuper briefly mentioned the Biafran conflict, particularly the 1966 massacres in the north before the civil war and famine, as a case of 'genocidal massacre', a new concept he introduced to the field; it performed the same qualifying function as Melson's distinction between total and partial genocide. He thought Biafran propaganda about genocide to be excessive and also noted that no attempt was made to exterminate the Igbo after their military defeat.[106]

This style of reasoning was hegemonic within the founder generation of genocide studies in the 1980s and 1990s. In an early genocide anthology, Alan Berger summed up the consensus in his chapter entitled 'The Holocaust: The Ultimate and Archetypal Genocide', which observed that the Holocaust had 'come to be viewed as the paradigm of genocide'. The question of agency was central, echoing Kuper's distinction between political and non-political genocides: 'it was not *what* Jews did but rather *that* they were Jews which constituted their "crime"'.[107] The notion of political passivity was built into Irving Louis Horowitz's influential definition of genocide in his *Genocide, State Power and Mass Murder* (1976), one of the field's founding texts: 'Genocide is herein defined as a *structural and systematic destruction of innocent people by a state bureaucratic apparatus*'.[108] On this logic, the palpable political agency of Biafrans rendered dubious their claims to genocidal victimhood: they could not be innocent. What is more, the centrality of the state for genocide's perpetration also made it difficult to class as genocide the 1966 massacre of Igbo in northern Nigeria. Although many genocide scholars eschewed his arguments about the Holocaust's 'phenomenological uniqueness', Steven T. Katz's contention that 'the concept of genocide applies *only* where there is an actualized intention, however successfully carried out, to physically destroy an *entire* group' accurately reflected the field's assumptions.[109]

This argument persists to the present day. Writing in an anthology on the Nigeria-Biafra war in 2013, Paul Bartrop, acting as gatekeeper to the

house of genocide studies, insisted that 'until it can be demonstrated that their [the FMG] goal was the *total destruction* of the Igbo as a people, and not forcing the surrender of Biafra and its reincorporation into the Nigerian Federal Republic, caution must be exercised in concluding the genocide occurred'.[110] In fact, neither for Raphael Lemkin, who coined the genocide concept, nor in international law is it necessary to show intended total destruction to demonstrate genocide. As Melson lamented, the UNCG speaks of the intention to destroy 'in whole or in part'.[111] Not for nothing did Samantha Power observe that

> the link between Hitler's Final Solution and Lemkin's hybrid term would cause endless confusion for policymakers and ordinary people who assumed that genocide occurred only where the perpetrator of atrocity could be shown, like Hitler, to possess an intent to exterminate every last member of an ethnic, national, or religious group.[112]

This paradigm ensured the exclusion of the Nigeria-Biafra war from genocide studies. Thus the first anthology on genocide, published by Jack N. Porter in 1982, contained a section on the Hutu-Tutsi in Burundi, the Ache of Paraguay, the Buddhists of Tibet, East Timor, Cambodia and East Pakistan, but not the Igbos of Nigeria.[113] In a much-cited article in 1988, Ted Gurr and Barbara Harff did not count the 1966 massacre of Igbos in the north because 'there was no deliberate, sustained policy of extermination dictated and organized by ruling groups', and also excluded the subsequent state-induced famine.[114] Helen Fein was prepared to refer very briefly to the 'Ibos in Nigeria (preceding the Biafran secession in 1966)' in her well-known analysis, *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective* (1990), although she too omitted the deliberate famine.[115] The Biafran case was not covered in Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn's widely read anthology, *The History and Sociology of Genocide* (1990), but included a bibliographical reference despite their stated misgivings.[116] Neither did Jonassohn's survey of 'man-made famines' mention the million or more Biafran victims.[117] The paucity of research was evident when Israel W. Charny's pioneering *Encyclopedia of Genocide* (1999) contained a perfunctory paragraph-long entry on the Igbos based wholly on Kuper's own brief summary.[118]

The situation had not changed appreciably in the 2000s. Harff again excluded the 1966 massacres from her survey of genocide and political mass murder since 1955 because 'the government was not complicit in killings carried out by private groups', and again she omitted the subsequent war and the famine.[119] No mention was made of the Nigeria-Biafra war in the canonical *Century of Genocide* anthology in 2004, nor in the fourth edition of 2013, although the third edition (2009) contained a chapter with

few paragraphs on the war in relation to undefeated perpetrator regimes.[120] Ben Kiernan's mammoth, prize-winning world history of genocide makes no mention of Biafra despite purporting to cover 'genocide and extermination from Sparta to Darfur'. Nor does it appear in new books on 'forgotten' and 'hidden' genocides.[121] If at all, it is briefly mentioned in passing, as in Benjamin Valentino's monograph on mass killing and genocide in the twentieth century and Philip Spencer's *Genocide Since 1945*.[122] Usually genocide scholars do not even list Biafra among the cases excluded from their definition of genocide. The exclusion of the Biafran case from genocide studies has been virtually as complete as it has been unnoticed.[123]

Until the Bosnian and Rwandan cases of 1994, the canonical genocides were the Holocaust and Armenian genocide. The first comparative genocide studies conference, held in Israel in 1982, was limited to these cases. This selection perhaps can be explained by the biographies of the founding generation of genocide scholars, who were Armenians and Israelis and either Holocaust survivors or their children. Yet, as Melson's journey indicates, the Holocaust was not the initial focus. It was too traumatic to write about the Holocaust early in his life, he wrote later. The interest in postcolonial Africa functioned as a displacement. 'As did so many of my generation growing up in the late 1950s and 1960s, I had hoped that Africa, the Third World, would avoid the recent horrors of Europe'. The Biafran case spurred him less to explore contemporary Africa and similar contemporary cases, however, than to go back in time: 'I knew I had to return to the Holocaust to try to make sense of it both at the level of personal emotion and in some broader comparative intellectual perspective'.[124] Europe's traumatic past, then, led to a commitment to postcolonial reconstruction, and then back to the Holocaust when these hopes for the new postcolonial nation-states were dashed.[125] After spending 1977 in Jerusalem, overlooking the occupied Judean desert and Dead Sea from the Hebrew University's elevated campus, he decided to work on the Holocaust and became a charter member of the Jewish studies programme at his home institution, Purdue University in Indiana, USA. Seeking a case to compare to the Holocaust, Melson settled on Armenia rather than Biafra or Cambodia because it 'most resembled [the Holocaust]'.[126] Fein, too, had initially written about colonial violence after a period of anti-Vietnam war activism before rediscovering her Jewish identity while living in India in the early 1970s and resolving to work on the Holocaust, anti-Semitism, genocide and refugees.[127]

In a very concrete sense, the canonization of the Holocaust and Armenian genocide came at the conceptual expense of Biafra and other so-called partial colonial and postcolonial genocides. Rather than incorporating the colonial and postcolonial into genocide studies, the Holocaust focus superseded them so that only conflagrations that somehow resembled this

'maximal standard' (Martin Shaw) could be imaginable as genocide, that is, as the terrible outcome of redemptive ideologies whose victims were passive objects of revolutionary state violence.[128] If this exclusion was the result of unreflective models of genocide, however, so were the Biafran claims to genocide during and since the civil war.

Biafran Claims of Genocide

Proponents of the Biafran cause made out a case for genocide from the beginning of violence in 1966. As noted above, in doing so, they also bought into the Holocaust prototype by casting themselves as African Jews in the developing dramaturgy of genocide. Their case consisted of several elements: positing the Nigerian construction of an enduring 'Igbo problem', ontologizing collectives (the Igbo, the Hausa and so on), highlighting fierce northern Nigerian (read: Hausa) ethnic resentment at Igbo talent and social success, stressing that the Igbo were innocent victims of premeditated and highly organized exterminatory violence and narrating the war/genocide as the culmination of fifty years of 'Igbophobia'. In these accounts, the genocide had two phases: the 1966 killings followed by the war—famine and bombing of civilian targets like schools and markets, though some scholars traced a line of violence to earlier massacres.[129] Lastly, the British are held virtually co-responsible. Douglas Anthony's chapter in this volume shows that Biafran elites also termed the 1966 massacres 'pogroms' and explicitly invoked Jewish and Armenian precedents, linking them to longstanding ethnic antipathies against Igbos living in northern Nigeria in particular, while they also stress that Biafrans included other groups living in Eastern Nigeria. An example of this tendency was a Biafran pamphlet that argued diplomacy had failed because 'the final solution of the "Biafran problem" involved genocide'.[130]

This genocide claim provoked an international debate about the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Nigeria. It also placed immense pressure on the British government, whose support for the FMG attracted accusations of neocolonialism by Biafran proponents.[131] Public opinion there was firmly on the Biafran side; government rhetoric about Nigerian unity and its longstanding military relationship were no match for images of starving babies, the widespread circulation of which was part of the Biafran public relations campaign. Senegal and Tanzania also referred to Biafran genocide. The British ultimately won the propaganda war, however, by sponsoring an international observer team to visit Nigeria and report on the genocide issue. The FMG played along, although it forbade the team entry to Biafran territory where the famine and aerial bombing of Eastern Nigerians were actually occurring. The team determined that genocide was not taking

place, and international public opinion largely concurred. Like Melson, the latter concluded that the Nigerians were not Nazis and the Igbos not Jews.[132] It was deemed a civil war rather than a genocide.

Academic proponents of the Biafran cause today advance arguments strikingly similar to the Biafran propaganda campaign of the late 1960s. Biographical trajectories account in part for this continuity: these scholars were either participants in the conflict or are children of participants, often working in universities abroad. G. N. Uzoigwe, for instance, author of the 'Reflections on the Biafran revolution' from 1969—a passionate yet poised and beautifully rendered plea for the Biafran cause—has since also penned many books on the subject, as well, most recently, a conference paper entitled, 'The Igbo Genocide, 1966: Where Is the Outrage?', which seeks to raise the profile of the Biafran case by making less poised comparisons:

> It dwarfed the Congolese killings of the early 1960s, the Tutsi genocide, and the Darfur genocide, in its hatred, planning, intensity, ferocity, barbarity, and the number of people killed or affected. And yet genocide scholars have totally ignored it despite the impressive documentation of what happened.[133]

These are not claims likely to advance his cause. Who can say with certainty whether the Rwandan genocide was less intense, ferocious or barbaric? Unfortunately, this academic advocacy is characterized by such rhetorical excess, argument by assertion and recurrence to the same, thin layer of evidence for FMG genocidal intention.[134] For example, Chima Korieh, a prolific writer on the subject, recently edited two anthologies on the Nigeria-Biafra war, one dedicated to his Biafran parents and daughter, 'haunted by the images of the starving children in Biafra', which were based on a conference co-funded by an Igbo organization. He proclaims 'the capacity of an oppressed people to resist an attempted genocide'.[135] Little has been written about the conflict's 'genocidal character from the Biafran perspective', he continued, which has been mischaracterized as a war: it was thus an 'invisible genocide'. He pointed to evidence for 'the meticulously planned and implemented political project of exterminating the Igbo ethnic group in northern Nigeria before the conflict in other parts of Nigeria and during it', although adducing none beyond the conclusions of an International Committee on the Investigation of Crimes of Genocide in 1969 (an ad hoc group originating in Paris 'under official Jewish and Christian auspices' and comprising jurists from various countries[136]) and the experiences of Biafran refugees. The same misplaced certainty and argument by assertion is on display again when he writes, regarding the famine, that the 'Conditions in Biafra during the war leave *no doubt* that there was

a well-organized and systematic attempt to starve the Igbo population to extinction'. As usual, there is also the invocation of the Nazi analogy: 'The war was indeed a Nigerian variant of what the Nazis called the final solution to the Jewish problem'.[137] To maintain consistency with the Holocaust dramaturgy as a non-political genocide, Korieh and others emphasize Igbo innocence and lack of agency. They thus play down Igbo officers' participation in the fateful military coup of 1966, and do not mention the Biafran rejection of a supply corridor (for fear that the FMG would poison food) in 1968 and 1969, still less recall the obdurate continuation of the war against all odds despite the catastrophic famine.[138]

Responses to the international observer team are also weak. Korieh writes defensively, 'Perhaps that intent [to commit genocide] was not officially proclaimed. But the state had many willing executioners with clear intent on exterminating the Igbo. The state did not do much to stop it nor prosecute those who did the job'.[139] The Biafran case tends to resort to quoting contemporaries, whether other Biafrans or sympathetic Westerners, who asserted that genocide was taking place, without independently assessing the evidence. Where incriminating quotations of Nigerian officials can be adduced, they are conscripted into an argument about 'unparalleled hatred' against the Igbo and Nigerians' long-term genocidal intentionalism with Goldhagenesque overtones.[140]

The prolific independent scholar Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe is perhaps the most outspoken articulator of this paradigm, which also depicts the Nigerian state as a prison house of nations, especially for the Igbo. Like Uzoigwe in his 1969 article, and many of the project's supporters at the time, Ekwe-Ekwe believes that the Biafran ideal represented authentic self-determination because it challenged the borders and artificial states imposed on Africans by European colonial rulers.[141] These notions are worthy of serious discussion, but come with considerable partisan baggage. Thus he claims Biafra as 'Africa's most devastating genocide of the 20th century' while 'Most of Africa and the world stood by and watched'. His indignation continues:

> The records of those who carried out the Igbo genocide make no pretences, offer no excuses, whatsoever, about the goal of their dreadful mission—such was the maniacal insouciance and rabid Igbophobia that propelled the project. The principal language used in the prosecution of the genocide was Hausa. The words of the ghoulish anthem of the genocide.[142]

Ekwe-Ekwe, Uzoigwe, Korieh and others are well aware that other Nigerians accuse the Igbo of being a 'bumptious' and ethnocentric people

who seek to dominate the country. What non-Igbo Nigerians deplore as overweening ambition, Ekwe-Ekwe understands as talent, enterprise and leadership:

> The Igbo were one of the very few constituent nations in what was Nigeria, again prior to 29 May 1966, who understood, fully, the immense liberatory possibilities . . . and the interlocking challenges of the vast reconstructionary work required for state and societal transformation in the aftermath of foreign occupation. The Igbo had the most robust economy in the country in their east regional homeland. Not only did they supply the country with its leading writers, artists and scholars, they also supplied the country's top universities with vice-chancellors and leading professors and scientists. They supplied the country with its first indigenous university (the prestigious university at Nsukka), with its leading and most spirited pan-Africanists and its top diplomats. They supplied the country's leading high schools with head teachers and administrators, supplied the country with its top bureaucrats, supplied the country with its leading businesspeople and supplied the country with an educated, top-rated professional officers-corps for its military and police forces. In addition they supplied the country with its leading sportspersons, essentially and effectively worked the country's rail, postal, telegraphic, power, shipping and aviation services to quality standards not seen since in Nigeria. . . . And they were surely aware of the vicissitudes engendered by this historic age, precisely because the Igbo nation played the vanguard role in the freeing of Nigeria from Britain, beginning from the mid-1930s.[143]

In his contribution to one of Korieh's anthologies, Uzoigwe complained that Ekwe-Ekwe has been ignored. Given the tone of his writings, that would not be surprising, but in fact his online contributions have attracted attention.[144] A Canadian academic, Gerry Caplan, disputed Ekwe-Ekwe's casualty figures, pointed out that 'Ojukwu was hardly the knight in shining armor portrayed by Ekwe in his various writings', that Biafra contained its own minorities that were less than enthusiastic about the independence cause and, most importantly, that it was not a non-political genocide: 'the responsibility for it was hardly as one-sided as he [Ekwe-Ekwe] claims'.[145] Oxford don Gavin Williams objected to the 'blanket condemnations of the "Hausa-Fulani"', and Ian Smillie, founder of the Canadian NGO Inter Pares and noted writer on humanitarianism, argued that the conflict was a war rather than a genocide.[146]

These arguments are equally unsatisfactory. Ekwe-Ekwe's critics admit that the perpetrators of the 1966 massacres were never brought to justice,

and that 'The federal forces did indeed try to starve the Igbos into submission, a cruel weapon' (Caplan), yet they do not draw any consequences from these facts. Igbo scholars' frustration with the failure of genocide studies to join the dots and think seriously about the million deaths in relation to their models of genocide is understandable. The almost-cavalier dismissal of this violence was echoed in the British prime minister's recounting of the 1966 massacres: 'The Ibos who had seized power [in the 1966 coup] were themselves dispossessed by another military coup, and had retired to Iboland to brood'.[147] By contrast, this is how Charles Keil, an American ethnomusicologist who witnessed the 1966 massacres and then led the chapter of the Committee to Keep Biafra Alive at the State University of New York at Buffalo, described the events to which Wilson referred:

> The pogroms I witnessed in Makurdi, Nigeria (late Sept. 1966) were foreshadowed by months of intensive anti-Ibo and anti-Eastern conversations among Tiv, Idoma, Hausa and other Northerners resident in Makurdi, and, fitting a pattern replicated in city after city, the massacres were led by the Nigerian army. Before, during and after the slaughter, Col. Gowan could be heard over the radio issuing 'guarantees of safety' to all Easterners, all citizens of Nigeria, but the, intent of the soldiers, the only power that counts in Nigeria now or then, was painfully clear. After counting the disembowelled bodies along the Makurdi road I was escorted back to the city by soldiers who apologized for the stench and explained politely that they were doing me and the world a great favor by eliminating Ibos. 'They eat dogs. They must die like dogs'. 'We find 'em, we kill 'em, and they do us the same, na be so?'. 'They are born with greed in their hearts'. 'They are the only people spoiling Nigeria ever since—One Nigeria without Ibo!'. 'We make sure they will never worry us again'. I am paraphrasing the kernels of conversations with dozens of soldiers conducted at nightclubs, roadblocks and in their barracks during the ten months between the pogroms and July, 1967, when I left Nigeria. I met a few soldiers, mostly officers, who were not convinced that the Ibos were innately evil, expendable, exterminatable, but they were exceptions.[148]

Despite their differing assessments of the conflict as a genocide *or* a civil war, all parties have been transfixed by the Holocaust dramaturgy, thereby missing the point that war and genocide are not utterly distinct categories, indeed that genocides usually take place during military conflict: war can be waged in a genocidal manner. To require the 'innocence' or agentlessness of the victim party ontologizes the victim collective, conflates

combatants with civilians and thereby imports a genocidal logic into academic analysis. Just because the Nigerians may not have been Nazis, and Igbo not African Jews, does not mean they cannot still be victims of genocide. We elaborate on this proposition briefly in the next section.

Genocide, Famine and Warfare

Just as the Holocaust dramaturgy has framed genocide studies, so has the distinction between war and genocide. They can be distinguished in various ways: for example, belligerents can surrender in the former but not the latter, because it is essentially a campaign to exterminate rather than to dominate groups.[149] While seemingly clarifying, there are grounds for regarding these options as too stark for some factual circumstances. How much sense does it make to categorize the eventually predictable starvation of over half a million people, like in Biafra, as merely as a campaign to dominate and then govern a fractious people, the military violence performing 'a communicative function with a clear deterrent dimension'?[150]

On the face of it, intending to destroy part of a group—or cripple it, as Lemkin sometimes put it—would satisfy the requirements of genocide. For all that, the literature focuses exclusively on the casualties, forgetting that the purpose of the genocide concept is to protect people's 'groupness': the FMG campaign was not just attacking individuals but the notion of 'Biafra'. Finally, consistent with the Holocaust dramaturgy, it presumes that genocide must entail the complete extermination of the enemy; that is why surviving a surrender, as occurred in Nigeria in 1970, cannot be imagined as genocide. Observing, as many do, that Eastern Nigerians were not exterminated upon losing the war misses the point that doing so would have delegitimized the FMG and its patrons, and was functionally unnecessary: committing genocide during the war could be sufficient to exert control of the contested territory.[151] For 'integrating' Eastern Nigerians into the state with the policy of 'no victor, no vanquished' meant smashing Biafra through 'lawfare', that is, legal measures that achieve the same end as military operations: in this case, dismembering the Eastern Region with the new federal state borders instituted in 1967.[152]

Ultimately, the slippage between Igbo and Biafra categories explains the fraught nature of the genocide concept in this case. The former have not been destroyed, nor can it have been the FMG intention to destroy such a large group. However, without doubt, Igbo have been subordinated in Nigeria since 1970 by removing their regional governance of the oil-producing areas, subjecting them to punitive abandoned property and post-war currency conversion regimes, and hindering economic development of their states by policies of studied neglect.[153] When MASSOB and other

Igbo leaders talk of the continuing 'war' on the Igbo, this is what they mean.[154] But is this genocide? By contrast, 'Biafra' as an Igbo project of collective assertion and liberation was destroyed in 1970 and has been a taboo subject ever since, at least until MASSOB placed it back on the agenda. For its members and other Igbo, the destruction of this agency and dashing of collective hopes for freedom can be experienced as genocidal loss of group self.[155] A critical discussion of these propositions is overdue even if it has no bearing on the legal meaning of genocide.

One dimension of this discussion is revisiting the war-genocide relationship. Martin Shaw has posited a distinction between what he calls degenerate warfare and genocide; both target civilians but in different ways. The former attacks the enemy's civilian population as part of a broader military campaign, as in aerial bombing of cities, but destroying it is not the ultimate goal: the belligerent is the enemy's state, not its population. In genocide, a group as a whole is the enemy and its power and members are targeted for destruction.[156] In practice, genocides usually occur during military conflict, so it is appropriate to think of them as 'a component of such conflicts' and or as interwoven in a single campaign.[157] Indeed, Shaw concludes that 'hybrid forms of war *and* genocide are the general rule'.[158]

Arguing along similar lines, Mark Levene reminds us that Lemkin conceptualized genocide as warfare against civilian groups rather than states, a notion captured by Lucy Dawidowicz's book, *The War Against the Jews, 1933–1945*.[159] He posits three types of warfare—between states, by a state against one deemed illegitimate and warfare within states; each can evince genocidal features in certain circumstances, especially where partisan resistance breaks out. In reality, genocide emanates 'in many cases of these very same "total war" scenarios'.[160] Unlike Shaw, however, he follows the conventional distinction between war and genocide, and thus classes Biafra in the former category because the Eastern Nigerians were not exterminated upon surrender.[161] Yet on his own definition of genocide, which highlights a regime's attempt to destroy a group 'if not in totality, then in such numbers—at least as perceived by the regime—that it no longer represents a threat', the Biafran case could be made to fit; after all, Eastern Nigerians were attacked as a whole until they were no longer threatening.[162] Each case will need to be examined for dimensions of overlap or confluence that may be difficult to disentangle. On these terms, the Biafra case, with the blockade representing an attack on the entire population seems to occupy a grey zone between degenerate warfare and genocide.

So much for social science, what about law? Induced famine can be classified as an *actus reus* of the article II(c) of the UNGC: 'Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part'.[163] Proving the necessary 'intent

to destroy in whole or part' is less straightforward. The jurisprudence of the international criminal tribunals has insisted on 'special intent' (*dolus specialis*), meaning that foreseen outcomes of a policy (*dolus eventualis*) do not count as genocidal. 'Even if a government knows that its policies will create famine among Tigrayans, for example, unless it specifically intends to exterminate the Tigrayans in whole or in part, its actions will not meet the standard for genocide'.[164] At the same time, the tribunals have acknowledged that perpetrators can possess various intentions (sometimes called motives) that do not vitiate a genocidal one.[165] In other words, the intention to defeat a state militarily can coexist with an intention to destroy a group's social power and ability to resist, indeed destroy it as a group—consistent with Shaw's point about the hybridity of war and genocide.

Whether these considerations bear on the Biafran case remains to be determined empirically and conceptually. The various dimensions of the military campaign need to be reconstructed, and the organizers and perpetrators of the 1966 violence identified. What is more, careful consideration should be given to contextualizing the Biafra case in the history of civilian victims of blockades, sanctions regimes and sieges—and especially consequent famines—which are far more common features of warfare (both civil, interstate and de facto) than supposed, ranging from the Napoleonic wars, the American civil war, the First World War, the Ukrainian hunger-famine for 1932–33, and the German siege of Stalingrad. Serious questions confront the case for genocide.

- Can a genocide accusation be sustained on behalf of such an immediately invented group like Biafra, one that purported to transcend the Igbo to encompass smaller groups in Eastern Nigeria that chafed under Igbo domination?
- If the genocide was aimed at the Igbo as such, how does one account for the fate of Igbo people who safely resided outside Biafra—in FMG-controlled territory—during the civil war and re-migrated there after it was over? This is a case in which the killing was ended by the aggressor, not by a third party.
- Can one identify a FMG intention to destroy Biafra or Igbo people by starvation through its blockade when the Biafran authorities rejected offers to enable the delivery of supplies because it did not suit their military objectives?
- What about the claim by Ogoni writer and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa that his people suffered genocidal violence at the hands of Igbo soldiers during the war for allegedly supporting the FMG?[166]
- What of the possible, bitter irony that the prolongation of the war due to Western support of Biafran resistance, which was elicited by

the fear that genocide was taking place or would occur if Biafra lost, dramatically increased the Biafran civilian losses that the secession and western aid was designed to prevent? For this reason, Ian Smillie called the relief effort 'an act of unfortunate and profound folly', also noting that the hard currency that humanitarian organizations brought to Biafra were spent on weapons, just as weapons were smuggled with humanitarian aid, as suspected by the FMG.[167]

• Igbo scholars are wont to quote some incriminating statements by northern generals but were they implementing government policy? Did Gowon make such statements in public or private?

• Finally, most genocides are expulsions of one kind or another; in this case, the aim was to preserve a federation by including the Igbo against their will. How does this fact cohere with a genocidal intention?

More thinking remains to be done to relate genocide and the FMG campaign.

Conclusion: Memory and Aftermath of the Conflict

When Saro-Wiwa wrote his book, *Genocide in Nigeria: The Ogoni Tragedy*, its main point was not to accuse the Igbo-Biafrans of dominating and killing the river peoples of the Niger Delta during the war.[168] His target was the Nigerian state and foreign oil companies, especially Shell British Petroleum, for plundering the delta peoples' resources, despoiling their environment and attacking them when they protested. Saro-Wiwa himself and others were executed by the state on trumped-up murder charges in 1995. Despite government oppression, various delta protest and liberation movements continue to resist this form of internal colonialism, and now make common cause with their erstwhile enemy, the Biafrans, in the form of MASSOB.[169] Both use the genocide rhetoric.

Ever after Biafra's fall in early 1970, the memory of the war remained wrenching in Nigeria and Nigerian diaspora circles. The question whether genocide was committed constitutes a recurrent bone of contention within Nigerian society, going back, as we have seen, to the widespread genocide allegations and invocations of Holocaust memory during the conflict. As Mpalive-Hangson Msiska argues in this volume, Achebe's *There Was a Country* does not exemplify the ethnic chauvinism for which some commentators reproached it, but rather an attempt to reach closure through a confrontation with the past. '[H]ankering for a home', as Msiska argues, Achebe aimed to 'work through' the conflict as his personal and postcolonial Nigerian society's traumatic experience.[170]

A similar plea for a confrontation with a troubling past can be identified in the contribution by Bird and Ottanelli. The memory of the Asaba

massacres haunts the town community up to this day: this spectre can only be relegated to the past, it seems, once a national process of national reconciliation through commemoration has been initiated.[171] MASSOB broke the taboo to refer to Biafra in Nigerian political discourse and, as one might expect, the centrifugal forces of the Nigerian federal state have countered this resurgence. In recent years, the movement for a new Biafra collaborated with other quests for ethnic self-determination while allowing the grievances to be increasingly termed as 'Igbo' concerns, rather than 'Biafran'.[172]

Whether the massacres, bombings and famine are named as genocide or not, dealing with the history of the war is important to understand the fabric of postcolonial Nigeria and the international order in which the conflict emerged and unfolded. The Nigeria-Biafra war poses intricate challenges for genocide-studies scholars. Two related issues in particular are worth pondering further. First, the Nigeria-Biafra war underlines the importance of the conceptual history of genocide and of what Michael Rothberg has dubbed 'multidirectional memories' for the study of genocides.[173] More thinking needs to be devoted to how genocide as a concept—crucially often directly tied to dominant understandings of the Holocaust as a state-sponsored, ideology-driven racial hate crime—influences the perceptions, and thus, in effect, the politics of other conflicts. Second, but connected with this point, scholars of genocide studies need to reflect on the impact of this understanding of the Holocaust on their discipline and how this model determines their (mis-)apprehension of other cases they discuss or—exactly because of this model—fail to discuss.

This chapter was written as Western publics were again stirred by a humanitarian crisis in Nigeria, this time by the kidnapping of some 276 female students from a secondary school dormitory in the town of Chibok in Northeastern Nigeria in mid-April 2014. Although the culprits, an Islamist militia known as Boko Haram, have been registered by Western security agencies and international observers like the International Crisis Group (ICG) since 2011, their brazen act now invoked what Didier Fassin calls 'humanitarian reason': the expression of moral sentiments to motivate humanitarian action for far-off victims that conceals its redemptive emotional investment and the asymmetrical power relations between the West and the Global South.[174] For Nigeria, the recent rise of Islamic terrorism is part of a longer history of political crisis in its postcolonial kleptocracy, a political system unable to offer basic services, still less provide hope for its citizens. Widespread corruption, mounting economic inequality and social marginalization are the breeding ground of unrest and violent conflict.[175] The country's complex and multiple insurgencies, which have predominated in the non-Muslim southern oil region, are now perceived

internationally through the depoliticizing prisms of 'Islamic terror' and 'humanitarianism'. In many ways, the Nigeria-Biafra remains a crucial episode to make sense of these current events.

Notes

1. Auberon Waugh and Susan Cronje, *Biafra: Britain's Shame* (London: Joseph, 1969); Conor Cruise O'Brien, 'A condemned people', *New York Review of Books*, 21 December 1967, pp. 14–20; O'Brien, 'Biafra revisited', *New York Review of Books*, 22 May 1969, pp. 15–27; Frederick Forsyth, *The Biafra story* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969); Stanley Diamond, 'Who killed Biafra?', *New York Review of Books*, 26 February 1970, pp. 17–27.

2. The figure is taken from Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A history of Nigeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 158.

3. On secession: David A. Ijalaye, 'Was "Biafra" at any time a state in international law?', *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 65, No. 3, 1971, pp. 551–559; Charles R. Nixon, 'Self-determination: The Nigeria/Biafra case', *World Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1972, pp. 473–497; M. G. Kaladharan Nayar, 'Self-determination beyond the colonial context: Biafra in retrospect', *Texas International Law Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1975, pp. 321–345; E. Wayne Nafziger and William L. Richter, 'Biafra and Bangladesh: The political economy of secessionist conflict', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1976, pp. 91–109; Lee C. Buchheit, *Secession: The legitimacy of self-determination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978). On humanitarian intervention: roundtable with five academics convened by Senator Edward M. Kennedy on 27 April 1972 on 'Biafra, Bengal and beyond: International responsibility and genocidal conflict', *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 66, No. 4, 1972, pp. 89–108; Richard B. Lillich (ed.), *Humanitarian intervention and the United Nations* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1973); here especially, Michael Reisman and Myres S. McDougal, 'Humanitarian intervention to protect the Ibos', pp. 167–195; Laurie W. Wiseberg, 'Humanitarian intervention: Lessons from the Nigerian civil war', *Human Rights Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1974, pp. 61–98. On ethnic conflict: Crawford Young, *The politics of cultural pluralism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976); Dan Jacobs, *The brutality of nations* (New York: Knopf, 1978).

4. The Nigeria-Biafra war has long ranked among Africa's forgotten wars. See Rolf Hofmeier and Volker Matthies (eds.), *Vergessene Kriege in Afrika* (Göttingen: Lamuv, 1992). In Nigeria, the civil war had remained a topic of scholarly and public debate throughout. See for instance Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe, *The Biafra war: Nigeria and the aftermath* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990); Ekwe-Ekwe, *Biafra revisited* (Dakar and Reading: African Renaissance, 2007); Chima J. Korieh (ed.), *The Nigeria-Biafra war: Genocide and the politics of memory* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2012).

5. We use the spelling 'Igbo', now widely common in English. However, the usage is not consistent throughout the theme issue's contributions; in particular if the spelling 'Ibo' is used in original sources, this will be left unaltered.

6. Mark Levene, *Genocide in the age of the nation-state*, 4 vols. (London: I. B. Tauris and Oxford University Press, 2005–2013); A. Dirk Moses (ed.), *Empire, colony, genocide: Conquest, occupation and subaltern resistance in world history* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008). Vol. 13, No. 4, 2011 of the *Journal of Genocide Research* is a special issue devoted to the East Pakistan secession of 1971. Martin Shaw, *Genocide and international relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Adrian Gallagher, *Genocide and its threat to contemporary international order* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013).

7. Michael Barnett, *Empire of humanity: A history of humanitarianism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 133–147; Eleanor Davey, *Idealism beyond borders: The French revolutionary left and the intellectual origins of humanitarianism, 1954–1988* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Marie-Luce Desgrandchamps, 'Entre coopération et concurrence: CICR, Unicef et organisations religieuses au Biafra', *Relations Internationales*, Vol. 152, No. 4, 2012, pp. 51–62; Desgrandchamps, '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*, Vol. 146, No. 2, 2011, pp. 95–108; Forian Hannig, '"Eins, zwei, drei Biafra": Internationale humanitäre Hilfe in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren' (PhD project, University of Halle-Wittenberg); Lasse Heerten, *The Biafran war and postcolonial humanitarianism: Spectacles of suffering* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming); Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, 'Humanitarian aid and the Biafran war: Lessons not learned', *Africa Development*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 2009, pp. 69–82; Tehila Sasson, 'From empire to humanity: Technologies of famine relief in an era of decolonization' (PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2015); Mie Vestergaard, 'Representing "humanitarian victims": The case of Biafra' (PhD project, Roskilde Universitet, 2015).

8. Lasse Heerten, 'The dystopia of postcolonial catastrophe: Self-determination, the Biafran war of secession, and the 1970s human rights moment', in Jan Eckel and Sam Moyn (eds.), *The breakthrough: Human rights in the 1970s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), pp. 15–32; Daniel J. Sargent, *A superpower transformed: The remaking of American foreign relations in the 1970s* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), ch. 3.

9. Lasse Heerten, ' "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* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 249–274; Claude Cookman, 'Gilles Caron's coverage of the crisis in Biafra', *Visual Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 4, 2008, pp. 226–242.

10. Karen E. Smith, *Genocide and the Europeans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Carol Ijeoma Njoku, 'A paradox of international criminal justice: The Biafra genocide', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 6, 2013, pp. 710–726. Other more recent studies of governmental reactions to the Nigerian civil war include Maxim Matusevich, *No easy row for a Russian hoe: Ideology and pragmatism in Nigerian-Soviet relations, 1960–1991* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), ch. 3; Matusevich, 'Ideology and pragmatism: The Biafra war and Nigeria's response to the Soviet Union, 1966–1970', *Nigerian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 28, Nos. 1–2, 2002, pp. 97–138; Kevin O'Sullivan, *Ireland, Africa and the end of empire* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2012), chs. 4–5; Enda Staunton, 'The case of Biafra: Ireland and the Nigerian civil war', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 124, 1999, pp. 513–535; John W. Young, *The Labour governments 1964–1970*, 2 vols. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 2: ch. 8.

11. See, for instance, Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The past of the present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 172–173; Paul Nugent, *Africa since independence: A comparative history* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 92–98, 104–105. For older accounts, see Colin Legum, *Africa since independence* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), who only mentions the conflict in passing, even though he covered the war as a journalist at the time, and also Basil Davidson, *The black man's burden: Africa and the curse of the nation-state* (New York: Random House, 1992), which does not cover the conflict at any length, despite the focus on the shortcomings of the nation-state model in sub-Saharan Africa.

12. Chinua Achebe, *There was a country: A personal history of Biafra* (New York: Penguin, 2012); Wole Soyinka, *The man died: Prison notes of Wole Soyinka* (New York: Noonday Press, 1988 [1971]); Soyinka, 'If religion was taken away I'd be happy', *Telegraph*, 12 October 2012; Soyinka, 'Wole Soyinka speaks on Achebe's costly mistakes, Ojukwu & Biafra', *YouNews*, 19 May 2013, available at: www.younewsng.com/2013/05/19/wole-soyinka-speaks-on-achebes-costly-mistakes-ojukwu-biafra. Retrieved 16 April 2014.

13. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a yellow sun* (London: Fourth Estate, 2006). As might be expected, the Nigerian government censored the film: 'Censors delay Nigeria release of Biafran war film', *Daily Mail*, 26 April 2014, available at: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-2613059/Censors-delay-Nigeria-release-Biafran-war-film.html. Half of a yellow sun, directed by Bili Bandele, www.imdb.com/title/tt2215077.

14. Sarah Mathieu-Comtois, 'Why partition? Biafra and South Sudan in comparative perspective', *McGill International Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2012, pp. 25–37.

15. See, for instance, Jeffrey Herbst, 'The creation and maintenance of national boundaries in Africa', *International* Organization, Vol. 43, No. 4, 1989, pp. 673–692.

16. Osita Ebiem, *Nigeria, Biafra and Boko Haram: Ending the genocides through multi-state solution* (New York: Free Press, 2014).

17. Chima J. Korieh and Ifeanyi Ezeonu (eds.), *Remembering Biafra: Narrative, history, and memory of the Nigeria-Biafra war* (Glassboro, NJ and Owerri, Nigeria: Goldline & Jacobs Publishers, 2010); Elizabeth Bird and Fraser Ottanelli, 'The history and legacy of the Asaba, Nigeria, massacres', *African Studies Review*, Vol. 54, No. 3, 2011, pp. 1–26. On MASSOB, see Ike Okonta, ' "Biafra of the mind": MASSOB and the mobilization of history', in this volume, and Godwin Onuoha, *Challenging the state in Africa: MASSOB and the crisis of self-determination in Nigeria* (Münster: LIT, 2011).

18. The most recent addition to the literature in monograph length is Michael Gould, *The struggle for modern Nigeria: The Biafran war 1966–1970* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), which primarily rests on interviews but does not use these sources to develop an oral history of the conflict. It aims rather to provide a history of the conflict 'as it was'. The international history of the war remains particularly poorly studied. The best published works in monograph length are still the dated John J. Stremlau, *The international politics of the Nigerian civil war, 1967–1970* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977); Suzanne Cronje, *The world and Nigeria: The diplomatic history of the Biafran war 1967–1970* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1972), and the unpublished dissertation by Laurie Wiseberg, 'The international politics of relief: A case study of the relief operation mounted during the Nigerian civil war (1967–1970)' (PhD thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1973); Françoise Ugochukwu, *Biafra, la déchirure: Sur les traces de la guerre civile nigériane de 1967–1970* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009) is unfortunately of less analytical or empirical value. However, see the forthcoming Heerten, *Biafran war*.

19. Tochukwu E. Ezeoke, 'Nigerian-Biafran war: A case of genocide?', *The Nigerian Voice*, 8 October 2012, available at: www.thenigerianvoice.com/nvnews/99683/1/nigerian-biafran-war-a-case-of-genocide.html. Retrieved 21 April 2014.

20. For example: Godfrey N. Uzoigwe, 'The Igbo genocide, 1966: Where is the outrage?', paper delivered at the IAGS conference, Buenos Aires, 2011. Chapter six, 'Genocide and secession', of his *Visions of nationhood: Prelude to the Nigerian civil war, 1960–1967* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2011) presents a detailed case for the genocide label. A section of the book also aims to 'to provide the moral and philosophical rationale of the Biafran struggle', p. 128. Other examples include Ekwe-Ekwe, *Biafra war*, Ekwe-Ekwe, *Biafra revisited*, and Korieh, *Nigeria-Biafra war*.

21. Raymond Evans, ' "Crime without a name": Colonialism and the case for "indigenocide" ', in Moses, *Empire, colony, genocide*, p. 138.

22. Mahmood Mamdani, 'The politics of naming', *London Review of Books*, 8 March 2007, pp. 5–8.

23. On the different possible brands attached to the conflict in early twenty-first century Sudan, a conflict partially similar to that in Nigeria/Biafra, Mamdani, 'The politics of naming'. For this process in East Pakistan/Bangladesh in 1971, see A. Dirk Moses, 'Civil war or genocide? Britain and the secession of East Pakistan in 1971', in Aparna Sundar and Nandini Sundar (eds.), *Civil war and sovereignty in South Asia: Regional and political economy perspectives* (New Delhi: Sage India, 2014), pp. 142–164.

24. This is another similarity with the 'Bangladesh liberation war'. See Srinath Raghavan, *1971: A global history of the creation of Bangladesh* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013). On the connections between civil war and revolution, see David Armitage, 'Civil war and revolution', *Agora*, Vol. 44, No. 2, 2009, pp. 18–22.

25. In French 'guerre du Biafra' is more widespread. As an introduction to 'civil wars' and their definition, see Stathis N. Kalyvas, 'Civil wars', in Carles Boix and Susan Stokes (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of comparative politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 416–434.

26. Ijalaye, 'Was "Biafra" at any time a state?'.

27. 'The Nigeria-Biafra war, 1967–1970: Postcolonial conflict and the question of genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 16, Nos. 2–3, 2014, available at: www.tandfonline.com/toc/cjgr20/16/2-3?nav=tocList.

28. The domestic consequences of the war are well covered in a special issue of *African Development*, Vol. 31, No. 4, edited by Ike Okonta and Kate Meagher, called 'Legacies of Biafra'.

29. Michael Crowder, *The story of Nigeria* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), pp. 237–259; Phia Steyn, 'Oil exploration in colonial Nigeria, c. 1903–1958', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2009, pp. 249–274.

30. On the colonial construction of ethnicity in Nigeria, see Philip S. Zachernuk, 'Of origins and colonial order: Southern Nigerian historians and the "Hamitic hypothesis", c. 1870–1970', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 35, 1994, pp. 427–455.

31. For classic accounts of colonial and decolonizing Nigeria, see James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963 [1958]); Richard L. Sklar, *Nigerian political parties: Power in an emergent African nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963). See also Falola and Heaton, *A history of Nigeria*, ch. 6.

32. J. D. Y. Peel, 'The cultural work of Yoruba ethnogenesis', in Elizabeth Tonkin et al. (eds.), *History and ethnicity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 200. For the economic historical context, see also Toyin Falola, *Economic reforms and modernization in Nigeria, 1945–1965* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2004), pp. 96–101, 150–155; Gerald K. Helleiner, 'The fiscal role of the marketing boards in Nigerian economic development, 1947–61', *Economic Journal*, Vol. 74, No. 295, 1964, pp. 582–610; Sarah A. Khan, *Nigeria: The political economy of oil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 5–11; Anthony Hamilton Millard Kirk-Greene, 'Coups and aftermath: January 1966–July 1967', in *Crisis and conflict in Nigeria*, 2 vols. (Aldershot: Gregg Revivals, 1993 [1971]), 1: pp. 103–105; Kairn A. Klieman, 'U.S. oil companies, the Nigerian civil war, and the origins of opacity in the Nigerian oil industry, 1964–1971', *Journal of American History*, Vol. 99, No. 1, 2012, pp. 155–165; Robert L. Tignor, *Capitalism and nationalism at the end of empire: State and business in decolonizing Egypt, Nigeria and Kenya, 1945–1963* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), part two.

33. Crowder, Story of Nigeria, chs. 12–14; Larry Diamond, *Class, ethnicity and democracy in Nigeria: The failure of the first republic* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988); William D. Graf, *The Nigerian state: Political economy, state, class and political system in the post-colonial era* (London: Currey, 1988), chs. 1–2; Eghosa E. Osaghae, *Crippled giant: Nigeria since independence* (London: Hurst, 1998), ch. 2.

34. John Iliffe, *Obasanjo, Nigeria and the world* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2011), pp. 20–21; Martin J. Dent, 'The military and the politicians', in S. K. Panter-Brick (ed.), *Nigerian politics and military rule: Prelude to the civil war* (London et al.: Athlone Press, 1970), pp. 78–93; Robin Luckham, *The Nigerian military: A sociological analysis of authority and revolt 1960–67* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

35. Iliffe, *Obasanjo*, pp. 21–23; Luckham, *Nigerian military*, ch. 2.

36. The best account of the massacres can be found in Douglas A. Anthony, *Poison and medicine: Ethnicity, power, and violence in a Nigerian city, 1966 to 1986* (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), chs. 2–3. The massacres remain a central pillar of allegations of genocide. See Godfrey N. Uzoigwe, 'Forgotten genocide', in Chima J. Korieh (ed.), *The Nigeria-Biafra war: Genocide and the politics of memory* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2012), pp. 61–90.

37. Anthony Hamilton Millard Kirk-Greene, *The genesis of the Nigerian civil war and the theory of fear* (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1975).

38. R. T. Akinyele, 'The state and minority agitation in Nigeria', in Michael U. Mbanaso and Chima J. Korieh (eds.), *Minorities and the state in Africa* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2010), pp. 293–316; Tekena N. Tamuno, 'Separatist agitations in Nigeria since 1914', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 8, 1970, pp. 563–584.

39. Kirk-Greene, 'Coups and aftermath', pp. 25–111; Anthony Hamilton Millard Kirk-Greene, 'War and peace: July 1967–January 1970', in Anthony Hamilton Millard Kirk-Greene (ed.), *Crisis and conflict in Nigeria*, 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 1–144; Albert Wirz, *Krieg in Afrika: Die nachkolonialen Konflikte in Nigeria, Sudan, Tschad und Kongo* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1982), pp. 134–147.

40. Pradeep P. Barua, *The military effectiveness of post-colonial states* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 9–24; S. K. Panter-Brick, *Nigerian politics and military rule: Prelude to the civil war* (London et al.: Athlone Press, 1970); Luckham, *Nigerian military*.

41. Stremlau, *International politics*, pp. 69–73.

42. Gemuh E. Akuchu, 'The Organization of African Unity peacemaking machinery and the Nigerian-Biafran conflict' (PhD thesis, University of Denver, 1974); Akuchu, 'Peaceful settlement of disputes: Unsolved problem for the OAU (a case study of the Nigeria-Biafra conflict)', *Africa Today*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1977, pp. 39–58; Adebayo Oyebade, 'The role of the Organization of African Unity in the civil war', in Toyin Falola (ed.), *Nigeria in the twentieth century* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2002), pp. 413–424. For the general context, see Onyeonoro S. Kamanu, 'Secession and the right of self-determination: An O.A.U. Dilemma', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 1974, pp. 355–376. For a short overview of mediation attempts through peace talks see Gould, *Struggle for modern Nigeria*, pp. 112–119.

43. Stremlau, *International politics*, pp. 72–79.

44. Stremlau, *International politics*, pp. 48–49, 219–223.

45. See Maxim Matusevich's chapter in this volume.

46. Young, *Labour governments*, 2: ch. 8.

47. E. Wayne Nafziger, *The economics of political instability: The Nigerian-Biafran war* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983), pp. 104–106; Raphael Chijioke Njoku, 'Nationalism, separatism, and neoliberal globalism: A review of Africa and the quest for self-determination since the 1940s', in Don H. Doyle (ed.), *Secession as an international phenomenon: From America's civil war to contemporary separatist movements* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2010), p. 347; Phia Steyn, '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: Carolina Academic Press, 2009), pp. 425–443; Chibuike Uche, 'Oil, British interests and the Nigerian civil war', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 49, 2008, pp. 111–135.

48. Sargent, *A superpower transformed*; Joseph E. Thompson, *American policy and African famine: The Nigeria-Biafra war, 1966–1970* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990).

49. Douglas A. Anthony, ' "Resourceful and progressive Blackmen": Modernity and race in Biafra, 1967–1970', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 51, 2010, pp. 41–61; Morris Davis, *Interpreters for Nigeria: The third world and international public relations* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977); Gernot Zieser, 'Die Propagandastrategie Biafras im nigerianischen Bürgerkrieg (1967–1970): Eine Modelluntersuchung zu interkulturellen Kommunikation zwischen Entwicklungs- und Industrieländern', *Publizistik*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1971, pp. 181–193.

50. See Brad Simpson's chapter, 'The Biafran secession and the limits of self-determination', in this volume.

51. See S. Elizabeth Bird's and Fraser Ottanell's chapter in this volume, and also Bird and Ottanelli, 'The history and legacy of the Asaba, Nigeria, massacres'.

52. Stremlau, *International politics*, ch. 8.

53. Gloria Chuku, 'Women and the Nigeria-Biafra war', in this volume.

54. Heerten, *Biafran war*, chs. 3 and 5; Nicholas Ibeawuchi Omenka, 'Blaming the gods: Christian religious propaganda in the Nigeria-Biafra war', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 51, 2010, pp. 367–389; O'Sullivan, *Ireland, Africa and the end of empire*, ch. 5; Ken Waters, 'Influencing the message: The role of Catholic missionaries in media coverage of the Nigerian civil war', *Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 90, No. 4, 2004, pp. 697–718; Laurie S. Wiseberg, 'Christian churches and the Nigerian civil war', *Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1975, pp. 297–331.

55. Stremlau, *International politics*, pp. 127–141, 224–235.

56. On the French government's role, see Christopher Griffin's chapter in this volume. Also: Jean-Pierre Bat, *Le syndrome Foccart: La politique française en Afrique, de 1959 à nos jours* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012), pp. 295–303; Daniel Bach, 'Le Général de Gaulle et la guerre civile au Nigeria', *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1980, pp. 259–272; Daniel Bon and Karen Mingst, 'French intervention in Africa: Dependency or decolonization', *Africa Today*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1980, pp. 13–14; Kirsty Melville, 'The involvement of France and Francophone West Africa in the Nigerian civil war', *Murdoch University African Studies Working Papers*, No. 9, 1979; Maurice Vaïsse, *La grandeur: politique étrangère du général de Gaulle, 1958–1969* (Paris: Fayard, 1998), pp. 495–500. On the Ivory Coast's involvement, see Jacques Baulin, *La politique africaine d'Houphouët-Boigny* (Paris: Editions Eurafor-Press, 1980), pp. 87–126.

57. Much work remains to be done on China and many of the other cases cited here. An early contribution is Alaba Ogunsanwo, *China's policy in Africa: 1958–71* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 233–243.

58. Stremlau, *International politics*, pp. 245–246; Wiseberg, 'Humanitarian intervention', pp. 67–74. For a scathing verdict on the humanitarian operation's effects, see Ian Smillie, *The alms bazaar: Altruism under fire: Non-profit organizations and international development* (London: Intermediate Technology Publications, 1995), p. 104.

59. Iliffe, *Obasanjo*, pp. 27–30; Stremlau, *International politics*, pp. 330–322.

60. John de St. Jorre, *The Nigerian civil war* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1972), pp. 397–398.

61. For a characteristic example see 'Nigeria's civil war', *Time*, 23 August 1968, p. 20. For a study of the works of one the most notable photojournalists who worked in Biafra, see Claude Cookman, 'Gilles Caron's coverage of the crisis in Biafra', *Visual Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 4, 2008, pp. 226–242. For a study of the British press coverage of the conflict see A. B. Akinyemi, 'The British press and the Nigerian civil war', *African Affairs*, Vol. 71, 1972, pp. 408–426 and on Biafra as a humanitarian media and protest event in general see Heerten, *Biafran war*, here esp. chs. 4 and 5.

62. Michael Ignatieff, *The warrior's honor: Ethnic war and the modern conscience* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997), p. 124. For similar assessments, see Caroline Moorehead, *Dunant's dream: War, Switzerland and the history of the Red Cross* (London: HarperCollins, 1998), p. 622; Frederick Forsyth, 'Foreword', in Tony Byrne (ed.), *Airlift to Biafra: Breaching the blockade* (Dublin: Columba Press, 1997), p. 7;

and also Matthias Schmidhalter, 'Die Hilfsaktion für Biafra: Wendepunkt in der Auslandshilfe des Schweizerischen Caritasverbandes', *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte*, Vol. 98, 2003, pp. 171–182.

63. Aengus Finucane, '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: Routledge, 1999), p. 247.

64. Jonathan Benthall, *Disasters, relief and the media* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1993), pp. 92–108; Thierry Hentsch, *Face au blocus: histoire de l'intervention du Comité International de la Croix-Rouge dans le conflit de Nigéria, 1967–1970* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1973); Desgrandchamps, 'Entre coopération et concurrence'; Jacobs, *The brutality of nations*; Pérouse de Montclos, 'Humanitarian aid and the Biafran war'; Alex de Waal, *Famine crimes: Politics and the disaster relief industry in Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 1997), pp. 72–77; Wiseberg, 'Humanitarian intervention'.

65. There are two older but still useful studies of the involvement of the British public: William A. Ajibola, *Foreign policy and public opinion: A case study of British foreign policy over the Nigerian civil war* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1978); Oladapo Olusola Fafowora, *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: Heinemann, 1990).

66. On MSF, see Davey, *Idealism beyond borders*; Desgrandchamps, 'Revenir sur le mythe'; Peter Redfield, *Life in crisis: The ethical journey of doctors without borders* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

67. These trends are particularly palpable in narratives about the emergence of MSF authored by the protagonists of the movement or journalists sympathetic to them. See, for instance, Bernard Kouchner, *Charité business* (Paris: Le Pré aux Clercs, 1986), pp. 207–223; Kouchner, *Le malheur des autres* (Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob, 1991), pp. 107–118; but also: Patrick Rotman and Hervé Hamon, *Génération*, Vol. II: *Les années de poudre* (Paris: Seuil, 1988), pp. 11–20. However, these ideas also permeate scholarly accounts: see, for instance, Philippe Ryfman, *Une histoire de l'humanitaire* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008), pp. 48–52.

68. For a perceptive analysis of such narrative, see Bertrand Taithe, 'Reinventing (French) universalism: Religion, humanitarianism and the "French doctors"', *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2004, pp. 147–158.

69. Marie-Luce Desgrandchamps, 'Dealing with "genocide": The ICRC and the UN during the Nigeria-Biafra war, 1967–1970', in this volume.

70. Kevin O'Sullivan, 'Humanitarian encounters: Biafra, NGOs and imaginings of the third world in Britain and Ireland, 1967–1970', in this volume.

71. O'Sullivan, 'Humanitarian encounters'.

72. O'Sullivan, 'Humanitarian encounters'.

73. Brian McNeil, '"And starvation is the grim reaper": The American Committee to keep Biafra alive and the genocide question during the Nigerian civil war, 1968–1970', in this volume.

74. James Farquharson, '"Black America cares": The response of African-Americans to civil war and "genocide" in Nigeria, 1967–1970', in this volume.

75. The allusion is of course to Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

76. Roy Doron, 'Marketing genocide: Biafran propaganda strategies during the Nigerian civil war, 1967–1970', in this volume.

77. Joseph C. McKenna, 'Elements of a Nigerian peace', *Foreign Affairs*, July 1966, pp. 668–680. Reprinted in *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol. 11, No. 9, 1969, pp. 287–293.

78. The following argument is based on Heerten, '"A" as in Auschwitz'.

79. Edith Bruder, *The Black Jews of Africa: History, religion, identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 142–146; Bruder, '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: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), pp. 31–64; Johannes Harnischfeger, 'Igbo nationalism and Jewish identities', in Edith Bruder and Tudor Parfitt (eds.), *African Zion: Studies in black Judaism* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), pp. 65–86; Tudor Parfitt, *Black Jews in Africa and the Americas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), pp. 102–116.

On the nexus of genocide claims and constructions of national or ethnic identity, see Christian Gerlach, *Extremely violent societies: Mass violence in the twentieth-century world* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), ch. 7.

80. 'Le témoignage de Monsieur Jacques Marette devant l'assemblée nationale française', *Biafra: Bulletin du comité d'action pour le Biafra*, Vol. 1, Supplement to No. 5, 1969, pp. I–VI; Jean Buhler, *Tuez-les tous! Guerre de Sécession au Biafra* (Paris: Flammarion, 1968), p. 114; Raymond Offroy, 'Editorial', *Biafra: Bulletin du comité d'action pour le Biafra*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1969, p. 1.

81. See, for instance, Andreas Olie Chegwe (ed.), *Biafra: Tragödie eines Volkes, Ein Volk stirbt und die Welt sieht zu* (Wiesbaden, self-published, no date [ca. 1969]).

82. For this argument see Heerten, '"A" as in Auschwitz'. On the imagery of the Holocaust and its role in Holocaust memory in general, see also Cornelia Brink, *Ikonen der Vernichtung: Öffentlicher Gebrauch von Fotografien aus nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern nach 1945* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998); Habbo Knoch, *Die Tat als Bild: Fotografien des Holocaust in der deutschen Erinnerungskultur* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2001); Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to forget: Holocaust memory through the camera's eye* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

83. Desgrandchamps, 'Revenir sur le mythe'; Heerten, '"A" as in Auschwitz'.

84. Zach Levey, 'Israel, Nigeria, and the Biafra civil war 1967–1970', in this volume; Yair Auron, *The banality of denial: Israel and the Armenian genocide* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003), pp. 80–81, briefly covers the Israeli debate about the war. The Knesset debated it three times in 1968 and 1969. Michal Givoni, 'Des victimes pas comme les autres: Réactions israéliennes face a la catastrophe du Biafra', in William Ossipow (ed.), *Israël et l'autre* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2005), pp. 195–242.

85. On reactions in Germany in general see also Florian Hannig, 'West German sympathy for Biafra, 1967–1970: Actors, perceptions and motives', in this volume.

86. Günter Grass, 'Völkermord vor aller Augen: Ein Appell an die Bundesregierung', *Die Zeit*, 11 October 1968, p. 5.

87. J. Rudolph and H. Menzel, 'Information für die Teilnehmer der Podiumsdiskussion "Biafra—Testfall für eine neue Politik", Heidelberg, 27.1.1969', Evangelisches Zentralarchiv in Berlin, 87/1119.

88. Heinrich Tenhumberg, 'Massenmord trotz Völkerrecht? Zur Problematik Nigeria/Biafra', in Tilman Zülch and Klaus Guercke (eds.), *Soll Biafra überleben? Dokumente—Berichte—Analysen—Kommentare* (Berlin: Lettner, 1969), p. 229.

89. 'Nur beten', *Der Spiegel*, August 19, 1968, pp. 71–76; here p. 72.

90. Young, *Labour governments*, 2: ch. 8.

91. Frederick Forsyth, *The making of an African legend: The Biafra story* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977 [1969]), pp. 267–278.

92. Auberon Waugh, *Britain and Biafra: The case for genocide* (London: Britain-Biafra Association, 1969), pp. 5, 7.

93. Harold Wilson, *The Labour government, 1964–1970: A personal record* (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicolson and Michael Joseph Ltd., 1971), p. 557.

94. Michael Rothberg's work has offered stimulating insights how this shortcoming can be overcome. See especially his *Multidirectional memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the age of decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

95. For a notable and stimulating exception see Smith, *Genocide and the Europeans*.

96. The most notable exception is Peter Novick's seminal study *The Holocaust in American life* (Boston and New York: Mariner Books, 1999), pp. 247–248. See also William F. S. Miles, 'Third world views of the Holocaust', *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 2004, pp. 371–393, which unfortunately contains some misjudgements about the Biafran case.

97. 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': Donald Bloxham and Devin O. Pendas, 'Punishment as prevention? The politics of punishing génocidaires', in Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of genocide studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 625.

98. Helen Fein, 'From social action to social theory and back: Paths and circles', in Samuel Totten and Steven L. Jacobs (eds.), *Pioneers of genocide studies: Confronting mass death in the century of genocide* (New Brunswick, NJ: Greenwood Press, 2002), p. 223.

99. Robert Melson, *Revolution and genocide: On the origins of the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. xviii.

100. Robert Melson, 'My journey in the study of genocide', in Samuel Totten and Steven L. Jacobs (eds.), *Pioneers of genocide studies: Confronting mass death in the century of genocide* (New Brunswick, NJ: Greenwood Press, 2002), p. 142.

101. Melson, *Revolution and genocide*, p. xviii.

102. Melson, *Revolution and genocide*, pp. xvix, 23–28.

103. Robert Melson, 'Paradigms of genocide: The Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, and contemporary mass destructions', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 548, No. 1, 1996, pp. 158, 163.

104. Leo Kuper, 'Plural societies: Perspectives and problems', in Leo Kuper and M. G. Smith (eds.), *Pluralism in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 7–26; Kuper, *The pity of it all: Polarisation of ethnic and racial relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977); Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe, 'Modernization and the politics of communalism', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4, 1970, pp. 1112–1130; E. C. Ejiogu, *The roots of political instability in Nigeria: Political evolution and development in the Niger basin* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

105. For a critical discussion of this distinction, see A. Dirk Moses, 'Revisiting a founding assumption of genocide studies', *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 2011, pp. 289–302.

106. Leo Kuper, *Genocide: Its political use in the twentieth century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 73–76. He based his account on Kirk-Greene, *Crisis and conflict in Nigeria*, 2 vols.; St. Jorre, *Nigerian civil war*.

107. Alan L. Berger, 'The Holocaust: The ultimate and archetypal genocide', in Israel W. Charny (ed.), *Encyclopedia of genocide*, 2 vols. (London: Mansell, 1988), 1: p. 59. Emphasis in original.

108. Irving Louis Horowitz, *Genocide, state power and mass murder* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1976), pp. 16–18. Despite his well-known hostility to leftist politics, Horowitz's functionalist understanding of genocide meant that he discerned it in various nation-integrating processes, ranging from 'the absorption of "backward tribal nations" into the general nation' of the United States, to 'the liquidation of bourgeois nations into the general socialist commonweal in the Soviet Union', pp. 72–73.

109. Steven T. Katz, *The Holocaust in historical context*, Vol. 1: *The Holocaust and mass death before the modern age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 28, 128–129. Emphases in original.

110. Paul R. Bartrop, 'Getting the terminology right', in Chima J. Korieh (ed.), *The Nigeria-Biafra war: Genocide and the politics of memory* (Amherst, NY: Cambria

Press, 2012), p. 57. Emphasis added. Herewith, he reverses his previous judgement that 'There was little doubt as to the Nigerians' genocidal intent in the form of the enforced famine': Bartrop, 'The relationship between war and genocide in the twentieth century: A consideration', *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 2002, p. 527.

111. Martin Shaw, *War and genocide: Organized killing in modern society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), p. 37.

112. Samantha Power, 'Introduction', in Raphael Lemkin (ed.), *Axis rule in occupied Europe*, 2nd ed. (Clark, NJ: Law Book Exchange, 2008), p. viii.

113. Jack Nusan Porter (ed.), *Genocide and human rights: A global anthology* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1982).

114. Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr, 'Toward empirical theory of genocides and politicides: Identification and measurement of cases since 1945', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 1988, p. 368. Mark Levene agrees with this analysis: Mark Levene, 'The Holocaust: After Rwanda', *Jewish Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 4, 1994, p. 15. Several years later, however, she did include Igbos in the north in a chart on 'Victims of genocide and politicides since WWII': Harff, 'Recognizing genocides and politicides', in Helen Fein (ed.), *Genocide watch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 32. This anthology includes cases on Iraqi Kurds, Burundi, the Ukrainian famine and Bahai in Iran but not Nigeria/Biafra.

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116. Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn influential anthology, *The history and sociology of genocide: Analyses and case studies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 429, 455.

117. Kurt Jonassohn, 'Hunger as a low technology weapon, with special reference to genocide', in Colin Tatz (ed.), *Genocide perspectives*, Vol. 1 (Sydney: Centre for Comparative Genocide Studies, Macquarie University, 1997), pp. 263–288.

118. Torben Jørgensen and Eric Markusen, 'Igbos, genocide of (1966–1969)', in Israel W. Charny (ed.), *Encyclopedia of genocide*, 2 vols. (London: Mansell, 1988), 1: p. 347. There is a more detailed discussion in Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, *Human rights in commonwealth Africa* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1986), pp. 94–97. She also disqualifies the genocide categorization.

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120. Samuel Totten, William S. Parsons and Israel W. Charny (eds.), *Century of genocide*, 2nd ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 2004). Bridget Zilkic-Conley and Samuel Totten, 'Easier said than done: The challenges of preventing and responding to genocide', in Sam Totten and William S. Parsons (eds.), *Century of genocide* (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 520–521. The fourth edition, called *Centuries of genocide*, was also edited by Totten and Parsons.

121. Ben Kiernan, *Blood and soil: A world history of genocide and extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); René Lemarchand (ed.), *Forgotten genocides: Oblivion, denial and memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Alexander Laban Hinton, Thomas La Pointe and Douglas Irvin-Erickson (eds.), *Hidden genocides: Power, knowledge, memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013).

122. Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final solutions: Mass killing and genocide in the twentieth century* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 85–86; Philip Spencer, *Genocide since 1945* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 56, 107. Martin Shaw does devote a paragraph to the case in his *Genocide and international relations*, p. 113.

123. The third edition of Adam Jones monumental *Genocide: A comprehensive introduction* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2017) treats the Biafra case, citing the

Journal of Genocide Research special issue on the conflict, which indicates a possible change in scholarship. Manus I. Midlarsky, *The killing trap: Genocide in the twentieth century* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 25–34.

124. Melson, *Revolution and genocide*, p. xviii.
125. Robert Melson, 'Nigerian politics and the general strike of 1964', in Robert A. Rotberg and Ali A. Mazrui (eds.), *Protest and power in black Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 171–187. He analyzes the Biafra question in Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe (eds.), *Nigeria: Modernization and the politics of communalism* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1971). Later he would write about his Jewish family's survival during the Holocaust: Melson, *False papers: Deception and survival in the Holocaust* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000).
126. Melson, 'My journey in the study of genocide', p. 143.
127. Fein, 'From social action to social theory and back', p. 221; Helen Fein, *Imperial crime and punishment: The massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and British judgment, 1919–1920* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1977): Fein, *Accounting for genocide: National responses and Jewish victimization during the Holocaust* (New York: The Free Press, 1979); Fein (ed.), *The persisting question: Sociological perspectives and social contexts of modern antisemitism* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1987). Her criticisms of the Indian caste system and valorization of Jewish-Western ethics of equality mirror those of the American feminist Katherine Mayo in *Mother India* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000 [1927]). On this trope, see Mrinalini Sinha, *Spectres of mother India: The global restructuring of empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).
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129. See Chuku, 'Women and the Nigeria-Biafra war'.
130. Douglas Anthony, '"Irreconcilable narratives": Biafra, Nigeria and arguments about genocide, 1966–1970', in this volume.
131. Africa Research Group, *The other side of Nigeria's civil war* (Cambridge, MA: Africa Research Group, April 1967); Roy Lewis, 'Britain and Biafra: A commonwealth civil war', *Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No. 239, 1970, pp. 241–248; Akinyemi, 'The British press and the Nigerian civil war'.
132. Karen E. Smith, 'The UK and "genocide" in Biafra', in this volume.
133. Godfrey N. Uzoigwe, 'Reflections on the Biafran revolution', *Pan African Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1969, pp. 299–322; Uzoigwe, *Visions of nationhood*, ch. 6. Quotation from Uzoigwe, 'The Igbo genocide, 1966'.
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135. Chima J. Korieh, 'Preface', in Korieh, *The Nigeria-Biafra war*, p. xi; Korieh and Ezeonu, *Remembering Biafra*.
136. See Auberon Waugh, 'New hope for Biafra?', *Spectator*, 29 May 1969, p. 3.
137. Chima J. Korieh, 'Introduction: The history and politics of memory', in Chima J. Korieh (ed.), *The Nigeria-Biafra war: Genocide and the politics of memory* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2012), pp. 3, 13–14. Emphasis added.
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139. Chima Korieh, 'Biafra and the discourse on the Igbo genocide', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 6, 2013, p. 732.

140. Korieh, 'Biafra and the discourse on the Igbo genocide', pp. 730–733.
141. Ekwe-Ekwe, *The Biafran war*; Ekwe-Ekwe, *Biafra revisited*; Ekwe-Ekwe, *Readings from reading: Essays on African politics, genocide, literature* (Dakar and Reading: African Renaissance, 2011); Ekwe-Ekwe, 'Rights for Scots, rights for Igbos', *Pambazuka: Pan-African Voices for Freedom and Justice*, No. 567, 26 January 2012, available at: http://pambazuka.org/en/category/features/79397. Retrieved 24 April 2014.
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145. Gerry Caplan 'On the Igbo genocide', *Pambazuka: Pan-African Voices for Freedom and Justice*, No. 572, 1 March 2012, available at: www.pambazuka.org/en/category/letters/80365. Retrieved 24 April 2014.
146. Gavin Williams, 'On the Igbo genocide 2', *Pambazuka: Pan-African Voices for Freedom and Justice*, No. 572, 1 March 2012, available at: http://pambazuka.org/en/category/letters/80366. Retrieved 24 April 2014; Ian Smillie, 'On the Igbo genocide 3', *Pambazuka: Pan-African Voices for Freedom and Justice*, No. 572, 1 March 2012, available at: http://pambazuka.org/en/category/letters/80367. Retrieved 24 April 2014.
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148. Charles Keil, 'The price of victory', *Africa Today*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1970, pp. 1–2.
149. Fein, 'Genocide', p. 21; Jacques Sémelin, *Purify and destroy: The political uses of massacre and genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).
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151. See Shaw, *Genocide and international relations*, pp. 148–150, for critique of Kalyvas's equation of control and domination. Genocide is a policy of control as well.
152. On this concept, see John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, 'Law and disorder in the postcolony: An introduction', in John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff (eds.), *Law and disorder in the postcolony* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp. 30–31; Jens Meierhenrich, *Lawfare: The formation and deformation of Gacaca jurisdictions in Rwanda, 1994–2012* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). On the post-1970 denouement, see Olukunle Ojeleye, *The politics of post-war demobilisation and reintegration in Nigeria* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).
153. Ekwe-Ekwe, *The Biafra war*, p. 116. Axel Harneit-Sievers, *Constructions of belonging: Igbo communities and the Nigerian state in the twentieth century* (Rochester, NY: Rochester University Press, 2006), pp. 124–125 is less pessimistic about Igbo integration.
154. Philip U. Effiong, 'Forty years later, the war hasn't ended', in Chima J. Korieh (ed.), *The Nigeria-Biafra war: Genocide and the politics of memory* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2012), pp. 261–276.
155. See Edlyne Anugwom, 'Memory as social burden: Collective remembrance of the Biafran war and imaginations of socio-political marginalization in contemporary Nigeria', in this volume. Olajide Oloyede, 'Biafra in the present: Trauma of a loss', *African Sociological Review*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2009, pp. 2–25. Cf. Victor Ukaogo, 'Igbo challenges in postconflict Nigeria', in Chima J. Korieh (ed.), *The Nigeria-Biafra war: Genocide and the politics of memory* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2012),

pp. 303–323. For elaboration on group emotions, see A. Dirk Moses, 'Genocide and the terror of history', *Parallax*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 2011, pp. 90–108.

156. Shaw, *War and genocide*, ch. 2.
157. Shaw, *Genocide and international relations*, p. 148; Shaw, *What is Genocide?*, p. 148.
158. Martin Shaw, 'The general hybridity of war and genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2007, p. 471. Emphasis in original.
159. Mark Levene, *Genocide in the age of the nation state*, Vol. 1: *The meaning of genocide* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), p. 51; Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The war against the Jews, 1933–1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975).
160. Levene, *Genocide in the age of the nation state*, p. 64.
161. Levene, *Genocide in the age of the nation state*, p. 61. He cites Kuper's *Genocide* for this proposition.
162. Levene, *Genocide in the age of the nation state*, p. 86.
163. David Marcus, 'Famine crimes in international law', *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 97, No. 2, 2003, pp. 262–263.
164. Marcus, 'Famine crimes in international law', p. 264.
165. Paul Kim, 'Genocide in the jurisprudence of ICTY and ICTR in 2004', *International Criminal Law Review*, Vol. 5, 2005, pp. 431–446.
166. Ken Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria: The Ogoni tragedy* (London, Lagos and Port Harcourt: Saros International Publishers, 1992), p. 43.
167. See the comments by William Shawcross, *The quality of mercy: Cambodia, holocaust and modern conscience* (New York: Fontana and Collins, 1985), pp. 424–427; Smillie, *The alms bazaar*, pp. 104–105. Thanks to Eleanor Davey for drawing Smillie's views on this matter to our attention. Michael Aaronson was also a participant in the relief effort and comes to similar conclusions in Aaronson, 'The Nigerian civil war and "humanitarian intervention" ', in Bronwen Everill and Josiah Kaplan (eds.), *The history and practice of humanitarian intervention and aid in Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 176–196.
168. He covers that issue in *On a darkling plain: An account of the Nigerian civil war* (London, Lagos and Port Harcourt: Saros International Publishers, 1989).
169. Ike Okonta, ' "Biafra of the mind": MASSOB and the mobilization of history', in this volume; Okonta, *Where vultures feast: Shell, human rights, and oil in the Niger Delta* (London: Verso, 2003); Anugwom, 'Memory as social burden'; Raisa Simola, 'Time and identity: The legacy of Biafra to the Igbo in diaspora', *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2000, pp. 98–117.
170. Mpalive-Hangson Msiska, 'Imagined nations and imaginary Nigeria: Chinua Achebe's quest for a country', in this volume.
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