BIAFRA, RIP

After more than two years of heroic struggle against overwhelming odds, little Biafra lies murdered—murdered by the centralizing State forces of Nigeria, forces that were backed, of course, by those two great centralizing powers of our time, the United States and the Soviet Union. Over two million Ibo tribesmen—the bulk of the citizens of Biafra—lie dead, two million more lives racked up on the permanently bloody altar of central State power.

The American public is totally unfamiliar with the real situation in Africa. They tend to think of “countries” like Nigeria, the Congo, Gabon, etc. as genuine countries, as people bound together by common ties of culture, language, fellowship, and other attributes of nationhood. Nothing could be further from the truth. None of these African countries are countries in any legitimate sense of the term; they are geographical figments, grotesque parodies of nationhood.

How did they get that way? These nations, though now independent or quasi-independent, are all legacies of Western imperialism. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Britain, France, and Portugal engaged in a mad scramble to conquer and carve up the numerous tribes and the vast land area of the African continent. The carving was purely the result of scramble and agreement, and had nothing to do with the ethnic, cultural, or tribal boundaries in the continent. Regions and districts were based purely on the administrative convenience of the imperial power, not on the needs or realities of the tribes involved. Many tribes were split down the middle by the boundaries of these “countries”.

One would think that when the British and French finally left Africa, this unholy mess would be straightened out and the needed realignment and splitting-up of countries finally take place. But this was not to be. For the British and French could only rule the immensely greater populations in Africa by finding local rulers, satraps and collaborators, to govern the native population on behalf of the imperial power. The first step of an imperial power is to find or create channels of rule by creating native satraps and “quislings” who can serve as transmission belts for imperial dictatorship. The Western powers found these satraps in two ways. One was by working through existing tribal chieftains, helping these chieftains cement their rule over their own tribes and over other tribes in the region. Another was by creating an educated urban elite who would staff the offices of government and rule the scattered but silent rural majority of the country. When the British and French made their orderly withdrawal from their official empire, they took care to leave their bureaucratic and feudal satraps in charge of the various countries. Britain and France then remain as de facto, though no longer de jure, imperialists, and the new native elites remain close economic and political collaborators with their old masters. The last thing that the new elites want is self-determination and national justice for the numerous African tribes; their own parasitic and exploitative power rests on retaining the old imperial boundaries and strong central governments derived from imperial rule.

Nigeria, for the libertarian, is a particularly poignant example of the African middle. By favoritism and gerrymandering, the British made sure that the newly independent Nigeria would be governed by the feudal chieftains and emirs of the backward Moslem North. Not only suppressed but also systematically slaughtered were the Ibos of Eastern Nigeria. Everyone knows that the Ibos are generally hated in West Africa for being the embodiment of the “Protestant” virtues: intelligence, hard work, thrift, entrepreneurial ability. Give a few Ibos half a chance and they will create jobs, commerce, and wealth wherever they go. Even more fascinating for the libertarian is that the Ibos, of all the tribes in the region, have always been libertarian and quasi-anarchistic. Their tribe never suffered from persecution and slaughter, they declared their independence from central rule, backed the Nigerian State. Of course Britain supported the Nigerian State. Of course Soviet Russia, with its horror of decentralization, secession, or national independence from central rule, backed the Nigerian State. Of course the United States did the same, piously inveighing against the “Balkanization” of the African continent. All of these Empires want the Third World to have unitary and “efficient” rulers who can follow their own orders, and dictate easily to their subjects below. All of these monster States are implicated in the shame of the murder of little Biafra.

We can only hope that someday Biafra will rise again, and that ethnic justice, come that resurrection morn, will redraw the map of Africa.
LEFT AND RIGHT

The Psychology Of Opposites

What is Left? What is Right?

On the rapidly changing American scene the distinction between Left and Right is becoming more and more a question of personal psychology. The scramble of ideologies is undergoing such an upheaval at present it is virtually impossible to label a political candidate on the basis of his position papers. When Norman Mailer ran in the Democratic Mayoralty primary in New York City last year he identified his political position as "to the left and to the right of everybody else." And he was right. His radical decentralist program defied all standards of liberal/conservative traditionalism. He scornfully referred to this tradition as "the soft center of American politics" and offered a program closest to the quasi-anarchist position of Paul Goodman.

Anarchists, and those calling themselves anarchists, abound on both sides of the political spectrum, from the grabbag collection of SDS to the split-off faction of YAF. Timothy Leary, running for Governor of California, adopts a platform of pure free-market libertarianism and is called a "Radical Leftist". Ronnie Reagan, long-time favorite of conservative free enterprisers, promises to Preserve and Protect the corporate-liberal status quo even if he has to break some skulls doing it. (Curious, isn't it, what superb bulldogs the conservatives make for the liberal superstructure?).

As Bulldog Nixon swings the Right more accurately into a position of total repression, and Spiro the Righteous roams the earth impugning the courage of those who would rather live than die in Vietnam, everyone of even the slightest libertarian sympathies is polarized more sharply to the Left. So Left is Right and Right is Left. Free market is Left and Socialism is Right. Voluntary communes are Left and State Capitalism is Right. The New Left--the radicals, the revolutionaries, the students who are turning against their social democratic parents--are driven by outrage; they are obsessed with a mania for justice because other human beings are victimized by racism, because fellow humans are imprisoned in rotting tenements riddled with filth and rats. They see the injustice that exists around them and they are incensed because they have the capacity to identify with the victims of an unyielding and thoroughly unresponsive superstructure, a system controlled and operated by insatiable racketeers and their political puppets who will never give up power until they are smashed out of existence.

The Left bleeds for people.

While the Right--even our anarchist friends recently separated from YAF--concern themselves with abstractions, they are more upset over the fact that their free market principles are not given a chance to operate than they are because fellow humans are trapped in overcrowded schools and ghettos. They seem to be incapable of emphasizing suffering individuals and dismiss all such concern as misguided altruism. Their notion of justice is one which involves only themselves, and they fail to see that they will never enjoy personal freedom until all men are free of injustice. The Objectivist drive for liberty is not so much to create a world in which all men are free to live their lives in peace, but rather to conjure a society in which Galt-like superheroes with wavy hair and "ice-blue eyes" can demonstrate their economic superiority over "parasitic illiterates who litter the welfare rolls."

Thus it is possible for our anarcho-Objectivist friends in Philadelphia to hold demonstrations calling for the "Release of John Galt"--while Bobby Seale is fighting for his existence in Chicago. Thus it is possible for our Objectivist friends in Maryland to ask me to prove that Fred Hampton and Mark Clark "had not committed or threatened to commit violations of the rights of others . . ."--after they had been shot in their beds at four in the morning by Chicago police (this article is my answer to them).

It's enough to give you a headache.

But the long-term test of whether an individual will identify with the Left or with the Right is one--as I mentioned earlier--of personal psychology. The Left, it seems to me, has the capacity of bleeding for flesh-and-blood human beings. Even the horrible liberals, lately scorned by both radical capitalists and pot-happy flower children, were originally motivated by the desire to "help the oppressed". The fact that they chose the worst means possible of doing it--coercion rather than freedom--is another question entirely. The concern for fellow human beings which originally motivated them was genuine. Now they are fat and powerful and they use the Reagans and Agnews to protect them when all attempts at co-operation end in failure. They are the New Conservatives while those who call themselves conservatives are nothing more than bully boys for their corporate-liberal mentors.

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The Left bleeds for people.

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Massacres In Vietnam

The Old Right's great responsibility over the last quarter century has been that of bearer of the most profound truth about the American state, as Harry Elmer Barnes expressed it after the U. S. had unleashed its massive bombings of Vietnam: "we always knew that the business of the U. S. government is mass murder." The Old Right at the end of the second world war had recognized the special repugnance of the U. S. government. The burden of that fact was so great that many sought to evade the responsibility by adopting the historical amnesia of the New Right which paralleled the historical blackout about that war imposed by the Old Left (that this parallel is more than accidental may be suggested by the fact that many of the philosophers of the New Right had been the creators of the Old Left's analysis and burden regarding American barbarism during and since the second world war. As a result they were equally in the forefront in understanding the genocidal nature of the war against the Vietnamese people (A. J. Muste, Dave Dellinger and Staughton Lynd were most active in this regard).

Old Right elements in the current anti-imperialist movement emphasized what others had not the memory or the experience with U. S. barbarism to know. Thus, they were in a position to perform a vanguard function by initially raising the issue of genocide and presenting the earlier history of U. S. barbarism to convince those anti-imperialists who had not yet shed their love affair with the U. S. government. Finally, after the U. S. intervention in Vietnam had become understood, the anti-imperialist movement adopted the radical critique presented by the Old Right. The Old Right transmitted to the Movement as a whole the realization that the U. S. government and its agents are war criminals. The recognition of the criminal nature of the U. S. state and its servants was the major intellectual advance which permitted the Movement to grow from protest to resistance.

The Vietnamese in the northern and southern parts of their country have been subjected to the war crimes committed by the U. S. war criminals. They have been poisoned with chemicals and anti-personnel gases, bombed by anti-personnel bombs, cluster bombs and the many other devices developed by U. S. know-how. B-52 saturation bombings, "free fire zones" air strikes, search and destroy missions, torture, atrocities and massacres by the U. S. have become the everyday life of the Vietnamese people. Having suffered this genocide the Vietnamese may wonder if it was not irony when the incumbent chief U. S. war criminal insisted that the atrocities and barbarism must continue in order to save them from... massacres. As recent revelations have verified, the Vietnamese are being subjected daily to massacres by the U. S. The victims include men, women and children. The most famous crime attributed to the Germans before World War II was the 1942 massacre in the Czech town of Lidice where every male was shot, but not the women and children. The U. S., unlike the Germans, has universalized the atrocity to make a Lidice out of the whole of Vietnam.

The chief manager of genocide touched all our hearts by his sincerity when he declared recently: "We saw the probability of what would happen in South Vietnam when the Communists entered the city of Huế last year. During their brief rule there, there was a bloody reign of terror in which 3,000 civilians were clubbed, shot to death and buried in mass graves." The case of Huế was discussed in an article in The Christian Century (Nov. 5, 1969) by Len Ackland who had lived in Huế and speaks Vietnamese. Writing about the seizure of Huế by the National Liberation Front, he said: "When on the first day of the attack, about 20 Vietcong entered Gia Hoi (a precinct of 25,000 residents in Huế) in order to secure the area, they carried with them a list of those who were to be killed immediately as 'enemies of the people.' According to Le Ngan, director of Huế's special police, the list consisted of five names, all those of officers of special police." The Catholic priest of the district explained that "none of his clergy or parishioners were harmed by the NLF." The Saigon rulers refused to make Huế an open city to save the lives of the citizens, instead, the Saigon army and U. S. marines undertook the systematic destruction of Huế by bombing and artillery in order to dislodge the NLF who had gained control of the city without resistance. No Saigon officials have sought to estimate the number of people killed by the American bombings and artillery attacks on Huế. Tran Van Dinh, a former Vietnamese envoy to Washington who broke with the Thieu-Ky regime, is a resident of Huế and described how members of his own family had been reported by the Saigon government as killed by the NLF while they had in fact been victims of the U. S. bombing and had been buried in..."
MASSACRES IN VIETNAM—(Continued from page 3)

temporary graves since a regular burial was impossible during the U. S. bombardments. As George McT. Kahin, Cornell professor and America's most prestigious South- east Asian scholar, has noted, the three thousand people who died in Huế were mainly the victims of U. S. bombs, bullets, shells and napalm—an additional aspect of the overall genocide committed by the U. S. against the Viet-
namese people. So much for the fabricated "Vietcong massacres".

Having observed the complete lack of accuracy in the presidential statement, it is necessary to ask why it was possible for the NLF to take Huế in a few hours without many shots, whereas it required 26 days for the U. S. marine corps to recapture Huế at the price of thousands killed by American bombardments. The northern half of South Viet-
nam (part of the province of Annam which is divided by the 17th parallel) had been the center of the struggle of Viet-
nam's Buddhist majority for freedom from the Diem dictatorship which they caused to be overthrown in 1963. Within the Thieu-Ky government imposed similar restric-
tions on the freedom, the Buddhist students in cooperation with the civil authorities and army commanders in this region in this region established an autonomous government in early 1966. Accepting the good faith of U. S. pro-consul, Henry Cabot Lodge, these civil, military and religious leaders of the Vietnamese of the region were betrayed and the Saigon troops were flown into Huế and other cities in U. S. transports to seize control and arrest the local leaders. Those who escaped became members of the National Liber-
aption Front. Thus, leading the forces which entered Huế two years later were the former Buddhist leaders of Huế. These were welcomed by their compatriots, the citizens of Huế, while the Saigon officers and troops fled. Given the purges and executions committed by the Saigon police in Huế for two years, that only five special police in the Huế district, according to the non-NLF source, were to be punished.

Recommended Reading

**ANTIOCH REVIEW.** The Fall, 1969 issue ($1.50) is a special issue devoted to a critique of the pro-

fessional scholarly associations. Particularly recommended are Alan Wolfe on the political science association and Martin Nicolaus on the asociologists.


Mickey and John Rowntree, "More on the Political Economy of Women's Liberation", *Monthly Review* (January, 1970), 6 pp. The first sensible article on the women's liberation movement, pointing out that capitalism emphatically does not insist that women remain in the home (certainly a pre-capitalist hangover), and rational economic reasons why wage rates for women tend to be lower and unemployment rates higher than for men.

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**LEFT AND RIGHT—(Continued from page 2)**

Comradeship, it is the ability to identify with the actual victims of injustice that cements the bond uniting revolu-
tionaries on the Left, whether they call themselves anarcho-

communists, free market anarchists, or just plain radicals.

Terminology has ceased to be important. As we enter a period of overt repression it is this crucial psychological atti-
dato toward our fellow human beings that will determine which side of the political fence each one of us will stand.

—Jerome Tuccille