

PART THE FIFTH

THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE TRUE HEROES AND MEN OF EXCEPTIONAL TALENT ON BOTH SIDES

Those who deserve nomination for the highest decorations as true heroes and patriots must include both Benjamin Adekunle (Black Scorpion) from the Nigerian side and probably Col. Joe Achuzie (Hannibal) or (Air Raid) from the Biafran side. To these must be added a certain great Biafran leader of a band of inventive scientists and technological whiz-kids. Professor Gordian Obuneme Ezekwe (1929-1997). He led the teams variously called Research and Production Board, Science Group, PRODEV, PRODA etc. Prof. Ezekwe and his men wrought wonders even long after the war. Professor Ezekwe was very appropriately made Minister of Science and Technology by IBB, a post he adorned so well before he died. Those are the three colourful heroes of the war that we all hope was not fought in vain.

Prof. G. O. Ezekwe, along with his team armed with the Ibo spirit of inventiveness, never-say-die entrepreneurial spirit constructed mini refineries, supplied various daily needs of the civil population locally-made fabricated weapons, bombs, rockets, including the famous Ogbunigwes, landmines called foot cutters and things named 'Marshalls,' 'Genocide' and of course, shot-guns revolvers, hand grenades, ammunition and explosives of various descriptions. A good statue of him should be erected by the Federal Government possibly at Aba.

I knew Ezekwe very well, having interacted actually with him when I was Executive Secretary of the National Science and Technology Agency between 1978 and early 1980. I always made sure I supplied him with all the research funds he applied for, the very same day, without his having to defend his proposal. He was a wonderful man, ahead of us all at the Science Secretariat!

Five things stand out. For the most dramatic key battles, one on each side, I should choose Nigeria's strategic early victory at BONNY and of course, the brilliant Biafran cutting up of the Federal convoy at ABAGANA. No doubt Bonny and Abagana are the aces. As to logistical inventiveness, Biafra's Science Group under EZEKWE is the sole winner of gold in this category. Benjamin Adekunle and Joe Achuzie deserve their gold medals. Let us please listen to Major General Chris Ali for once and stop cheating and pretence about this dark period in our national history. BENJY, the hero of yester-years and icon of today, I pray and hope this is the beginning of the flow of great and good things for you from your country and its authorities at all levels. Please let's all stand and give a round of applause for the man whose achievements we all converge here to celebrate.

I THANK YOU ALL, OCF, ODF and every individual here present.