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Zik and I: *The Biafra Story Part II by Ojukwu*

By Idenze Ezeme

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FEATURE
IMAGE

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ZIK AND I

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In a 1985 interview with Newswatch, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu shares his perspective on the Biafran War, explaining the challenges, politics, and truths behind Biafra's failed attempt to break away from Nigeria.

Ojukwu disputes the idea that Biafra would have won if minority groups had fully supported it. He says Nigeria's leader, Gowon, created 12 new states to split the Eastern region and weaken Biafra's support. He points out that many soldiers from minority areas, like Cross River and Rivers, actually fought for Biafra. Their hesitation wasn't always about opposing Biafra but came from fear, uncertainty, or hopes for a different solution that wouldn't force them to fight Nigeria directly.

Ojukwu shares the struggles Biafran fighters faced, sometimes using wooden guns in battle because real weapons were scarce. He stresses that Biafra's unity wasn't about money or land—it was about surviving together through hardship.

When asked about declaring Biafra, Ojukwu says the idea came from a draft by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, whom he admired despite later disagreements. He reflects on how Azikiwe's words carried deep meaning but were often misunderstood.

Finally, Ojukwu talks about loyalty and life after the war. He felt uneasy about claims that people from his hometown, Onitsha, got special treatment afterward. To avoid taking advantage of his connections, he chose to leave Nigeria for exile in Liberia in 1981 before returning to public life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Idenze Ezeme

Nze is an Igbo history and culture enthusiast with an in-depth passion for exploring the rich cultural heritage, traditions, and historical narratives of the Igbo people. His works is mostly focused on pre-colonial Igbo societies, traditional belief systems, leadership systems, and the impact of European colonialism.



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