



Quest for Internet

In the 111th installment of our weekly series at emeagwali.com, we present letters pertaining to Philip Emeagwali's war memoir "THUNDER ROAD TO BIAFRA." One million people died during that 30-month Nigeria-Biafra Civil War during which Emeagwali lived from refugee camp in Awka-Etiti to an army barrack in Ndoni to the war front in Oguta.



A 13-year old Philip Emeagwali and his family were part of this crowd that fled from heavy artillery attacks and a few hours before the Nigerian army captured Awka. By the time this article was published, Philip Emeagwali and his family had fled advancing Nigerian army and stopped at refugee camps in Onitsha, Oba, Nnewi, Nnobi and Awka-Etiti [Photo: The Fall of Awka, *Life Magazine*, July 12, 1968].

A Response to Clem Ugorji's Essay: "General Phillip Effiong and the Biafran War"

It is extremely unfortunate that this guy, Clem Ugorji, would spew such an unwarranted and quite an annoying attack on Philip Effiong Jr. First of all, why does Ugorji stand up for Leo? He sounds like an aggrieved lover defending his girlfriend. If Philip made some kind of assault on Leo (who actually cast the first stone), then why can't Leo defend himself? Philip made no attack against Ugorji. However, Ugorji, who is clearly blinded by his Ibo sentiments and chauvinism, has chosen to defend his "girlfriend" and launch such an insulting attack against one whom he should ordinarily hold in high esteem.



Men that fought for Biafra on the second anniversary of Biafra's independence [L-R Philip Effiong (4th), Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu (5th)]

To make things even worse and shallow, Ugorji attacks Philip's father (General Effiong) in the process. His assumption that somehow General Effiong has fed Philip, his son, with the views he expresses is unproven and therefore unworthy of this type of discourse. Without any proof, he shouldn't make such an assumption and subsequently insult General Effiong. He also insults General Effiong by stating that all his involvements in war situations do not add up to heroism? Has Ugorji ever been directly involved in war? What does he know about war? Nothing evidently, otherwise he wouldn't make such bold and brainless comments. I would like to know

what role his father or any member of his family played during the war. None apparently. And yet such cowards are the ones to audaciously refer to others as cowards.



General and Mrs. Philip Effiong

I also don't see anywhere in Philip's comments where he demonstrates hatred of any sort for Ibos. And yet, again, this Ugorji guy accuses him of holding something against Ibos.

Whether we Ibos like it or not, our leader, General Ojukwu, was not with us when we most needed him. We must therefore be grateful for those who put their lives on the line for our sake, rather than insult them like Ugorji does. We hold certain people sacred and would not speak

against them, at least not publicly. Thus, even though general Ojukwu left with his entire family after urging the people to fight, we don't speak against him publicly. He had, after all, promised us that the "grassers" would fight if all else fails. He apparently didn't believe in this philosophy when he saw the need to leave. We would also not speak against Dr. Azikiwe even though he changed sides in the middle of the war. If we, and the likes of Ugorji, would not speak against such figures, no matter what, then why would we speak against General Effiong and put him down? Clearly, then, Ugorji's motivation is ethnic bias and nothing else.

Whether anyone likes it or not, General Effiong and those that were with him before Biafra's ultimate collapse should and will always be revered by most Ibos. This is a great relief since it is also a reminder that most Ibos do not think or carelessly run their mouths like Ugorji. We must remain indebted to the likes of General Effiong without whom many of us would not enjoy the privilege of life and the great opportunities that we enjoy today. That includes you, Ugorji, who, because you occupy who-knows-what-office in Lagos, thinks that you are now empowered to insult the people who you should be indebted to and essentially look up to as heroes.



Biafra soldiers during training (near Umuahia)

Shame on you, Ugorji. Your ingratitude and arrogance is, sadly, unbelievable. If you still have any iota of dignity in you, you should remove your miserable essay from this site. I see that Philip actually apologised to you. For what? He owes you absolutely no apologies. You should be apologising to him and, especially, his father. That he chose to apologise and avoid such

uncouth exchanges shows him to be a man with class and dignity, qualities that you lack woefully.

I think it is only appropriate that I apologise to Philip for your comments. I also want him to understand that most Ibos hold his father and family in high esteem. In other words, the likes of Ugorji and Leo do not represent the majority of us.

In the end, and in a seriously failed attempt at sounding intelligent, Ugorji's attack is little more than a great pile of perfumed garbage. It is also a cowardly attempt at seeking cheap attention.

I would have sent this response to Ugorji if I had his address. However, in the spirit of fairness I request that this rejoinder be posted on the Emeagwali site, just like Ugorji's.

Thank you.

Ihuma Nze
ihumanze @ yahoo.com
Washington DC
September 5, 2003



Soldiers on the Umuahia - Aba Highway.

http://peterwilliams.ch/Biafra_1968/00236-29a.jpg

