

Gunmakers, Bombmakers and the Outcome of the Biafran War, 1967-1970

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Abstract

Between 1967 and 1970, Biafra faced a very difficult challenge of sustaining a formidable resistance against Nigeria. Outgunned and outmatched by Nigeria in military hardware, Biafra resorted to indigenous technology under its Research and Production (RAP) unit to fabricate guns and bombs. The war-driven scientific and technological stimulation resulted in a civil-military collaboration which impacted on the duration and intensity of the 30-months war. Relying on material cultural evidence from the Umuahia War Museum and the Nigerian Army Resource Centre Museum, as well as oral evidence, war memoirs, and complementary secondary literature, the paper argues that gunmakers and bombmakers in Biafra found a way around a Federal Naval blockade which left Biafra relatively isolated militarily, by resorting to domestic technological indigeneity which sustained the war. Consequently, without external European, American or Asian assistance; scientists and technologists in Biafra purged science of its impractical innocence and made a relative significant contribution to global war technology from an African enclave, albeit in its most stifled rudimentary form.

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