WOMEN AND POLITICS IN NIGERIA

THE ROLE OF OLUFUNMILAYO RANSOME-KUTI
c. 1900 - 1978

BY

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CERTIFICATION

This Thesis have been read and approved as meeting the requirements of Post Graduate School, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria for the Award of Masters Degree in History.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been compiled by me and it is a record of my rescarch work.

Eunice Shola Ajala

To God Almighty, the Author and Finisher of all. Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever.

And also to my Parents, In-laws, Husband and lovely children. I love you all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AG	-	Action Group
ANC	-	African National Congress
AWU	-	Abeokuta Women's Union
CMS	-	Christian Missionary Society
CPP	-	Commoners People's Party
CWC	-	Central Working Committee
FEC	-	Federal Executive Council
FNWS	-	Federation of Nigerian Women Societies
LPC	-	Ladies Progressive Club
LYM	-	Lagos Youth Movement
NA	-	Native Authority
NAWOJ	-	National Association of Women Journalists
NCLP	-	Nigerian Commoners Liberal Party
NCNC	-	National Council of Nigerian Citizens
NCWS	-	Nigerian Council of Women Societies
NEC	-	National Executive Committee
NEPU	-	Northern Elements Progressive Union
NNDP	-	Nigerian National Democratic Party
NPC	-	National Peoples Congress
NWU	-	National Women Union
NYM	-	Nigerian Youth Movement
SNA	-	Sole Native Authority
USSR	-	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
WIDF	-	Women's International Democratic Federation

ABSTRACT

The utmost purpose of this research is to examine and reconstruct the role of Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti as a politician and how she has impacted into the development of Nigeria, bringing to light her political activities in the emancipation of Nigeria for independence.

Women have been involved in politics in History. They held leadership positions for instance Queen Amina of Zazzau, Queen Kombassa of Bonny Kingdom etc. Some women also held political offices such as the Office of the Iyalode in Yoruba land, Magira in Kanuri land, Sonai in Nupe land. Such offices were created for them to be participants in the political process and to attend to socio-economic needs of their communities. As a matter of fact, they have been a formidable force in contributing to the development of the socio-economic sectors. Thus, women have been part of the development process of their communities whether recognized or not, as many literature tend to concentrate on the achievement of men.

The purpose of this research is to examine the cognate role of Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti and her enormous contributions to the political development of Nigeria. Her struggle with other nationalists for the independence of Nigeria is very crucial to the history of Nigeria. Importantly, her political achievements have broken the barrier set against women in politics. Her belief in a united Nigeria has also motivated her actions for the development of the country.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Women have been active economically and socially over time, their enormous contribution to the society is constructive. Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti followed the legacies of her predecessors to address the challenges the people of Nigeria faced during colonial rule. Colonial policies were set to oppressively exploit the populace.

It is in the light of this, that this research seeks to address these issues with special reference to Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti, who was also able to break the barrier, the iron door that have been placed against the women in political participation of Nigeria. Thus, she had laid down the legacy for women today.

1.1 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study falls between 1900 and 1978, that is, from the time of her birth to the time of her demise in 1978. The circumstances surrounding her life and family were crucial to her radical and revolutionary character and spirit. Her achievements have served as a positive influence on post colonial women for active participation in politics.

The research is centred on a female icon in Nigerian History Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti. She was able to break the barrier against women in politics and in other facets of the society. Through her enormous and magnicious contributions to the society, she proved to the world, especially Nigerian women that politics and decision making is a venture women can be

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part of and stakeholders in order to assist the men in the development of the country.

1900 will be the take off of this research, because she was born in that year, a period when Nigeria was experiencing a dramatic change in her history. Especially, the usurpation of power from indigenous rulers to foreign domination. A period in which all structures of colonial domination were put in place in Nigeria.

However, her activities politically, socially and economically will not be examined in isolation, but in relation to other women who were politically inclined whom she took a cue from, such as her predecessors; Moremi, Madam Tinubu of Lagos and Iyalode Efunsetan etc. and also those she had influenced such as Mrs Margeret Ekpo, Hajia Gambo Sawaba, Janet Okala etc.

1.2 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

Women the world over are part of the political system of every society, whether directly or indirectly. Although, some women have been constructive in their contributions to their communities while some have not. In the case of Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti her political role has been constructive in the development of Nigeria. The contributions of women in their various societies in history such as Queen Amina of Zazzau, Queen Kombassa of Bonny, Madam Tinubu of Lagos and Inkpi of Igalaland etc. have been constructive and dynamic to their societies and Nigeria as a whole, especially in the political process. Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti was a politician who puts the interest and welfare of the people at heart. She joined forces with other

nationalists for the independence of Nigeria, her activities were beyond feminism as she fought for the emancipation and progress of Nigeria.

Despite, the fact that a woman is given the responsibility of taking care of her family, she is not handicapped from administering well or being a decision maker in the affairs of the state or nation. The constructive qualities of Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti as a homemaker have equipped her with the ability to lead well and be politically active. This is seen in her ability to organise and coordinate the women Associations such as the Ladies club (LC), Abeokuta Women Union (AWU) etc. The purpose of this study is to show Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti as a personality who was able to balance her home front with her political career. She was a good wife and disciplined mother to her husband and children respectively. People, who came in contact with her, felt her tremendeous impact and at the same time she was able to discharge her contributions to the development of Nigeria in the area of education, emancipation of women and politics.

The political developments in Nigeria during the colonial era can not be discussed without her contributions and her ability to denounce and reject certain colonial policies, emancipate the women and enlighten them on the need to fight for their right and most importantly struggle for the achievement of independence. Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti, through her tremendeous achievements in Nigerian history has boosted the status and image of women, not only in Nigeria but globally.

The activities of Olufumilayo Ransome-Kuti in politics are good examples to prove that not all women in politics are promiscuous. As it is widely claimed that a responsible married woman cannot venture into politics, because she will keep late nights due to meetings and therefore become promiscuous. In essence all female politicians are seen as such because, politics have been ascribed to be the major and primary place of the man, thus their activities and infidelity cannot be questioned. However, Olufunmilayo was able to prove that despite her involvement in politics, her home was stable, able to bring up disciplined and morally upright children. Her husband was understanding and therefore she preserved her fidelity. Every woman who is politically inclined and active can achieve this also or take a cue from her.

Therefore, this research is to examine the challenges and problems women face in their societies with special reference to Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti and also her ability to go beyond these challenges and make a mark in the history of Nigeria, which have informed and influenced other women in contemporary Nigeria to be active participants in Nigeria's politics.

1.3 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti was a woman in Nigerian political history, which can not be sidelined in the development of Nigeria. Her achievements have been tremendeous, and thus have informed and influenced other women who are politically conscious in Nigeria today. She was a Nationalist to the core, who participated in the struggle for the achievement of Independence in 1960.

Hence, the purpose of this research is to reconstruct the role of a female political activist and nationalist, in the bid to unfold how actively and importantly women have participated in politics. There were active female participants in history as far back as the pre-colonial period such as Queen Amina, Queen Kambassa, Bakwa Turunku, Moremi, Iyalode Efunsetan, and Madam Tinubu of Lagos who were female icons that influenced Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti and informed her political activism. Moreover, her family background also played a concrete role in building up an icon of great calibre and reputation.

Throughout her life she was part and parcel of change that took place in Nigeria, during Nigeria's formative years as a recognised territory under one political administration. The colonial structures put in place which was exploitative and discriminating also moulded her ideology to be radical. She used this to contribute her quota for the independence of Nigeria from foreign domination along with other Nationalists of her time, such as Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Ernest Ikoli, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Olajumoke Obasa, Alhaji Aminu Kano, Anthony Enahoro etc. Who formed different political parties to champion their course against colonial rule for national independence. Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti was a founding member of the West African Student Union (WASU), Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), and also the National Council of Nigerian citizens (NCNC). She later formed her political party called the Commoner Peoples Party (CPP).

In essence, she was a pioneer female activist and politician who achieved what many women of her age did not. This is obviously seen in her role in the political development of Nigeria.

1.4 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The past hundred years or so have witnessed the emergence of revolutionary ideas that have changed the course of human civilization. One singular development that changed the agenda of governance has been the emergence of women as active players in nation building. There is need to recognise the global trend towards gender parity in all spheres of life a trend that is even more significant in parliamentary democracies. National development largely depends on the level of integration of women into the total aspects of the communities because they are also the bedrock of growth and development as men.

The nature of colonialism, which was to oppressively exploit the people for the benefit of the metropolis, permeated the rise of women to agitate against such colonial policies. This goes to show that colonialism adversely affected the people. The adoption of forced labour, taxation, cash crop production, etc was used to impoverish the colonies for the benefit of the Metropolis. It took the combined effort of both males and females in the society to struggle and demand for independence.

Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti was not a feminist as many literatures posits. Her political activities show that she was a politician who pursued goals that were beneficial to the whole citizenry of the country. She was able

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to fight the course of the masses that were grossly affected by colonial rule. The inadequate provision of social amenities, victimization and exploitation through taxation, the autocratic nature of the Sole Native Authority etc.

Importantly, she focused her ideologies and activities on fostering a united Nation, despite the historical complexities of Nigeria. The political activities she embarked on were anti-ethnic, such as her ability to organise and coordinate women from all over Nigeria and at the same time contributed her quota in championing the course of Nigerian citizens as a whole from colonial oppression.

Significantly, the main thrust of this research is to reconstruct the role of a female political activist in the bid to unfold how actively and importantly women have participated in the liberation of Nigeria from colonial rule.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The procedure of any research is essential in any discipline, because it is the procedure that determines the kind of information or facts that are gotten.

The methodology used in this work was the sourcing of primary materials such as the Biography box of Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti (comprising of manuscripts) which was got from the University of Ibadan Library. The Daily Newspapers such as Daily Times, West African Pilot, the Guardian etc. where most of her speeches were found. Interviews were also conducted. All the primary source materials are aimed at gathering first hand

information to compliment other sources. Other primary sources are the colonial records, policies, Gazetteers etc.

However, primary sources cannot be used in isolation that is why secondary sources are also very important such as text books, journals, articles, thesis published and unpublished.

These sources are used together to compliment and supplement facts for the reconstruction of the political activities of Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti in the political development of Nigeria.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

Recently, women issues have experienced an awakening through writings. Several works have been done on women in order to promote the contributions of women to their societies at large, as it has been long ignored.

One of the most important works done on women in politics is the work written by Mba, Nina: *Nigeria women mobilised; women political activity in southern Nigeria 1900 – 1965.* On the whole, this book is centred on women's political activities in colonial Southern Nigeria. This shows the gap that was created by colonialism on the status of women as against the pre-colonial period. Nina Mba explored the various communities in pre-colonial southern Nigeria and examined the political status of women as a complimentary role to men. The women participated in decision making for instance Iyalode, Erelu, Omu etc were positions women occupy in their

various communities[1]. There was also evidence of female rulers like Queen Kambassa, etc. However, in colonial Nigeria the position of the woman in politics was usurped due to the nature of colonialism.[2]

In colonial Nigeria, women's roles in agitating against colonial policies such as taxation etc. was a major discourse, how they became a formidable force in the removal of warrant chiefs and Obas, who served as custodians of the British colonial administration. The Aba women war of 1929 and that of the Lagos Market women[3] were the major concerns of the book. Little emphasis was made on the political activities of Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti in the struggle for independence. Thus, her relevance to the political developments of Nigeria was minimally addressed.

Secondly, *Nigerian women in Historical Perspective* edited by Bolanle Awe, is a compilation of different works on female individuals in History, how they had contributed economically, socially and politically to their societies. Women such as Queen Amina, Nana Asmau, Iyalode Efunsetan, Adunni Oluwole, and Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti[4] etc. were discussed. The purpose of this book according to Bolanle Awe was that the roles of women in African history have been neglected and writings tend to concentrate on the

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[1] Mba, N.E: *Nigerian women mobilized; women political activity in Southern Nigeria 1900-1965.* California University, Berkeley. 1982. p3
[2] Ibid. p4
[3] Ibid
[4] Awe, B (ed) *Nigerian Women in Historical Perspective*. Sankore. Lagos.

achievements of men[5]. With the evidence of women in Nigerian history, it shows that women can also be politically active.

Colonialism is seen as the major factor in the decisive over turn of the status of women from a favourable condition during the pre-colonial era to an unfavourable condition during colonial rule. The chapter on Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti written by Nina Mba posited Olufunmilayo as a feminist as she campaigned against female subordination, and exploitation. Therefore, no concrete reference was made to her activities in politics as she participated fully in the NCNC in the struggle for Nigerian's independence and also contested for elective positions as a politician.

Thirdly and finally, *For women and the nation: Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria* by Odim-Johnson,C and Mba, N. Is a full length work done on the life and times of Mrs. Olufunmilayo, Ransome-Kuti. This book is more of a bibliography,[6] a compilation of her life and activities in Nigeria. The authors viewed her as a feminist[7] as her activities were centred on female representation, but that is not enough to posit her as a feminist. Feminism is cantered on total dislike for the opposite sex in what ever they do. As for Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti she was not only addressing the issues on women or preaching gender equality but issues affecting the society at large such as oppression, exploitation, victimization of the colonised which was the

[5] Ibid. p2
[6] Mba, N.E. and Odim-Johnson, C: *For Women and the Nation: Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti of Nigeria.* p.x
[7] Ibid. p 103

major thrust of colonialism. Her family background is very crucial in influencing her activities such as her father as a strong Anglican disciplinarian, the supporting role of her husband etc. influenced her political activism. Moreover, her activities and character have not only influenced women of her time, but also Nigeria as a whole.

CHAPTER TWO

SURVEY OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PRECOLONIAL SOUTH WESTERN NIGERIA

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Indeed, it has been suggested that an analysis of the leading figures of pre-twentieth century Africa will show that there are more women than men in the fore front of social, political and economic life than in contemporary Africa.[1] This will be the major discourse of this chapter. An attempt is made to see the political roles women had played in the pre-colonial period and why this had to change with the establishment of colonialism.

However, for a thorough analysis, it will be cumbersome, if all societies in Nigeria area are examined. Thus, in order to be concise and precise, only areas of the south western part of Nigeria are articulated, however, in relation to other parts of country. Moreover as Olufunmilayo is the focus of this research, it is highly pertinent to examine her society (South Western Nigeria) in the pre-colonial era, so as to understand the structures that were in place that informed her political activities.

2.1 POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PRECOLONIAL SOUTH WESTERN NIGERIA

The focus on the involvement of women in the politics of the South Western Nigeria during the pre-colonial era is essential, as it is decisive in molding and shaping the trend of events that took place in the colonial and post-

[1] Awe, B(ed): *Nigerian Women in Historical Perspective*, Sankore, Lagos 1992. p7

colonial Nigeria. Especially as, it was from this environment that the female icon, Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti was influenced.

Despite the fact that women are categorized as inferior to the men and not fit for political participation and decision making, there is evidence of prominent female personalities who have one way or the other influenced their communities, politically, economically and socially. It was from such personalities in history, that Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti was influenced to be an active participant in politics despite the barriers set against women in the sphere.

Therefore, to constructively set the foundation for Olufunmilayo participation in politics as she was directly part of the Yoruba community. This study examines different Yoruba communities during the pre-colonial era and how they have informed and placed women politically. Thus, it is pertinent to highlight few Yoruba societies where female personalities were visible in political participation.

2.1.1 ILE-IFE: MOREMI

In Yoruba communities, there is the existence of prominent female personalities. First, is the evidence of Moremi, a Yoruba legendary woman of the Oduduwa group in Ile-Ife who is believed to be the spring board of the Yoruba race. Moremi took all strict measures to assume complete consolidation of Ile-Ife from her constant threats. The story of Moremi, deals with the last resistance of the Oduduwa group, whose entry has been dated to the period

between the 7th and 9th centuries AD. The threat to their survival came from people known as the Igbo who were earlier inhabitants of Ile-Ife.

According to traditions, they settled at Ideta-Oko quarters in Ile-Ife, beyond Esinminrin River. Their enemies constantly raided this new Oduduwa settlement and made life unsafe[2]. Moremi, who was described as a Princess, Queen and Commoner etc decided to allow herself to be captured by the traitors, in an attempt to spy on the strategies of attack used by the enemy and thus informed her people, how best to prepare themselves against their enemies. She discovered that the Igbo people usually dressed like non-humans, whenever they raided the Oduduwa group, which made the Oduduwa group assumed them to be non humans and saw them as threat and superior. With the information relayed to the people by Moremi, her people planned on a strategy of counter attack, by preparing light torches set on the dresses of the Igbo people by which they were completely routed[3]. Prior to this victory Moremi had consulted the goddess of Esinminrin River for help and promised to give her whatever she prized most, if she could help her people[4].

Hence, with the final victory of the Oduduwa group over the Igbo, the son of Moremi, Oluorogbo was sacrificed to the goddess on her demand. Thus, this act of bravery on the part of Moremi to save her people from their constant enemies was appreciated by her people. The children of Oduduwa were full of gratitude to Moremi for her heroic deeds and they decided to commemorate her

[2] Awe, B(ed): *Nigeria Women in Historical Perspective....* P6
[3] Ibid
[4] Ibid

bravery and her keen sense of patriotism every year by the celebration of the Edi festival[5]. In Offa she is known as the mother of the people that helped in driving evil forces out of their land[6]. This shows the importance of Moremi in the history of Yoruba people. The attitude of Moremi shows the extent to which women are passionate towards their communities and could do anything to ensure their survival.

2.1.2 OFFA: IYA IPO AND OGBELARO.

There are different notable women, in the pre-colonial history of Offa, who either directly or indirectly influences their society. There was For instance, 'Iya Ipo', a woman who rescued her father Oba Olugbense from fire incident while the other children sought for his death. She took care of him and was rewarded by the Oba who was then old and weak. He declared that, all succeeding Obas in Offa (Olofa) must come from the female children of the royal family[7] and this has been till date. However, any violation of this decree will result to untimely death of the succeeding Olofa.

Ogbelaro, was another prominent woman in Offa, who was said to possess powerful charms, as a result, she was worshipped by the people and a day of every year was set aside for this. During ceremonies, she blessed the barren women, healed the sick and also blessed the entire town against disaster.[8] She was a prominent lady in the traditions of the Offa people.

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[5] Ibid
[6] Bello, M A: The changing status of women in Offa since 1900 (B.A Unpublished). 1992. p42
[7] Ibid p40
[8] Ibid p41

On a general note, in the political administrations of Yoruba land, offices are occupied by women such as Iyalode, Olori, Erelu, etc. The office of the Iyalode is not a hereditary position but based on the activeness of a woman and her general acceptability by the people. She was among the council of chiefs of the Ogboni cult and Oyomesi that made up the political administrative system of Yoruba land. The Iyalode represented women interests, engaged in judicial matters among women and also helped in organizing women when the need arose. While the Olori is the eldest wife of the Oba, she works hand in hand with the Iyalode and also saw to ensuring peace and order in the palace and the welfare of other women and children. Another vital role she performed which could never be neglected is that, she was influential in any decisions of the Oba, which shows that she was indirectly a decision maker[9].

Historical studies have unearthed evidence of Iyalodes who were strong and brave, such that they enforced a landmark in the history of women in Nigeria. It was from such Iyalodes that Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti was influenced to be politically active. For instance iyalode Efunsetan Aniwura and Madam Tinubu of Lagos who were both Egba by origin. Their activities would be discussed in relation to the societies they belong, to assert their prominence.

2.1.3 IBADAN: EFUNSETAN ANIWURA

Iyalode Efunsetan of Ibadan was a woman that can never be over looked in the history of Yoruba land. She was originally an Egba woman from Abeokuta where she started off as a trader and later moved to Ibadan. She

[9] Ibid p25

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established a wider network of trade as a middle man between the coast and the hinter land. She traded in goods such as slaves, later in palm oil, ivory, palm kernel, textiles, salt, guns and gun powder. After the abolition of the slave trade, she concentrated more on food stuffs, kolanuts, mats, livestock, bicarbonate of soda for cooking from Ilorin, natron for cosmetics and beads from Bida, she sold and bought within the community and around[10].

Gradually, she moved from the rank of a small scale retailer and joined the guild of whole sellers. Her position became primarily that of a supervisor of a trading empire which was manned by her servants who were largely her domestic slaves[11]. Subsequently, she became a producer, some of her slaves, especially women were weavers using upright loom to weave strong 'kiji pa', which was not only in demand within the country, but in South America, because of its durability[12]. While some of her slaves produce cosmetics, henna, palm kernel and oil and others engaged in large farms for food crop production.

As a result of this wealth and prestige, she began to be noticed in her community. Firstly she was made Mogaji (leader) of her compound, a post normally reserved for men. But after the death of her relative and benefactor, Oluwole, she was made the next Mogaji. Through her dedication and hard work she was able to bring about remarkable changes in the Oluyole's compound, from a small humble dwelling, it was transformed into one of the biggest

[10]Awe, B: "Iyalode Efunsetan" Awe, B(ed) *Nigerian Women in Historical Perspective*. p.63
[11] Ibid. p.64
[12] Ibid. p 65

compounds at Oja'ba[13]. Consequently, her great achievement drew the attention of Ibadan populace and their leaders and she was conferred the highest chieftaincy title of a woman, the Iyalode[14]. In essence she worked herself through to greatness by hard work and dedication.

Significantly, she participated during wars, by giving out guns and gun powder to warriors on credit and also supplied slaves to fight on the battle field before and after she was conferred the Iyalode. This contribution gained her respect in the society she lived. As the Iyalode, she was the spokes person on all women matters, settlement of disputes, seeing to their welfare, etc. She was also part of the town chiefs who met to discuss matters pertaining to the general welfare of the town.

However, her greatness earned her jealousy from her male counterparts as it is also evident today. Are Latosa, Balogun Ajayi Obgboriefon etc saw her as a threat to their authority. This feeling necessitated a rift between her and these people because she refused to supply guns, ammunitions and soldiers for Are Latosa on his war expedition in 1874 as there was stretched increase in credit facilities, which was not paid. As a result, she was relieved of the post of Iyalode and the Otun Iyalode was installed in her stead. With this denouncement, she was expected to commit suicide or go on exile, but she did not oblige to any. This, however, shows the extent of her strength and power. The only alternative left for the conspirators, was for her to be eliminated by

[13] Ibid p 65
[14] Ibid. p 66

murder. This was achieved through the collaboration of some of her slaves as internal allies to the conspirator Kumiyilo and three other slaves took up the responsibility of murdering her. Her life ended in a tragedy. Notwithstanding, she was an industrious, dynamic, strong willed, independent and great woman in Ibadan.

2.1.4 LAGOS: MADAM TINUBU; 1805 - 1887

Madam Tinubu was an Egba by origin but settled in Lagos. A profound decision maker, a resounding prime mover of the abdication of Oba Kosoko from Lagos and the re-installation of Oba Akintoye. During the reign of Oba Dosunmu, when the Europeans wanted to occupy Lagos in 1861, she displayed nationalist spirit to resist European domination, but due to the superiority of Europeans in military strength, she was not able to hold them to ransom. Consequently, she was expelled from Lagos as a result of Consul Campbell's orders.

In 1864, she demonstrated military skills in the battle of the Egba against the Dahomean. She prepared poisoned bean cakes called 'Akara Ogun' for the Dahomean soldiers. This resulted to their death at the battle. Uptil today, she is referred to as 'akara Ogun'. Interestingly, she also dressed like a warrior and took up a post near the Owu gate ready to fight, if it became necessary[15]. In addition, guns and ammunitions used by the Egba fighting forces were supplied by her, to show her solidarity to Egba people which she belonged.

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[15] Matti, U O: Madam Tinubu of Lagos: the rise and demise of a 19th century merchant princess and political activist. 1805- 1887 (B A) University of Ilorin, 1991. p.21

The activities of Madam Tinubu had a direct influence on Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti[16], not only because she was an Egba woman. She was able to influence the abdication of Oba Kosoko of Lagos who was not the rightful Oba to the throne and also resisted against colonial domination that is the conquest and occupation of Lagos. The political activities of Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti, also followed this pattern; abdication of the Alake from Egba land, the resistance against colonial policies and the agitation for national independence.

2.1.5 BENIN: EMOTAN AND IDIA.

In Benin society, the position of woman was said to be obviously discriminatory. Osaren Omorigie opined that the Binis believed that women were the last to be created by God and that they were not original beings, because they were created from men. This was what could have probably led to the subjugation of women in Benin society[17]. Women in Benin were regarded as producers of children and also managers of homes. All these attested to the fact that Benin women exists as biological figures and nothing else. They march through the passage of house training, maintaining and death[18]. This fact is obvious in every society, but that of Benin was more emphatically, as they were not given any rank or title in the society as in the case of other communities discussed. Gladys Iduoze surmised that Benin was a male dominated society, as

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[16] Interview with Prince Adebowale Ogunkehin 23rd July, 2007.
[17] Iduoze, G.E: the changing status of Benin Women from 19th century to the present. (B A) university of Ilorin. 1992. p.16
[18] Ibid. p.17

a result the life of the woman was that of domination, subjugation and generally uneventful.[19]

Despite, the degradation of women in Benin Society. Two women in history could be recounted on their achievements. First, Emotan is remembered in the history of Benin, because, she was able to help Ogun later known as Ewuare The Great in the 15th century to regain the throne from Uwafiokun his younger brother, during this process there was power rift, tension and crises, but with the ascension of Ewuare on the throne, peace and justice was restored. Thus, Benin became great as an empire during his reign. The possibility of this great achievement of Ewuare could be traced to the help and support of Emotan.

Idia, another woman of prominence in Benin, a warrior and leader.[20] She was the mother of Oba Esigie. She learnt her bravely skills from Oba Ozolua, who was also a warrior. Idia was the 'Iya Oba' an office introduced in 1515 and stationed at Uselu to engage in vital political activities. For instance, she influenced the victory achieved by Oba Esigie during the wars fought in Benin, such as Benin-Idah war, Benin -Udo war [21]etc as a result of her military skills and talents.

Apart from these two women who asserted their skills in the administration of Benin, there is the traditional religion office occupied by a woman in Benin that is the post of Iyeye. It was mostly occupied by a wealthy but childless woman who would assist in ceremonies at the palace such as

[19] Ibid. p.19
[20] Ibid. p.21
[21] Ibid. p.23

providing and cooking food for the Oba, but the title conveyed no political significance.

Unlike, the Hausa communities which had female rulers, in Benin, when a female, Adeleye, was to ascend the throne, she was automatically disqualified. She was the eldest child, of Ewuare the great, but because she was found menstruating during the period of installation, evidence claimed that the menstruation lasted for months, and thus disqualified her as Oba, because she could not go through the purification rites. As such, women were generally disqualified as Oba in Benin, no matter the chances they had to become one.

With the introduction of colonialism, women were totally exempted from political participation in Nigeria. Colonialism oppressively exploited the people and the women were most affected. Their political role in the society was made irrelevant.

However, and interestingly at that, the political status of women during the pre colonial era in Nigeria is most favorable compared to that of the western world. The nature of the western societies on the position of woman determined the total seclusion and elimination of women from the political system during colonial rule, in Nigeria and in Africa as a whole. And this has informed the pattern to which post colonial Nigeria inherited. The victimization, oppression, intimidation etc. of women in the political process through violence, assassinations, money politics, godfatherism etc. Thus, in order to address these issues which have brought underdevelopment and retrogression into the society, the UN-decade for women was established to address the issue of gender

inequality in politics, economic sphere and social life. This was in the bid to remove the stigma that has been inflicted on the woman as inferior. Hence the trend to which women have been marginalized in the Nigerian society could be traced to the pre-colonial period. The number of women that occupy political or leadership positions was low compared to their numerical strength. It was that which has unfolded through the years as colonialism further and totally usurped the little political access women had in the society.

CONCLUSION

Women in pre-colonial Nigeria have impacted into their societies one way or the other. They have displayed their political skills according to the demand of their various communities. Southwestern Nigeria as in the case of other communities had shown evidence of prominent women in history such as Moremi, who displayed bravery skills for the survival of her community, Iyalode Efunsetan Aniwura a reknowned woman who had a business empire and also worked herself to greatness through hard work and dedication. In addition, madam Tinubu of Lagos, Emotan, Idia etc. these women affected their societies positively.

This shows that in pre-colonial Nigeria women took up the challenge to impact into their communities. Apart from their socio-economic relevance and contributions to their communities they were also effective in consolidating their communities, resisting against enemy incursion, in essence they contributed politically to their communities. This proved that women are also Nation

builders and therefore can assist the men in the development of their communities.

Thus, it was on this platform Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti was influenced to be politically active for the development and progress of Nigeria. The nature of colonialism which construed the populace (colonized) to servitude and slavery for the benefit of the Metropolis also informed her political activism.

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CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF OLUFUNMILAYO RANSOME-KUTI

3.0 *INTRODUCTION*

Olufunmilayo was a woman of great character and charisma. The purpose of this chapter is to examine her family background and origin and how it had informed the tremendous qualities she possessed. These have been displayed in her activities as a political activist. Thus her family background is very crucial in addressing the abilities and qualities Mrs. Kuti displayed which had made her an icon in the history of Nigeria.

3.1 FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION

3.1.1 ORIGIN AND FAMILY

Mrs Ransome-kuti is from one of the kingdoms in Egbaland known as "Omo Iya Marun" which consisted of Igborro, Kemta, Ake, Imo and Idoku. She was from 'Imo" in Egbaland, because she was married to an 'Imo' husband, while naturally she was from Kemta, that is by birth[1]. She came from the Jibokun family of the Osonsun clan in Agogo[2]

Mrs Kuti's oldest remembered ancestor is traced to Sarah Taiwo that is her paternal great grand mother, who was born in the early 19th C in Erunwon an 'Orile' (homestead) in Egba forest.[3] She was captured and sold into slavery during this period characterized by incessant war fares among the Yorubas. She was

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[1] Interview with Prince Adebowale Ogunkehin *23rd* July, 2007.
[2] Interview with Evangelist David Oluwakayode Omobalogun 25th October, 2008 and Alhaji M.A. Majekodunmi, 29th October 2008
[3] Mba, N.E & Odim- Johnson,C: *For Women and the Nation..... p.*1

among the captives or "slaves" whose ship were seized on the West African Coast and freed during the abolition of the slave trade. Consequently, they were resettled in Freetown a colony for repatriating freed slaves by the British West African Patrol Naval Squadron. She was named Sarah by the Christian Missionaries, but maintained her traditional name Taiwo, which signified that she was a twin. However, the where about of her twin is not known.

Sarah Taiwo eventually got married in Sierra Leone to Sobowale Thomas a Yoruba man whose ancestors could not be traced. He adopted the surname of a missionary as the practice of many converts of that time. Their union produced a son called Ebenezer Sobowale Thomas who is traced to be Olufunmilayo's grand father. Olufumilayo's great grand father died shortly after Ebenezer was born. Thereafter Sarah Taiwo got married again to a man named Jibolu Coker and the marriage produced three children namely, Sowemimo, Olufashabe and Arungbamolu. After sometime in Sierra Leone, the family returned to Nigeria with their children, during the period when most Egba Saros were returning back to their homeland between 1830 and 1880s. They initially settled at Badagry, as it was the custom of Egba Saros to first resettle in Badagry before moving inland. After the death of Jibolu Coker in Badagry, Sarah Taiwo therefore remarried to a third husband named Wicklife, who also adopted the name of an European missionary. This union also produced a girl child named Efunjokun.[4]

Afterwards, she heard about the news of her family in Abeokuta, hence she moved to Abeokuta with all her children from her previous marriages. Eventually,

[4] Ibid p23

Sarah Taiwo died in Abeokuta on April 18, 1874 and a large cenotaph was created to her memory and located on a family land in Abeokuta. All through her life she engaged in trading as a form of occupation[5].

Ebenezer Sobowale Thomas, Sarah Taiwo's first child in her first marriage is the lineage from which Mrs Kuti is linked to. Ebenezer Sobowale Thomas family was the first Christian at Igbogun, the nearest village to their family farm land at Ifo.[6] Ebenezer was a talented carpenter by profession and an Anglican, who built a church called St. Thomas' church on the family farm land at Ifo after the father's name. His first wife died childless. He subsequently got married to Abigail Fakemi from Ilesha who had a son called Daniel Olumuyewa Thomas [7] who was apparently Olufunmilayo's father.

Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti oldest remembered relative from her maternal side was a man from Ilesha named Adeboye, the name of his wife is not known but they had a daughter called Harriet. Harriet on the other hand at a mature age married Isaac Adeosolu an Egba man. They both had a daughter named Lucretia Phyllis Omoyeni Adeosolu[8], who became Olufunmilayo's mother because she got married to Daniel Olumuyewa Thomas.

Both Daniel and Lucreta were literate.[9] They were Western educated, more or less missionary education. At that time education was pari pasu with

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[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid p.24
[7] Interview with David Oluwakayode Omobalogun, 25th October, 2008
[8] Mba, N.E & Odim-Johnson, C: For Women and the Nation. P 25
[9] Akanbi, B.: "Women and Politics: the case of Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti". in Journal of Federal College of Education Women Association, Kano. Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 85.

Christianization. Both husband and wife were devout Anglicans in Abeokuta who got married at St. Jude's church Ikija where Lucretia spent her boarding school life as a maid with a missionary family, Reverend and Mrs Wood[10]. The union between Daniel and Lucretia produced the first two children who both died at infancy (a boy and a girl). They later gave birth to Frances Abigail Olufela Folorunsho Olufunmilayo, born on 25th October, 1900 and Comfort Harriet Oluremi on March 3rd, 1903[11].

However, the insinuation by most literatures that Olufunmilayo was the first child of her parents, who generated the name 'Beere' is not correct she was rather the third child, most apparently the second girl child. It was unfortunate that her sister and brother died at infancy. Thus, the best established fact is that the name 'Beere' was due to her being the first girl admitted into the Abeokuta Grammar School[12] which began the establishment of girl child education in colonial Nigeria.

The inability of Lucretia to give birth to a son afterwards prompted Daniel into taking a second wife. Although despite his strong affirmativeness to Christianity, the African value system of polygamous marriage was still prevalent. Thus, his desire for a male child was strong, a second wife was the alternative. Rebecca Olushade Thomas, sister to one of his worker on the farm was joined in a traditional wedlock with him. This shows the nature of African society for the

[10] Odugbesan, C: "Beere: The Achievement and Contributions of a Brave Nigerian Woman Leader University of Ibadan Library. 1968. p.1

[11] Akanbi, B: Women and Politics..... p.88

[12] Interview withPrince Adebowale Ogunkehin, 23rd July, 2007 and Chief E.O. Shonekan, 23rd October, 2008. Also see Brief Autobiography of Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti (manuscript) University of Ibadan.

preference of a male child over a girl child. Rebecca Olushade Thomas gave birth to seven children; five lived to adulthood while two died at infancy. One of the sons of Daniel was Ebenezer Taiwo Thomas named after his grand father.[13]

The family background or origin of Olufunmilayo is very crucial and dynamic to her life. Her family had an affirmative nature and this is informed in her character, this is a trait that has been passed on to her from generation. It has been examined that Olufunmilayo came from a background of people known as Egba Saros that is freed captives or slaves. This category of people had faced a lot of challenges and hardship in the forest and on the sea. They suffered hunger, harsh weather conditions etc. Their survival despite these challenges had informed on them an assertive character trait, such that they became strong willed, determined and focused. In addition, nationalist spirit was stronger on them because of the passage from captivity to freedom. This character was passed on, from one generation to the other; even Olufunmilayo's children and grandchildren possess such character, for instance, Beko, Fela, etc. Thus, it has been a family trait. This is also obviously evident in her Family 'Oriki' (song of praise of a personality), and did not only depict the appellation of strength, bravery, intelligence etc[14] among the members of her family but also of her character which was displayed in her political activities.

In addition, despite the fact that Daniel Olumuyewa Thomas was a strong and devoted Anglican, this did not prevent him from being an Africanist. During

[13] Mba, N.E & Odim-Johnson,C: For Women and the Nation p.5
[14] See appendix for the full text of the Family Oriki

the closing of the 19th century cultural nationalist movements were springing up in Western Nigeria, this was a reaction to many missionaries denigration of African culture as 'primitive' and 'inferior' to European culture. This cultural nationalism on Olufunmilayo's parents was influenced by Samuel Coker, Daniel Thomas' uncle who was active in the Separatist Church Movement in Lagos. For instance Daniel Thomas along with other African during that time believed that monogamy and polygyny were cultural practices independent of religious affiliation and that polygyny did not violate any law of God.[15] The Separatist Church Movement also spurred an increasing interest in promoting Yoruba language, dressing, use of Yoruba names, etc. This influence on Olufunmilayo's parents despite their strong Anglican affiliation was automatically extended to their children, especially Olufunmilayo which she displayed through out her life.

It is also important to trace her family background to her marriage. In 1925, she got married to Rev. Isreal Oludotun Ransome-Kuti at St. Peter's Church, Ake, Abeokuta blessed with four children, Dolupo born in 1926, Olikoye in 1927, Fela Anikulapo in 1938 and Beko in 1940[16]. Reverend Isreal Ransome-Kuti was born at Gbagura, Abeokuta on 30th April 1891 to the family of Reverend Canon and Mrs. Josiah Jesse Ransome Kuti,[17] a famous Anglican Pastor. Similar to that of his wife, Rev. Isreal Ransome Kuti was the first son of his parent and also the first to be admitted into Abeokuta Grammar School, thus,

[15]Mba, N.E & Odim-Johnson,C: For Women and the Nation *p 25*
[16]Akanbi, B.: "Women and Politics"..... p 85
[17] Reverend Canon Adeniyi, J.S : "The Biography of late Reverend I.O. Ransome Kuti , Principal Abeokuta Grammar School 1932-1954" (manuscript) University of Ibadan Library, 1960

earned him the nickname "Dawodu" as a male[18]. Apparently, both husband and wife had a distinct origin which could also be said informed their future. Prior to their marriage, they had a long span Courtship of about 13 years which laid the foundation for their long years of committed marriage.

3.1.2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Olufunmilayo had a pleasant and secured childhood. She was born and grew up in Abeokuta. She did not come from a wealthy family, but lived a comfortable and respected life. Her parents were respected among the European and African communities.

Daniel Thomas' second wife Rebecca lived at Igbogun with her children at their village farmland while Lucretia, Olufunmilayo's mother lived in Abeokuta with her two daughters. This was in accordance with the traditional Yoruba practice. However, children from both marriages were not separated in any way in their relationships to one another. They were not only cordial but close[19]. The children all referred to their mothers as Mama Igbogun (Rebbecca) and Mama Kemta (Lucreta) according to the place they resided. There was constant visit between the children and mothers most especially during holidays. This fostered a close and committed relationship which helped in forging unity among both families. The idea that this is 'Omo Iyale' (first wife's child) or 'Omo Iyawo" (second wife's child) was not the case, as both women were seen as mothers and the children referred to one another as brothers and sisters.

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[18] Ibid. and Interview with Prince Adebowale Ogunkehin 23rd July, 2007.
[19] Mba, N.E & Odim-Johnson,C: For Women and the Nation. p. 26

In addition, Olufunmilayo was the eldest child among the children and the fact that she was a girl, should have made her irrelevant among the boys who were her half brothers, as the African culture upheld the male child above the female child. Even if they were younger than the girls, they were claimed to be the Head, however, Olufunmilayo was widely respected by her half brothers. She was said to possess characters that are usually associated with men such as assertiveness, daring, cunning, bravery, strength etc.[20] Despite this attitude, as a young girl she never escaped from her domestic responsibilities of cooking, washing, cleaning etc. as it was the claimed domestic chores assigned to girls.

Olufunmilayo and her sister Oluremi spent most of their holidays on the farm at Ifo with their step mother and her children. This went a long way to build a family bond among them. At their young age, they enjoyed riding to a train station near the family farmland and also trekking by foot several miles to the farm. Olufunmilayo was so much fond of these activities that even after she got married, she still paid frequent visits to the farmland at Ifo.

Daniel Olumuyewa Thomas and Lucretia Omoyeni Thomas were devoted Christians and also disciplined parents. Hence, their children were brought up as such. By profession, Lucretia was a dress maker, a profession she learned, through vocational education and a bit of reading for few years as this was what could be obtained for girls during the period. While Daniel Thomas was educated that is went to missionary school in Lagos (Araromi mission) and also was trained as a

[20] Interview with Chief E.O. Shonekan 23rd October, Chief S.O. Sokalu and Alhaji M.A. Majekodunmi, 29th October, 2008.

tailor and Carpenter. His vocation as a Carpenter, made him to rebuild the St. Thomas Church at Ifo, this time with stones which his father had originally constructed and also constructed a two-storey building home with eleven rooms also at Ifo. Apart from this background both husband and wife were traders, they were both trading agents for the British Merchants John Holt, John Horsfield and the United African Company. Lucretia managed their trade in Palm oil, palm kernels and cocoa while Daniel Thomas managed the trade in rice, cloth, nails and gun powder. They had a trading stall in Kemta Township in Abeokuta[21].

However, despite the educational and religious background of Olufunmilayo's parent, they were much rooted in their cultural heritage. As such they promoted their cultural values of speaking the Yoruba language which their children were taught, ate traditional foods. For instance Olufunmilayo so much loved 'bush meat', which was provided at least once a week. They wore traditional as well as western clothing. From all indication they were proud of their African origin as of the privileged status that western education accorded them in the colonial setting[22], and this virtue they passed unto their children.

3.1.3 *EDUCATION*

The strong believe in education motivated the parents to educate their daughters. Despite the fact that at that time education of girls was an uncommon attitude in Nigeria. The education of girls was mainly in domestic education for

[21] Mba, N.E. & Odim-Johnson, C: For Women and the Nation p.27
[22] Ibid

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instance, cooking and sewing but Olufunmilayo's parents had a strong motivation to educate their daughters in the same way the boys were educated.

Olufunmilayo's parents had a strong passion for education. They felt that girls were entitled to it as boys. But, this was not the situation during this period, boys were categorized as the beneficiaries of Missionary education, while it was irrelevant to the girls. This prompted the type of western education established in colonial Africa strictly for boys. However, during the pre-colonial era the indigenous or African system of education was equally provided for both genders.

The missionaries, were the pace setters of colonialism, Western education or rather colonial education that was introduced, was set to have a firm control over the colonies. It was improper to educate girls, this idea was already crystallized in the minds of the people as missionaries who arrived and lived among Nigerians employed women and girls as maids taught them a bit of cookery, sewing and how to read for a few years. While the boys were educated at schools to become school masters, clerks and clergy men.[23] This was the situation in the 19th century and such informed the training or rather education, the parents of Mrs Kuti got. Moreover, Mrs Kuti's parents were not handicapped by such incomplete education they received from the missionaries, rather they were prompted, knowing the value of education, to give sound and standard education to their children despite the fact that they were both girls. The investment in girls' education was seen as a waste both from the people and from the missionaries, because sooner or later they would be married off to their husbands. However, on

[23]Brief Autobiography of Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti (Manuscripts) University of Ibadan Library

the part of Olufunmilayo's parents, the father was vigorously opposed to this and was determined to educate his daughters to the highest possible standard.[24] Thus, her father had to defend his decision to invest in the education of his daughters.[25] It was this determination of the parent to educate their daughters, that spurred the potentials in Olufunmilayo and she became a personality to be reckoned with. She also extended it to her children, and hence, contributed to the country at large.

Olufunmilayo had her primary school education at St John's Church Primary School Igbein in Abeokuta between 1906 and 1913[26]. After this, due to the fact that there were no educational facilities for girls in the secondary schools, her father was faced with the problem of her secondary education. Hence, with the welfare and progress of his daughter at heart, and with the fact that she did excellently in her primary school level, the father, not considering the odds decided to send his daughter to Annie Walsh Girls Grammar School in Sierra Leone. But the father's friend Bishop S.C. Philips discussed with Rev. M.S. Cole the Principal to extend the Abeokuta Grammar School to a class of six girls[27] instead of Daniel Thomas sending his daughter on a distance school programme at her teenage age. With the advised considered, Olufunmilayo became the first girl to be admitted in 1914 into the Abeokuta Grammar School, for secondary education, along with five other girls.[28] This was where she earned the appellation

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Odugbesan, C: "Beere: The Achievement and Contributions……." p 1
[26] Akanbi, B : " Women and Politics……p 85
[27] Odugbesan, C: "Beere: The Achievement and Contributions……p 2
[28] Ibid

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'Beere' and shows that Olufunmilayo, was one of the pacesetters of girls secondary education in Nigeria.

Olufunmilayo, who had the trait of a brilliant scholar, was made a teacher due to lack of teachers for the younger girls between 1917 and 1919 after her junior preceptor examination. The class for the girls was extended, as the number of girls increased to 40. The school was later relocated to Ake also in Abeokuta. She was taking private lessons after school from Rev. Cole to meet up academically. In 1919, she proceeded for further studies in England, where she studied French, Dressmaking, Singing, Music and Millery[29] at the Wincham Hall School for Girls, Lostock Graham, and Cheshire, England. Her study abroad was arranged by her father's cousin Moses Coker. In one of her letters to her husband to be, Rev. I. O Ransome-Kuti . She quoted the words of her father

> My daughter I want you to be a competent lady,
> a helper to any man you may be married to, and to
> know everything about school. Therefore, I am
> sending you to England for three years, you will go
> to school for two years and you will be a boarder,
> you will stay a third year to learn dressmaking ....
> And for one year when you arrived home to Nigeria
> you will teach in the Abeokuta Grammar School, not
> for Revered Cole's sake but for your country's sake[30].

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[29] Ibid

[30] Letter to Isreal Oludotun Ransome Kuti. Olufunmilayo's papers. U.I Library. 25th March, 1919

She returned in 1923 to assume principalship of the Abeokuta Girls School, due to her urge to develop and improve the lot of the women in the society. In addition, she founded the Ladies Club, which was more of a social organization and was later extended to include mothers and elderly women[31] to educate them.

However, it is of utmost importance to examine the educational background of her husband. This will give this research a solid framework, as her husband had a direct influence on her life and activities. He was educated at the Infant schools in Gbagura, Abeokuta from 1896 – 1897, at Saint John's School Suren village 1898 to 1904, CMS Grammar School, Lagos 1905 to 1908, Abeokuta Grammar School July to December 1908 where he completed his secondary education. After his secondary education, he returned to teaching for a while as a junior assistant teacher at the Abeokuta Grammar School and later in 1912 proceeded to Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone for higher education. Thus, he finished his university career in minimum time, in 1914 and hence, returned to Nigeria with the certificates of Bachelor of Arts and Theology.[32] In addition in 1916 he earned his First Class Teachers Certificate, he resumed teaching as assistant teacher from 1916 to 1918 in the CMS Grammar School Lagos. Later he was transferred to Ijebu Ode to become Principal between 1919 and 1931. Hence, he became the youngest Nigerian to become principal of a secondary or Grammar school at the age of 27. At the period when the ability of Nigerians to hold responsible post was seriously in doubt and questioned by the British. In 1940 he

[31] Odugbesan, C: "Beere: The Achievement and Contributions....." P 5
[32] Rev. Canon Adeniyi, J. S: A short Biography of the late Reverend I.O Ransome Kuti.... p.1

obtained a Masters degree at Durham. The educational background of both husband and wife prepared the platform for their activism which they had constructively impacted into the society at large.

3.1.4 MARRIAGE LIFE

On January 20, 1925, Rev. Isreal Olufunmilayo Ransome-kuti and Olufunmilayo Thomas were joined in holy matrimony at the St. Peters Church, Ake. After a long courtship which began in 1912 with a salutation through a mutual friend and lasting through thirteen years and many separations[33]. This solid foundation made their marriage a committed one. On the day of their marriage the new couple moved to Ijebu Ode, a town south east of Abeokuta to start a family of their own.

Rev. I.O. Ransome Kuti and wife moved to Ijebu-Ode, as Olufunmilayo had to leave her teaching job at Abeokuta. Meanwhile Rev. Ransome-Kuti had gained popularity among the Ijebus due to his harmonious activities to bring the Egba and Ijebu people together who were much engulfed in rivalry over the years. One of his pupils commented that the Reverend expended great deal of energy towards this goal and that his candor and broad minded attitude gained the trust and admiration of the people of Ijebu-Ode[34]. After a few years Rev. I.O. and Olufunmilayo Ransome-kuti moved back to Abeokuta when he was transferred back to the Abeokuta Grammar School as Principal.

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[33] Mba, N.E & Odim-Johnson, C : For Women and the Nation... p 33
[34] Ibid p 37

Infact, immediately she got married, she settled down to a family life, in 1926 she gave birth to her first child, a daughter Dolupo, while in1927 she had Olikoye[35]. Between 1927 and 1935 she was very busy with her social work in organizing women to have a voice and also demand for their rights. However, that did not stop her from having more children. In 1935, she had another son who died two weeks after birth. In October 1936, she had a miscarriage in her sixth month of pregnancy, the child was a female, and survived for two days. This experience affected Olufunmilayo's health and thus had to recover fully before she had her other two children who survived, in 1938 and 1940 she gave birth to Fela and Bekolari respectively.

In essence, her dramatic activities in the public sphere did not hamper her desire to raise children and with the disappointments on the death of her two Children, she was committed in having more children. This shows her love for children and thus did not see them as a stumbling block to her career. Rearing children takes great commitment of time, energy and responsibility, that alone is enough to keep her busy without public engagements.

Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti was a woman who truly believed and upheld love as the epitome of marriage. She and her husband were deeply in love with each other, the more reason why they could wait for each other during their years of courtship. In one of her letters to her husband to be, when she was in England studying, evidently shows:

My heart has been so much filled of you that I

[35] Interview with Prince Adebowale Ogunkehin, 23rd July, 2007

could scarcely part with your portrait for a
good two days---- I cannot and I must not
change papa's plans, I must do whatever he
tells me, so that I may have his blessings.
My darling I can not force you to wait for me,
for you are now old enough to have a partner,
but how sad it will be at this age of our match
to break. Never shall I forget you, the man to whom
I first gave my heart[36].

In order to really show that this was true love for her husband, she decided not to be selfish in keeping him for herself. But suggested he looked for another partner, if he could not wait for her because he was nine years older than her. Therefore, this long wait for each other to complete her education abroad shows that they really loved each other and both were committed to education. Hence they had the same heart and focus about life. Education is the bedrock of progress and this they pursued with love. She admitted that they did not get married until thirteen years later.

> How both of us kept our heads during that interval
> of thirteen years was due in part to his unending
> desire for higher education and also to the influence
> my parents exerted on me - - - perhaps the younger
> generation would find this long waiting unendurable, we endured[37].

[36] Letter of Olufunmilayo to Rev. I.O Ransome Kuti 25th March, 1919 (manuscripts) U.I.

This escalating quality was transferred to their children, who have seen their parents as role models. They were highly educated and grew up loyal to their parents out of the love they had for them.

Olufunmilayo was a prudent woman. She was industrious and parsimonious, she engaged in a number of small-scale trading ventures and business scheme, sold eggs and other farm produce gotten from her family farmland at Ifo. And also acted as a retail agent for the Olubadan when he was manufacturing mineral waters in the 1930s. She did this along with her teaching profession. Despite these business engagements which she could have lived flamboyantly. She was very prudent in whatever she did on issues that deals with finance. Thus she eschewed showy materialism. Both the husband and the wife were committed to educating their children, rather than amassing wealth[38] such that, they did not buy a car. Reverend Ransome-kuti had been riding a motorized bike while Olufunmilayo rode a bicycle. Until 1935 when they decided to send money to their friend in England Ladipo Solanke to purchase a car. The first car he sent was very bad to the extent they could not use it. It could be said that the car was bought based on their limited resources. Thus, by July 1936, another money was sent and this time Ladipo Solanke was told to be careful in selecting the car by checking the conditions of the brakes, plugs, clutch etc[39]. .Apparently,

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[37]Mba, N.E. & Odim- Johnson, C: For Women ..... p 33
[38] Interview with Evangelist David Oluwakayode Omobalogun. 25th October, 2008.
[39] Letter of Olufunmilayo to Ladipo Solanke (manuscript) U.I library. 1936

their purchase of a car at that time, made Olufunmilayo to be the first woman to drive a car in Nigeria[40].

Moreover, the family owned many plots of land and also a building which was used by Olufunmilayo as a school, established after her husband's death in 1955. She was also careful in spending. She often kept record of any financial dealings, such that when she was the treasurer of the Jibolu – Taiwo – Coker family Union, it was said that anything that got into her purse does not get out, not that she was greedy but did not encourage wasteful spending. For instance she was particular of any financial losses, noting in her diary in June, 1946, that a student broke an egg and half bag of grain was missing,[41] this posits that she was very meticulous about little things and therefore not carefree.

Moreso Olufunmilayo Ransome-kuti was a disciplined woman and mother, this attitude was exhibited not only to her children, but also to her students[42]. The Abeokuta Grammar School served as the family's home until the husband died in 1955. Abeokuta Grammar School was described as a toughening school, a training ground for later survival in life[43] because of all round the clock presence of the Kutis. The students including their children were expected to be disciplined. In every classroom was displayed "my good name is greater than my books", so learning academic skills was not the major pursuit of the Kuti, but also being morally upright and responsible. The Ransome-Kuti's were strict disciplinarian

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[40] Interview with M r J.A Coker 4th November, 2008 and Prince Kola Adewale 6th November, 2008
[41] Mba, N.E. & Odim- Johnson, C: *For Women* .....
[42] Interview with Mr. A Abati and Chief S.O Sokalu 4th November, 2008
[43] Interview with Evangelist David Oluwakayode Omobalogun 25th October, 2008

who believed in corporal punishment.[44] Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti ensured that all the students in the school were treated as her children, there was no discrimination between her children and the students. All the children including the boys were mandated to do domestic chores e.g. cooking, baking, and sweeping etc which was claimed to be solely a girl's activity. The Ransome-Kuti's and their children ate the same type of food with the student boarders of the Abeokuta Grammar School who were about a hundred students.[45]

The frequent involvement of Mrs. Kuti political activities did not prevent her from supervising her children and students. They show disappointments when any of their children faltered in their studies and also were committed to them being well educated. All the Ransome Kuti's children studied abroad.[46] Despite, the frequent travels of her husband, she normally takes full charge of both the school and home, thus their roles as parents became complimentary and mutual.

Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti was a true African woman who believed in upholding the African virtue. For instance, although, in her early years she always appeared in European dresses, used imported dyes and perfumes, as well as cosmetic etc, but at the height of women's demonstrations in the 1940s she abandoned all western clothing and wore traditional ones, to show to the market women that she was just like them. Interestingly, during her study in England she dropped her European names Frances and Abigail and cleaved solely to her traditional name Olufunmilayo which she was called throughout her life and till

[44] Ibid
[45] Ibid
[46] Ibid

date. She spoke Yoruba at home and in public places and also taught her children the Yoruba language, unlike most people, who would rather teach their children the English language than the indigenous language. She however disagrees with some African or Nigerian value system of kneeling down or prostrating to greet elderly ones. She and her husband disallowed their children or students to greet them by kneeling down or prostrating and they also did not do the same.

Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti's political involvement did not clash with her fight for women's equality. She was a committed wife to her husband, and in the same way received her husband's full support in her political activities. During her meetings with the women, she preached and counseled them to be good to their husbands that they should be more tolerant and even forgo temporarily their own personal interests for those of their husbands[47]. She also enjoined women to be helpmates to their husbands in constructing the nation.

Apparently, Olufunmilayo was a bossy woman, whose say was always final in every matter. This is evidently seen as she controlled the life of her children. She compelled them to do as she pleases. For instance, her bossy attitude was asserted on the Ashimores in England who took in Frances (Dolupo's daughter) so as to enable Dolupo continue with her studies when she had a child out of wedlock. Dolupo refused to marry Dapo (Frances father) on the account that he was a married man. Frances admitted that the Ashimores found Olufunmilayo intimidating and called the shots with the Ashimores about her care even more so than her mother. One of such was that she demanded that on no

[47] Soyinka, W: *Ake: The years of childhood*. vintage, New York 1981 p. 69

account should the Ashimores allow Frances' father access to her[48] Consequently Frances did not meet her father until she was a teenager. Olikoye also admitted that he tells his wife to always leave the room when his mother is displaying her bossy attitude. More so Sandra Smith, a close associate of Fela, admitted that "Fela's Mama did not take a shit.[49] This character trait was also exhibited in her political activity as her leadership role in women the organization was unchallenged. She was president of the AWU, NWU and FNWS at the same time and none of the other women were given the chance to occupy the leadership positions. This shows an autocratic principle evident in her character.

However, from the above it seems as if the Ransome-kutis family was free from problems and challenges which is visible in every family or marriage. Their family was not an exception, as the children and students of the Ransome-kuti's figured out some instances, when Rev. I.O. Ransome kuti had problems and this was seen when both parent decided to eat separately and there seemed to be an air of coolness between them[50] but they never argued or quarrel publicly. The only time both couples were seen arguing was when the true parentage of Beko was doubted by Reverend I.O. Ransome Kuti. At this period Olufunmilayo was always traveling for one event or the other at the height of her political career, consequently she became pregnant and her husband declared that the pregnancy was not his. Olufunmilayo on her part claimed that the pregnancy was his, thus

[48] Ibid p.53
[49] Mba, N.E. & Odim-Johnson C: For Women……p 56
[50] Interview with Evangelist David Oluwakayode Omobalogun 25th October, 2008

this heated argument generated the name Bekolari which means it is not so.[51] The children admitted that due to the frequent travels of their mother as a result of her political commitments, they did not enjoy intimate relationship with her during their childhood years. But Fela admitted that he usually followed her to women organization meetings and campaign meetings to hear her talk and discuss[52]. This could be said to have informed his consciousness as an activist. Bekolari was also influenced by the political activities of his mother. He became a foremost human rights activist until his death in 2006.

Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti received help in of the integration of her home life with that of her school when ever she was away on political engagements. Some of this help she got from her husband's younger sister, who lived with them. She took up the responsibility of taking care of the children while she was away. Her husband was very supportive and understanding and also oversees her school[53]. Their marriage was a complimentary union built on honest communication, mutual support and deep respect, and importantly equity. These qualities of their marital relationships breeded and influenced Olufumilayo's political ambition. In an interview, before her death, Olufunmilayo admitted about her late husband that

> He was a fine man, hardworking, understanding and cooperative, He was a woman's man, he hated women being exploited. Many times's he was sent

[51] Interview with Chief E.O. Shonekan 23rd October, 2008
[52] Mba, N.E. & Odim-Johnson C: For Women.....p. 51
[53] Interview with Evangelist David Oluwakayode Omobalogun 25th October, 2008

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for and told to come and see what your wife is doing,

O! He merely smiled and told them to leave me alone

as I had my own mind. He never went against anything I did.[54]

Therefore, the Ransome Kuti's marriage looms large as a factor in influencing and encouraging the increasing political awareness of Olufunmilayo. Her personal characters which were exhibited in her marriage also informed her public persona.

3.2 OLUFUNMILAYO AS AN EDUCATIONIST

The genesis of her career as an educationist started when she was appointed as a teacher, while still a student at the Abeokuta Grammar School between 1917 and 1919 at that period she was barely eighteen years old. Olufunmilayo was a good student, intelligent and committed to education. She was thus chosen to teach the younger girls. In turn, she received her own instruction after school from the Principal Rev. M.S. Cole. This arrangement was in response to the expanding girls classes which rose from a class of six girls to about forty. A new class room had to be constructed to address this issue and a teacher had to be put in charge, thus Olufunmilayo admitted that

The principal arranged with my father that

I would be teaching the girls and he would

teach me after school to continue my studies[55].

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[54] Mba, N.E. & Odim-Johnson C: For Women..... p.43
[55] Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti Hand written Memoir U.I Library.

In 1919, she furthered her education in England, through the assistance of her uncle Moses Coker. On her return to Abeokuta in 1922, she resumed her teaching profession at the Abeokuta Grammar School. Consequently in 1923, she was named the head teacher of the girls' branch of the Abeokuta Grammar School. As a committed and hardworking teacher, she taught algebra, drawing, English, geometry, and Latin. To teach each of these subjects takes a whole deal of effort, because it is tedious. Moreover there were no enough teachers to teach these subjects, which was the more reason why she had to teach these subjects alone. Her commitment to teaching informed and influenced her teaching profession.

Her teaching profession did not wane after she got married in 1925. She moved with her husband to Ijebu-Ode where he was made Principal. At Ijebu Ode, she decided to assist the school as an unpaid 'help' to teach the students, until 1928, when she founded a kindergarten class known as Mrs. Kuti's class at the premises of the Grammar school at Ijebu Ode. The class was for four and five years old children, so as to prepare them for the primary level. The class began with nine pupils[56] and expanded at a constant rate. The class became well known and widely respected in the town. It was certainly one of the pioneering preschool classes in Nigeria. The subsequent transfer of her husband back to Abeokuta as the principal of the Abeokuta Grammar School in 1931, did not affect her desire and passion in the teaching profession. In Abeokuta, she began another kindergarten class, while that of Ijebu Ode was left for the Grammar School but

[56] Odugbesan, C: "Beere: The Achievement and Contributions.....p 3

only existed for few years[57]. On her return to Abeokuta in 1932, Olufunmilayo immediately earmarked two rooms in the new school building for use as Mrs. Kuti's class. Subsequently, as a result of her desire for education, she did not limit her self to the kindergarten class. She later wrote to the Nigerian Department of Education to grant her the approval to establish a primary school. The approval was given to her to run her own primary school.[58] Her desire for establishing her own school was an attempt to address the pressing issues on the lack of enough educational facilities in the country especially for the girls. Thus, her efforts in establishing a school laid the foundation for the establishment of private schools in the country. Moreover her activities informed other women to become proprietor of schools and contribute to the development of education in the country especially girl child education, for instance Mrs.Charlotte Olajumoke Obasa who was also interested in women, did a great deal in promoting their welfare and championing their interest. She inspired the formation of Caxton House School for girls. The school contributed substantially to female education during its period of existence.[59] In addition, Lady Oyinkan Abayomi, established the Girls Guide Association in Nigeria, this took a cue from the already existed Boys Scout. She also formed the British West Africa Education Girls club which later became the Ladies Progressive Club (LPC) this was in the bid to further the cause of female education. She also pursued the formation of the Queen's College

[57] Interview with Evangelist David Oluwakayode Omobalogun 25th October, 2008
[58] Odugbesan, C: "Beere: The Achievement and Contributions....." P 3
[59] Olusanya, G.O "Charlotte Olajumoke Obasa" Awe, B(ed) *Nigeria women in Historical perspective*. Sankore, Lagos, 1992. p. 116

in 1927[60]. Wuraola Esan in 1944 established Ibadan People's Girls Grammar School. In 1948, Ogunlesi, T founded the Molete Girls' Home School, while Alhaja Humani Alaga in 1964 founded the first school for Muslim girls in Ibadan.

In 1955, after the death of her husband, she founded an evening secondary school called Reverend Kuti's Memorial Evening School which consequently became Reverend Kuti's Memorial Grammar School in 1962 and exists till date[61]. Importantly her children attended these schools especially, the Mrs Kuti's Class which later became Mrs. Kuti's School. There she was able to instill academic discipline on them, which helped them to establish a solid academic foundation. However, her educational responsibilities were not limited to the establishment of schools. She was very active in promoting and demanding more educational facilities from the colonial government. She was among the charter members of the Nigerian Union of Teachers that was established by her husband along with others. The formation of the NUT in 1931 was through the affiliation of the Lagos Union of Teachers with the Association of Headmasters of Ijebu school, (AHIS) one of the earliest associations of teachers in Nigeria, formed by Reverend I.O. Ransome Kuti. Thus the Reverend played a prominent role in the establishment of the union, and served as its president from 1931 to 1955 when he retired[62].

The involvement of Reverend Kuti in the educational development of Nigeria served as a stimulus for Olufunmilayo to be actively involved. She served

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[60] Odim Johnson, C: "Lady Oyinkan Abayomi" Awe, B (ed) *Nigerian women in Historical perspective*. Sankore, p.55

[61] Interview with Evangelist David Oluwakayode Omobalogun 25th October, Chief E.O. Shonekan 23rd October, and Alhaji M.A. Majekodunmi.29th October, 2008.

[62] Interview Evangelist David Oluwakayode Omobalogun 25th October, 2008.

as the NUT's representative on the Western Provinces Regional Board of Education and in 1949, she was among the three NUT representatives on the Central Board of Education of Nigeria. She was also a member of the Board's Sub-committee charged with developing a plan for technical education for girls[63]. She advocated for equality in the educational monetary allowance between men and women pointing out that women too had dependents to take care of[64].

Thus, from 1923 to 1976, Mrs Kuti invested over 56 years in active educational service. As a result of her immense contribution to education, she was conferred an honorary Doctorate degree by the University of Ibadan in the 1960's. Moreso, because her husband was among the advocates for the establishment of the University of Ibadan in the Elliot's Commission of 1948[65]. The achievements of Mrs. Olufunmilayo in the educational development of Nigeria were due to the tremendous support of Reverend I.O. Kuti who was a critical factor in supporting her career as a renowned educationist.

The double task of focusing on a career and taking care of the family was the utmost responsibility of Mrs. Kuti who was able to balance the two[66]. The educational legacy she left behind influenced her children, who became people to be reckoned with in the society. Miss Dolupo Kuti, was a retired nursing sister, Professor Olikoye Kuti; a Pediatrician (Former Minister of Health) who introduced Primary Health Care into the Health service sector which has become

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[63] Mba, N.E & Odim Johnson C: *For Women* p.46
[64]Odugbesan, C: Beere: The Achievement and Contributions.....p.9
[65] Simola, R: "The construction of a Nigerian Nationalists and Feminist" Nordic Journal of African Studies. Vol8, No1, 1999. p 111
[66] Interview with Evangelist David Oluwakayode Omobalogun 25th October, 2008

beneficial to the Nigerian masses. Fela Anikulapo Kuti a renowned Nigerian musician and activist and Dr. Beko Kuti a Medical practitioner as well as a human right activist[67]. They were able to contribute their quota in the development of the nation and to uplift the sufferings of the masses.

3.3 OLUFUNMILAYO AS A PHILANTROPIST

Olufunmilayo was also concerned with the welfare of the less privileged. It was in this that the seed of positive activism began to develop and this grew into active political participation. Her political activities will be the major concern of the next chapter.

Out of her concern for people especially the women and girls. Olufunmilayo, in 1923, organized a ladies club in Abeokuta and later in Ijebu Ode in the late 1920s. In 1932 when she finally returned to Abeokuta she continued with the mission. A small organization to teach singing, handicrafts and cooking to the daughters of the elite mostly middle class was founded by her. It primarily offered "self improvement" instruction with a goal of creating fairly traditional, Christian, well-educated wives. This was in the bid to empower them with skills so that they will not be a total dependant on their husbands. The club was also committed to civic and community related projects such as organizing youths of both sexes for picnics, games, lectures and education.[68] In 1944, it incorporated into it market women. Olufunmilayo was approached by an old friend and former student who introduced her to a market woman, who told Olufunmilayo about her

[67] Interview with Chief E.O. Shonekan 23rd October 2008
[68] Odugbesan, C: "Beere: The Achievement and Contributions....." P 4

great desire to learn how to read.[69] Secondly, Olufunmilayo was inspired by another friend who held her hymnal book upside down in the church because she could not read, thus she undertook to teach these women to read. The establishment of the Ladies Club, the Abeokuta Women Union which later became the Nigeria Women Union was set to educate the illiterate market women.. The women association, incorporated into it large number of illiterate market women who were engaged in literacy classes to help in raising the standard of womanhood in Abeokuta --- to help in encouraging learning among the adults and thereby wipe out illiteracy[70]. Along with the literacy classes, sewing, handicraft, baking etc. were vocational courses taught.

The efforts put in place by Mrs. Kuti to educate the illiterate market women, so that they will be empowered to know their rights and relevance in the society, which is the cardinal of progress and development, made the women crave their loyalty and solidarity to her during the demand for the abdication of the Alake, removal of taxation on women and also the pursue for active female representation in the Sole Native Authority council[71]. Her authority however was never questioned. The combined effort of the educated elite and illiterate market women gave the organization a radical and revolutionary front. While Olufunmilayo on her part was highly radical and aggressive to issues that concerns the country most especially the women. She was described as a 'Lioness' an adjective that connote strength and energy. She never gave up in her

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[69] Ibid p 5
[70] Constitution of the Abeokuta Ladies Club U.I library 1932
[71] Interview with Prince Adebowale Ogunkehin 23rd July 2007.

fight, an activist with a take charge personality a leader of the people and therefore developed confrontational activist tactics, which was seen in the scenario that led to the abdication of the Alake Ademola II in 1948. Mrs Kuti discovered that, there was a wide gap between the educated women and the suffering illiterate market women and the plight of women generally.

> Some educated women never knew the hardship
>
> of paying tax being clergy men's wives[72]

The market women were hard hit by the colonial system. Thus, she decided to take up the responsibility, to be their spokes person in expressing their grievances to the colonial authorities. She was able to gain access to the market women, who became incorporated into the ladies Club and were empowered through adult education classes. Her two eldest children Dolu and Kove as well as Wole Soyinka (their cousin) were recruited as tutors in the literacy classes including Eniola Soyinka, Wole's mother.[73] Wole Soyinka admitted that

> The movement … began over cups of tea and a sandwich
>
> to resolve the problem of newly weds who lacked the
>
> necessary social graces was becoming popular ….
>
> It became all tangled up in the move to put an end to
>
> the role of white men in the country.[74]

The women Association meetings were held at the Kuti's living quarters which served as their headquarters.

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[72]Odugbesan, C: "Beere:The Achievement and Contributions……" P 5
[73] Soyinka, W: *Ake* p181
[74] Ibid p. 199-200

Hence, with this link Mrs Kuti was able to know the plight of the unfortunate, oppressed and exploited market women, who could not express themselves. Mrs Kuti was a trader, teacher, political activist, wife and mother. She rejected some Yoruba and western ideals that construed women to second class citizens, marginalization of the poor, from the benefits of citizenship or upheld ethnicity or race as legitimate criteria for assigning rights[75].

Due to her involvement in the NUT, she also focused on addressing the plight of womanhood by ensuring gender equality. Thus, she urged the NUT to see to it that more women attended its annual conferences with the hope that, the new legislators would do something to improve Nigerian womanhood. In addition to promoting and advocating for the right of women, in order to effectively pursue Olufunmilayo insisted the use of Yoruba dressings, Yoruba names and Yoruba language to express their plight, which was aimed at making the dominant market and illiterate women have a sense of belonging to the association. This example, she laid and other women followed suit, due to the racial stigmatization she received while studying in England. Olufumilayo gave her children solely Yoruba names, not because she was racially or ethnically inclined but as a passion for patriotism which was exhibited in her political philosophies. Years before her death, she changed the name Ransome to Anikulapo[76] which her son Fela also adopted.

[75] Interview with Chief E.O Shonekan and Alhaji M.A Majekodunmi 23rd and 29th October, 2008 respectively.
[76] Interview with Prince Adebowale Ogunkehin 23rd July, 2007

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In no time, her union began to tilt towards a more-defined focus which gave rise to the Abeokuta Women Union. This was in the bid to incorporate larger membership of women old and young, literate and illiterate, market women and elite women etc. In addition the AWU established community projects such as a weaving corporation, maternity and child welfare clinic and continued with the conduct of literacy classes.[77]

Mrs Olufunmilayo Kuti was able to mobilize women cognitively by being involved in their problems. Her close connection with the women made her aware of their predicament as they were adversely affected with food control policy of the colonial government[78]. The women were the major participants in trade in South-western Nigeria. She admitted that from this small organization

> I learnt that there was food control which was bad to the extent that you were not to eat rice which you planted on your farm, until the government quota was complete[79].

There was the control of transportation of food from Abeokuta to Lagos or Ibadan, such that barriers were erected at places like Ota and Illugun. The law was that women should not transfer food like gari, rice, yam, or cassava

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[77] Little: *West Africa Urbanization* pp127-128
[78] Odugbesan, C: "Beere: The Achievement and Contributions……p 5
[79] Ibid

flour to the capitals.[80] Those who smuggled the food stuffs, and were caught, had their goods confiscated and sent to the chief without penny compensation. At the same time the confiscated goods were sold at exorbitant prices by the chiefs, higher than the actual price in the market. A publication was made by the ladies club in the Daily Service Newspaper dated November 12, 1945 to protest against the confiscation of rice.

> We the members of the Abeokuta Ladies Club on behalf of all Egba women appeal to the press of Nigeria to help to bring the seriousness of the position of the market women to the attention of the authorities before it is too late
>
> Within a week of this publication the confiscation of rice was annulled.

The women were also intimidated by the Alake's men who went to the market and took food stuff for little money. For instance nine pence was sometimes paid for a fowl no matter how big it was. [81]This discriminate act was always reported to the ruler, who was never indifferent about the actions of his men. At the same time, the Second World War was raving hard on the people and the payment of the poll tax was compulsory for every market woman. This unbearing and overburdened situation, spurred a demonstration by the women led by Mrs Kuti in 1944. About 54 women were sentenced to three months imprisonment among them were pregnant women, some with babies and some

[80] Ibid
[81] Ibid

were old. They were placed in Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ijebu-Ode, Ife and Ilesha prisons. The women demanded the removal of all economic barriers. They were fearless of the victimization meted on them as their struggle continued till 1945 when the Resident announced that all food control was removed.[82] As a result of the abolition of food control, the women were able to buy and sell food stuff freely and the transportation of food was also easy to many parts of Nigeria. The farmers could also plant, reap and sell their farm products freely and happily.[83]

The Union also addressed the dignity of womanhood stating that women beaten by their husbands should be reported to the organization which would obtain necessary police or legal assistance. Thus, with this threat, the women had their dignity and confidence restored and they could claim their rights from their husbands without being persecuted, while their husbands in turn developed some respect for their wives.[84]

Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransome-kuti was able to articulate the problems of the women to promote gender equality and also demand for their rights. She was able to achieve this by empowering the women, especially the illiterate market women educationally, through the establishment of literacy classes. However, more of her activities in alleviating the plight of the women and also the masses in general which tilted her activities to a defined political front is the discourse of the next chapter.

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[82] Ibid
[83] Brief Autobiography of.....
[84] Odugbesan, C: " Beere: The Achievement and Contributions..... p 5

CONCLUSION

The origin and family background of Olufunmilayo Ransome-kuti was a critical factor that influenced her activities. Her tremendous achievement in the society at large cannot be separated from her family background. Such as the spirit of positive activism deposited in the Egba Saro which her family lineage was traced to. The 'Ex-slaves" who despite the challenges they went through, harsh weather conditions, sea tumult, during their enroute to Sierra Leone, where freed 'slaves' were repatriated, gave rise to an assertive and affirmative consciousness in these set of people. Thus made their lineage distinct from others and it was from one of such lineages Olufunmilayo hailed.

Another contributing factor to her vivid development as an activist is traced to the assertive influence that her husband Reverend Isreal O. Ransome-kuti had on her. His educational and political involvement also went a long way to mould a dynamic activist to be constructive in her ambition. His mutual support and understanding created a conducive atmosphere for her to pursue her career and also created the platform for her achievements as their relationship was described as thus "She the firebrand, he the rock."

Another contributing factor is education. It is a wheel to and for progress. Daniel Thomas (Olufunmilayo's father), a disciplinarian, saw education as an important tool for progress, and thus encouraged his daughters to be educated. Mrs. Olufunmilayo Kuti's educational background served as bedrock to her achievements.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLITICAL CAREER OF OLUFUNMILAYO RANSOME-KUTI

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to examine, the political activities of Mrs Kuti how it affected the country at large and to highlight her role in the political development of the country. It should be noted that she was not the only woman to be actively involved in politics in Nigeria, but a woman who was among the first to be involved in politics in modern Nigeria. She laid the legacy of women's participation in politics by contesting in elective positions and also the first to organize and establish women organizations, which were not only inclined to social and economic matters, but also to politics. Mrs Kuti was a voice to be reckoned with in Nigeria's struggle for independence via her involvement in political parties.

4.1 THE BEGINNING OF HER POLITICAL CONCIOUSNESS AND ACTIVISM IN POLITICS

The seed of positive activism has been revealing in the life of Olufunmilayo right from the early years of her life which was the desire to be responsible in alleviating the problems of people around her. For instance when there was under staffing of the Girls Grammar School she volunteered to be a student teacher between 1916 and 1918 an ambition encouraged by her father, who saw it necessary for girl child education. In addition, on her return from studying abroad, she established the ladies clubs which later

metamorphosed into the Abeokuta Women Union and later Nigerian Women Union. These organizations were set to mobilize women by empowering them educationally and vocationally. For instance, apart from educating the illiterate market women, such as the Adult literacy classes, vocations like sewing, baking etc were taught. Importantly, the association was also geared towards expressing the grievances of the women against colonial policies that had hampered their status. Women were particularly disenfranchised as the process of indirect rule rendered them invisible in the governing process as the office of the Iyalode was rendered irrelevant and challenged their decision making roles in the economy, particularly in the distributive or trading sector. Where they had previously been very important in decision making, such as market location, days and prices of commodities and services [1]

The combination of both literate and illiterate women gave it a radical front. Moreover, all these women distinguished themselves as traditional women, they communicated in Yoruba and also in their way of dressing, and these were in order to identify with indigenous culture. Wole Soyinka described them as

> Wrapper wearers' who descended upon the
> Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti residence at the
> Abeokuta Grammar School for the Women's meetings.
> Women of every occupation, the cloth dyers,

[1] Mba, N.E & Odim Johnson, C: For Women and the Nation p.68

weavers, baskets maker and the usual petty traders
of the markets. They arrived in ones, twos, in groups,
they came from near and distant compounds, town sectors
and far villages, whose names I never heard. They smelt
the sweat of the journey, of dyes, of dried fish, yam flour,
of laterite and the coconut oil of their plaits. Some
were tattooed on arms and legs, with aca-trices on their faces.
In addition to the head tie, their shawls, neatly folded,
were placed lightly on their heads for additional protection
from the sun[2].

These women came together under the leadership of Olufunmilayo to express their grievances against the colonial government. This goes a long way to show that Olufunmilayo identified herself with the grassroots, their plights and conditions[3]. She gave the association a radical ferment.

In the attempt to pursue a united front among the women who were from different background, she admonished them that no member of the union should regard herself better than the others, all must move freely and happily together[4] so that they would be able to achieve their aims. The Abeokuta women union adopted the Motto of unity, cooperation and selfless service. The objectives of the Union was Democracy in order to defend protect,

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[2] Soyinka, W: *Ake: the Years of childhood*. Vintage, New York, 1987. p185
[3] Interview with Evangelist David Oluwakayode Omobalogun 25th October, 2008. and Jibril, S 2nd November, 2008
[4] Egba Women Union Contitution see Appendix

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preserve and promote social, economic and political rights and interest of women. And to cooperate with all organization seeking and fighting genuinely and selflessly for the economic, political freedom and independence of the people[5].

The women Association, was set to address the issue of taxation on women, the abdication of the Alake due to his corrupt and oppressive practices, especially against women[6]. The elimination of the Sole Native authority system, which was a foreign institution, a tool used to perpetuate the oppression and exploitation of the masses, and a demand for a more representative system of government which will include the franchise for women and their representation in government matters. The establishment of the women association that is the Ladies club which later had a more defined focus that is the Abeokuta Women Union created the platform on which Olufunmilayo was politically active.

However, the involvement of Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti in politics cannot be divorced from the political activities of Reverend I.O. Ransome-Kuti because of his tremendeous support of her active involvement in the public sphere. He was seen as a staunch supporter of his wife, his political acumen and experience were a hidden force in the women's struggle. This was seen in the support of the Majeobaje society, one of the men's groups where

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[5] Ibid

[6] Interview with Evangelist David Oluwakayode Omobalogun and Alhaji M.A Majekodunmi 25th and 29th October 2008 respectively.

Reverend I.O. Ransome-Kuti was its president, lend their support for the abdication of the Alake.

In addition, her husband's involvement in several associations such as the Association of Principals of Independent Schools (with the acronym AIONIAN), the Association of Headmasters in Ijebu Schools (AHIS)[7] which he was a founding and active member, invariably created the platform for their involvement in politics. These associations were set to address political issues part from participating directly in educational decisions. Thus, the associations were nationalistic in orientation, and Rev. Ransome-Kuti was the president of both organizations.

In 1931, Rev. I.O. Ransome-Kuti was also among the founders of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) a mouth piece organization for teachers to dialogue and express their grievances to the colonial government.[8] Not only on educational matters, but also to serve as a bridge between the people and the colonial government as it often strove for cordial relations with the colonial government even while it sought to change British policy[9]. Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti was an active member of these organizations and attended their meetings alongside with her husband. Although, she had a mindset of her own in politics.

In the mid 1920s, the first political organization that the Ransome-Kuti's belonged to was the West African Student Union (WASU) which was

[7] Mba, N. E & Odim-johnson, C : For Women and the Nation P. 45
[8] Rev. Canon Adeniyi, J S: A short Biography of.....p 2
[9] Ibid

formed in London in 1925 by Ladipo Solanke, a close friend of the Ransome-Kutis. They became the founding members of the WASU in Nigeria, as the organization was nationalist and anti-colonialist in orientation. The Ransome-Kutis were very active in the activities of the organization, in expressing the demands of the people for colonial reform. They were also active in raising funds for the organization both in Ijebu Ode and later in Abeokuta. For instance, in November 1936, Abeokuta celebrated WASU week, during which pansies were sold as a WASU fund raiser, not only did the pansies provide money for the student union, but wearing them was a sign of support for the organization[10].

In July 1939, he encouraged the formation of the Nigerian Union of Students, (NUS) which later developed into a Nationalist and political organization that is the National Council of Nigeria and the Camerouns (NCNC) where he was a pioneering member.[11] In 1943, he was appointed the only Nigerian member of the Elliot's Commission set up by the British government to report on higher education in British West Africa[12]. One of the recommendations made was the establishment of the University of Ibadan, a decision strongly pioneered by Rev. I.O. Ransome-Kuti. He represented Abeokuta and then Western Nigerian at the constitutional conference for the McPherson Constitution. It should therefore be noted that he was a patriot

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[10] Mba, N.E & Odim –Johnson: *For Women and the Nation*.....p 50
[11] Ibid p 47.
[12] Rev. Canon Adeniyi, J.S. "A Short biography of Late Rev. I.O. Ransome-Kuti M.A.T.H: Principal Abeokuta Grammar School, 1932-1954". 1960. p 2

who played a very prominent part in Abeokuta politics in the late forties[13] and in the affairs of the nation at large. His achievement influenced his wife tremendously. Nina Mba posited that this background and marriage contributed substantially to the development of Mrs Kuti's political consciousness[14] both husband and wife shared the same moral and political connections.

The involvement of Mrs Kuti along with her husband in WASU, NUT and the NCNC provided a politicizing ferment and thus her political consciousness matured and became more radical beyond the emancipation of women and their rights. She was a nationalist, seeking for the overthrow of colonial rule as well as a politician, actively participating in the political process in Nigeria during her time.

With these developments, Mrs Kuti affiliated herself with the suffering of the market women to fight for their rights against colonial economic policies, thus, her social activities began to tilt towards political activities. Mrs Kuti played a tremendous role in the politics of Abeokuta and Nigeria which did not only affect the lives of women positively but the whole people of the country.

4.2 ABEOKUTA WOMEN UNION

Abeokuta Women's Union, which was a metamorphosis of the Egba Women's Union also known as the Ladies club had Mrs Kuti as President,

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[13] Ibid

[14] Mba, N.E : "Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti" Awe, B (ed) *Nigerian Women in Historical Perspectiv*e. Sankore, Lagos. p. 136

while Mrs F.W. Fagbemi, Mrs Eniola Soyinka (Wole Soyinka's Mother), Mrs Victoria Soleye, and Mrs. F.S. Adeyinka, including representatives from market associations and from the four districts of Abeokuta as members of the executive committee. The AWU had 20,000 women as financial members, it is claimed that the rest of the roughly 100,000 women in Abeokuta were in complete sympathy. The membership fee was two shillings and six pence and the annual due of 1/-[15]. The composition of the union of illiterate market women and educated women produced a militant organization, whose objectives transcended the alleviation of hardship, to the removal of the cause of hardship.[16] Mrs. Kuti advocated equality between the literate and illiterate women and demanded for franchise for all women irrespective of whether literate or illiterate. Not only that woman should vote, but also that women should be voted for. She also encouraged women to come out to demand for their rights.

AWU was not limited in scope to women affairs, they also fought for human rights and the removal of the Sole Native Authority which was the system of indirect rule that lent itself to the victimization of the king's subjects,[17] and abolition of taxation on women. Apart from this, the AWU had in its constitution the objective to cooperate with all organizations seeking and fighting genuinely and selflessly for the economic and political freedom

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[15] Egba Women Union Constitution see Appendix
[16] Mba, N. E: "Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti"..... p.138
[17]Odugbesan, C: "Beere: The Achievement and Contributions....." p 8

and independence of the people.[18] It was a nationalist organization that sought for the independence of the country on a national level, and this made it to incorporate other women from other regions such as Jos, Enugu, and Lagos etc. Subsequently, it became the National Women Union (NWU). As a result of its nationalistic focus the members became affiliated to nationalist and political organizations such as the NCNC, A.G, and NEPU etc at the period. Invariably, they became members of the women's wing of the political organizations. But the NWU was independent of any political party. With the participation of Mrs Kuti in the Political and nationalist affairs, she was nominated as a member of the interim council that ruled Abeokuta after the abdication of the Alake Ademola II in 1949 which she pioneered. In addition she was able to encourage progress in as many as about 2,000 houses were built within 28 months.[19] She also influenced the contribution of about 1,000 naira by AWU to the Egba council in 1949 for the building of Market stalls, in addition, she established a Maternity Center for mothers and babies to receive free treatment and also established a Weaving center to promote traditional handcraft[20] to boost the living standards of the people.

Her utmost contribution in politics in the society at large was seen in her rigid demand for the abolition of the tax on women in Abeokuta and the abdication of the Alake as well as the removal of the sole Native

[18] AWU Constitution
[19] Odugbesan, C: "Beere: The Achievement and Contributions....."
[20] Ibid

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Administrative system in Egba land, which started the elimination of autocracy in the society.[21]

4.2.1 ANTI – TAX STRUGGLE.

Right from the onset of her political campaign she advocated the policy of "no Taxation without representation[22] an AWU slogan. She kicked against the taxation policy on women that was introduced in Abeokuta as well as other places. Women were taxed, and at the same time, they were not giving any representation in the decision making process, even on matters that affected them.

The Egba women saw taxation on women as exploitation and oppression without redress, and thus employed the services of an accountant to check the books of the SNA treasury to prepare a detailed report of the expenditure, which was 49,412.00 naira[23] when converted from the pounds used during the period (British currency). Hence, they concluded that, with such a sensible expenditure, women need not to pay tax and the administration will have enough finance for its administrative engagements. Thus, the attempt by the SNA to insist on taxation on women was an act of corruption as the surplus money will be diverted to their pockets. In addition, the introduction of the poll tax on women also sent upheavals because women were already paying water rate and also helping their husbands to pay tax indirectly, by taking responsibility of feeding and educating their children. All these did not

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[21] Brief Autobiography of.....
[22] West African Pilot March 31, 1948.
[23] Mba,N.E: "Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti"..... p. 139

go down well with the women as they were mutilated economically[24]. In 1940, the Alake increased the tax on water. When the news about the increase reached the populace, about ten thousand people gathered in front of the place and the office of the British resident. When the Alake appeared and gave a speech supporting the increase, the crowd charted in Yoruba "Awa ko gba" (meaning we do not agree). Subsequently, The Daily Service carried editorials questioning the increases (July 10 and 21, of 1940). In 1942 several Egba Chiefs were jailed for embezzling tax funds which was to exacerbate the people's frustration with the tax system.[25] This showed the corruption of the Alake and his men as the women deemed it not fit to pay tax.

Moreover, with the support of the British colonial officers, the SNA collections of tax was often brutal, as women were often stripped naked by the tax collectors and the police to see whether they were old enough to pay tax[26]. This brutality was defended by the Alake on the grounds that chasing tax defaulters was more effective than prosecution or fines.[27] Importantly, despite the mandate on women to be taxed and the humiliation and molestation they experienced, they were not represented in the SNA and on the other hand the SNA failed to provide adequate welfare, medical and educational facilities for the people.

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[24] Interview Prince Kola Adewale 6th November, 2008.
[25] Daily Service, February 28, 1942
[26] Interview with Prince Kola Adewale 6th November, 2008
[27] AWU Grievances (Manuscript) U.I Library

The AWU also complained about the irregularities of the SNA in providing social amenities to the people such as sanitation, medical and education facilities. For instance in 1936 Abeokuta SNA spent 0.52% of its income on education, as late as 1947 there was only one SNA supported school.[28] This shows the nonchalant attitude of the SNA towards providing social amenities to the people. However, this gave room for embezzlement of public funds as the women were compelled to pay tax. The women were disheartened towards such acts of corruption. In a long document they lamented that the SNA was a great source of oppression and suppression to the Egba people, "we are not happy under it, it is foreign to the customs of the Egba.[29]

Thus, AWU demanded that women should be represented in the council and all other committees that were concerned with Egba affairs.[30] Letters were written by Mrs Kuti and the AWU to the colonial authorities and the Alake to repeal taxation on women, between 1946 and 1947 and also to the editors of Daily Times and the West African Pilot Newspapers. They alsos held several press conferences[31] on these issues. In April 1947 Mrs Kuti, on her own adopted the tactics of refusing to pay tax, which was imposed on her because of her support in agitating against taxation on women. Ideally, she was not listed to be taxed as a wife of a clergy man. This action by her was to

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[28] Egba Council Archives 1947
[29] AWU Grievances: (Manuscript) UI Library 1947
[30] Ibid
[31] Mba,N.E: "Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti".....p. 141

demonstrate the inability of Egba women to pay tax, as a result of which she was charged to prison for a month,[32] or to pay fine of three pounds after a court case where she pleaded not guilty[33]. But was found guilty by the court and had to pay the fine. The women were encouraged by her zeal to fight for their cause and thus rallied round her. A crowd of about five thousand women demonstrated at the court house and paraded the streets in her support.[34] However, this approach did not yield the significant result expected. AWU therefore decided to adopt a more radical and drastic approach, through mass demonstrations and rallies. In mid October 1946, Olufunmilayo led nearly a thousand women in a March to the Afin (Palace) to protest the increase in flat rate on women, but their demand was not accepted as the Alake admitted that it was too late for any amendment[35].

Another demonstration took place on 29th November, 1947 when thousands of women sat on the ground in front of the Alake Ademola II's Palace for 24 hours. On December 8, the women repeated the same 'vigil', this time for 48 hours. After the vigil at about 3.00pm the women marched round the town naked.[36] This was an attempt to show their bitterness to the Egba government. During the vigil, the women carried out mock traditional sacrifices and funeral rites for Ademola II and singing abusive songs, calling for the Alake to go. Songs were composed in order for the women to express

[32]Odugbesan, C: "Beere: The Achievement and Contributions....." p 6
[33] Interview with Prince Adebowale Ogunkehin 23rd July, 2007
[34] Daily Service, May 8, 1947.
[35] Interview with Prince Adebowale Ogunkehin.....
[36] Ibid

themselves. About two hundred songs were composed by AWU for use in their protests. Part of the songs were used to boost morals, others were ecumenical reflecting diverse religious allegories of the members such as Christians, Muslims, and Traditionalists, while some were abusive to the Alake and colonial officers[37]. Few of such songs are listed below

"Ademola Ojibesho
Big man, with big ulcer
Your behavior is deplorable
Alake is a thief
Council members thief. Anyone
who does not know Kuti, will
get into trouble, White man you
will not Get to your country safely
You and Alake will die an
unhonorable death."[38]

Another song goes thus:

Idowu (Alake) for a long
Time you have used your penis
As mark of authority that you
are our husband. Today, we shall
reverse the order and use our
vagina to play the role of husband
on you ---O ye men, vagina's head
will seek vengeance.

Similarly:

We are not paying tax, if you like
take us to prison----- if you like keep

[37] Interveiw with Chief E.O Shonekan (His mother was a member of AWU 23rd October, 2008
[38] AWU Documents (manuscript) 1947

us in prison, no we are not paying tax".[39]

The songs were sang in Yoruba, and it demonstrated the bitterness of the women not only on the Alake and his council of chiefs but also on the colonial officers and colonialism as a whole, a system which they abhorred. Moreover, the Alake was seen as a symbol of colonialism by Mrs. Kuti, which was why she demanded for his abdication. Rather than support the populace, he supported and enforced colonial policies that were detrimental to the people. In an interview with New Breed Magazine in May 1975 she commented that

> What people are saying that I attacked Ademola?
>
> I didn't really attack Ademola, I attacked imperialism.
>
> Those Europeans were using him against his people.
>
> I was attacking the Europeans indirectly and they know it.

However, attacking a ruler who abused his power was not an imported ideal but very much a part of Egba tradition"[40] as the custom of checks and balances was exercised. In 1950, this pattern of demonstration against the colonial system was also exhibited in Ibadan, where women urged the removal of Chief Abaje, the head of the Ibadan Native Administration, a cue they took from Abeokuta. A coffin was used as a sign of his rejection, the demonstration was led by Otun Iyalode from Mapo town hall to the District office in Agodi.[41] Similarly in the Eastern region about the same year 1,000 women destroyed

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[39] Ibid
[40] Mba, N.E & Odim- Johnson, C: *For Women and the Nation*..... p. 72
[41] Daily Times February, 20 1950.

Native Authority offices in Calabar province, smashing tables, benches and the resident of the NA Rev. Utit was assaulted and injured. This upheaval was a reaction against the erection of an oil mill on the land appropriated from the people by the colonial officers.[42] The women who were farmers were denied their land, which was the major source of their livelihood. Moreover, the oil mill that would be erected would not be used by the women, because they were classified to be weak and irrelevant in the use of technology. Thus, with no land and no access to the oil mill, they would become idle and irrelevant in the society, and denied resources to take care of their families and dependants. The women therefore decided to prevent every move to build an oil mill that would not be beneficial to them. The women in other places as cited above, might have been influenced by the demonstrations in Egba land led by Mrs Kuti, which achieved tremendous results even though not immediate.

The women during the vigil in Egba land, left their work, (closed down their shops) family and trade to sacrifice their time and resources to pursue a considerable goal. These mass demonstrations were well organized, in such a way that women organized food, water, sanitary facilities for themselves, so that they would be able to effectively carry out their vigil without any distractions. This act of solidarity among the women was greatly impressive, while Mrs Kuti's leadership was charismatic and never questioned. She elicited deep respect and loyalty from all members of the AWU who regarded her as their king, who made their lives better. There was a story of

[42] Daily Times November, 15 1950

Olufunmilayo snatching "Oro" a fearless and forbidden thing for a woman to do. Oro is part of the power of the Ogboni society, (the society of kingmakers and deposers of kings) that operated as a kind of council to balance and monitor the power of the rulers. Oro is both a 'thing" and ritual that 'comes out' to compel people to obey Ogboni sanctions. Only men could parade during Oro (women must stay inside when they march). An instrument about fourteen to fifteen inches long and one and half inches wide made of a light wood and with a hole at thc end through which a piece of string is attached, is whirled above the head. Depending on the size of the stick, a higher or lower pitched sound is emitted. Oro is said to have supernatural powers and those who do not obey its directives are punished. It was claimed that the Oro came out to stop women from demonstrating and Olufunmilayo, a fearless woman, snatched the stick and later displayed it in her home. Due to this act women chanted the song

Oro O, a fe s'oro

Oro o, a fe s'oro

Eti' lekun mo'okurin

Afe s'oro

Translated as Oro o, we want to perform oro

Lock up all the men, we are bringing

Oro out"[43].

[43] Soyinka, W: *Ake* p.213

Olufunmilayo was an aggressive leader, who was able to carry the women along and also demand at all cost a reform. As a result of their stiff agitations, subsequently the Egba Native Authority Central Council on December 3 informed the women that female taxation would be suspended pending further investigation. The promise was however not fulfilled as several women were charged to court, convicted and imprisoned. The women who felt harassed and a breach of the councils promise thus embarked on a forty-eight hours demonstration. This involved over ten thousand women in front of the palace. They threatened to remain there until the women arrested were released. Consequently, on December 10, all those arrested were released and the demonstration ended. However, the harassment of women continued as women did not pay tax. AWU also in that bid continued their protests. As the women refused to give up the Alake again promised to appoint two women councilors to the ENA Central Council and also to appoint an Iyalode and other women chiefs but said it would take time to find good candidates.[44] This promise although not fulfilled was an attempt by the Alake to curtail further demonstrations of the women, but the women were not given into that trick. Along with their demonstrations, the women sent letters to the Alake ENA Central Council, the Chief Secretary of the Government and the Governor. They also held press conferences, and also sent letters to editors of Newspapers etc. Listing a long detailed grievance against the Alake, such as the issue of taxation on women, women representation on the ENA central

[44] Daily Service, January 2, 1948

council and all other committees that have to do with the management of Egba affairs.[45] And also the economic monopoly policy of the Alake in compelling the market women purchase goods from him at inflated prices such as salt, rice etc. The women were adamant, aggressive and focused in their struggle, and refused to fall prey to empty promises.

Interestingly, the mass demonstration by the women was actively supported by the men, who belong to a reform society called Majeobaje and the Abeokuta society of Union and Progress (ASUP). They worked secretly and closely with the AWU and the president of these movements was Rev. I.O. Ransome-Kuti. They criticized the Alake of its activities and suggested that men's tax be raised, while female tax abolished.

> The way in which our women are being treated, hunted down and dragged about on public streets for non payment of tax reflects unfavorably against the reputation of Abeokuta for progress[46]

But this demand was rejected by the Alake, claiming that, it was not in his power to abolish taxation on women and Abeokuta needed the revenue.[47] With the involvement of the men, it is evident that the men did not leave the women alone in the advocate for a better living condition of the people, the fight against colonial policies, and did not criticize their activities, rather, they

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[45] AWU Grievances.1948

[46] Important Cities in Abeokuta. Egba Council Archives File no 49 and also interview with Chief E.O Shonekan 23rd October, 2008

[47] Akanbi, B.: "Women and politics. The case of Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti" FCEWA Vol.5 No.1 p. 91

supported them. The women took over the responsibility of fending for the family as the payment of tax by the men took away their income and thus they had little or nothing left for the up keep of the family. With the introduction of tax on women all hope was lost for the men as the women assisted them in the up keep of the family

The Egba women, on 28th April 1948, embarked on a five-hour march through the streets of Abeokuta, still demanding for the abolishment of tax on women and the abdication of the Alake. This march took the Alake by surprise leading to his suspension of the taxation on women and also appointing a committee to examine taxation and in principle to admit women to the council.[48] But, the women were not satisfied with this resolution, because the Alake overlooked the abdication case.

4.2.3 THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE ALAKE

The women who were still adamant on their demands, continued intensively to agitate for the abdication of the Alake. They were not carried away with the abolition of tax on women, but demanded the total resolution of their demands, the overthrow of the symbol of colonial rule. But it should be noted that the women were the prime-movers of the political developments that took place in Egba land during the period. During one of the women's demonstrations, on February 12, 1948, it was recorded that she had a physical

[48] Interview with Prince Adebowale Ogunkehin 23rd July, 2007.

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fight with a District Officer.[49] Who yelled at the women to shut up but she allegedly resorted

you may have been born, but not breed

Would you speak to your mother like that?[50]

On the other hand, the Ogboni chiefs, who were once in compliance with the Alake, in the bid to safeguard their position, as chiefs, turned their backs on the Alake, while, he was on a holiday trip to Jos in June 1948. They supported the women and resolved to reject the SNA in his absence, which had denied them the power they once enjoyed before the establishment of colonialism. Thus they resolved to the traditional method of signifying the rejection of an Alake[51] on his return from Jos. It is paramount to note that, it was on the platform of the women's agitations, that the chiefs were able to relay their long hidden bitterness against the colonial administrative system, which they did not have the boldness to express prior to the period of the women's agitation.

As a result of intense agitation from all quarters, the whole town was in chaos, Alake Ademola II accepted to abolish the SNA, but rejected his abdication. This invariably resulted to a more heated tension. The Ogboni boycotted the meetings of the Egba council, women held mass demonstrations, and the whole town was left in total unrest. The administration came to a

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[49] Akanbi, B. "Women and Politics....." p. 91
[50] Soyinka, W: *Ake*.... p.211
[51] Akanbi, B: "Women and Politics....."

standstill after a third meeting of the council had been cancelled.[52] More violence broke down on 26th July when a mob of young men demonstrated against the supporters of the Alake. On the 27th and 28th July, the women organized another demonstration insisting adamantly on the abdication of the Alake.[53] These demonstrations ushered in the process of the Alake's abdication, by which on 29th July, 1948, Alake Ademola II left Abeokuta for Osogbo with these words:

> That so fierce and unprecedented opposition should have been encouraged at this hour in my career on the stool of Egbaland is entirely beyond my capacity to understand, but as I have always placed the happiness of my people and progress of my dear country above everything. I cannot bear any longer the sight of turmoil, strife and discontentment. I have therefore decided ... in order to avoid blood shed, to leave the environs of my territory, I hope that after a time, frayed tempers will subside and the atmosphere of calm prevail.[54]

He also added that since he had become Alake in 1920 there had been no 'major' objections to his rule until the women began their protests.[55] The overthrow of the ruler was followed by celebrations by the women who

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[52] Interview with Prince Adebowale Ogunkehin 23rd July, 2007
[53] Ibid
[54] Alake Ademola Temporary Abdication. File 47 Egba Council Archives.
[55] Egba Council Archives file 47 and Daily Service January, 5, 1949.

danced throughout the town and held a thanksgiving service at St. John's Church Igbein, at which Bishop S.C. Philips (the Kuti's friend) gave a lecture on the emancipation of women. The deputy Director of Education for western provinces, S. Millburn also gave an AWU sponsored lecture on the education of women at centenary hall Abeokuta.[56]

With the exit of the Alake from Abeokuta, a new dawn unfolded. An Egba Interim council was established to replace the SNA, this council admitted four women as members to represent the four sections of Abeokuta (Mrs. Kuti was one of the representatives) and four additional members from the Majeogbaje society. The major objectives of the Interim council was the abolishment of all taxation on women, including water rates and an increase in the flat rate tax for men according to the early suggestion of the Majeogbaje society.[57]

Finally, in January 1949, through intense agitations and debates in the Interim Council, Alake Ademola II was abdicated and the main objective of the AWU was achieved. However, after 22 months in exile, December 1950, the Alake returned home to Abeokuta from exile in Osogbo, by an irregular vote of 29 to 19 in favour of his return. As a matter of fact the number of representatives (both ex-officio and elected), increased while the number of women representative remain static at four. The women could not majorly object to the reinstatement of the Alake through votes because they were

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[56] Ibid
[57] Akanbi, B. "Women and Politics....." p. 92

limited in number. But Mrs Kuti was displeased with this development and admitted that

> The Alake was brought back to Abeokuta by
> a clique of certain Egba's abroad, who are
> not domiciled in town, these people have pulled
> the full weight of their influence to lord it over
> the common people.[58]

With the support of a relatively new party the Action Group, and its, leader Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who was an antagonist party to the NCNC which the Ransome-Kuti belong and also apparently with the support of the British, Ademola II returned to Abeokuta as Alake. Attempts were made by the press to maim the personality of Olufunmilayo and the Abeokuta women union such as in the Nigerian Tribune of September 15, 1950 lambasted her as an effeminate authority and her followers' storm troopers who gave the public cause to disregard the integrity of the ENA of the Alake. Notwithstanding, the women had been able to achieve their rights and have commanded a change in the society for the benefit of all.

After the Alake's return, the water rate was re-introduced in 1952, three out of the four women representative apposed the water rate. They were over shadowed by the supporters of the Alake. The fourth woman Remi Aiyedun

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[58] Daily Times December, 5, 1950.

who belonged to the Egbe Atunluse, a pro-Alake group of women to counter the efforts of AWU, did not give the women her support[59]

However, with the re-introduction of the water rate system, the AWU and Majeobaje movement continued their petition against the water rate system. In the petitions, the AWU accused the Alake of hostility towards women interests. It was also recommended that new wells be sunk rather than extending the water supply at least until the latter could be afforded. It should be noted that the water rate was paid by both the men and the women in Abeokuta and Ijebu Ode.

Thus, the AWU adopted the policy of non-compliance to the payment of the water rate, consequently Mrs Kuti was arrested for inciting women not to pay the water rate, but the charges were eventually dropped, with subsequent petitions in Newspapers against the water rate by the women. It was finally abolished in 1960. The reason given for the abolishment of the water rate was that socially and economically, the earning of the vast majority of women in the region were so intertwined with those of their husbands that accurate assessment of women for rate is impossible.[60] This was one of the women's arguments during their petition against tax on women, which the colonial system was aware of, but this exploitative motive was the principal tool used to affirm their control over the people.

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[59] West African Pilot April 16, 1952.
[60] Daily Times March 18, 1960.

In her political career, she was nominated as a candidate for election to the House of Assembly in Egba Division in 1951, but was defeated, because not all women were given the franchise to vote, except those that could pay tax and only few could. In addition, they were not supported by their male counterparts because, they were seen as not fit in such a field. The non-franchise of women was a great discrimination on women and a barrier to hinder women's progress and development in politics. However, in 1958, she was elected to a seat on the council representing Kemta District where she lived[61]. Thus between 1949 and 1960, she remained on and off as a member of the Egba council later known as Abeokuta Urban District Council (AUDC), where she advocated for women's right to education, health services, job opportunities, living condition for the generality of the people, and also the franchise for women to vote and be voted for, which was achieved for women in Southern Nigeria in 1959 because there in lies their power of existence. Importantly, Mrs. Kuti's political activities in Egba land was very dramatic and radical in order to denounce colonial policies that were indicting to the populace and also the agitation for the overthrow of the Alake[62], even though he returned after almost two years in exile. Her political activities was not limited to Egba but extended to the national level as would be discussed subsequently.

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[61] Interview with Evangelist Oluwakayode Omobalogun……..
[62] Interview with Mr. J.A. Coker and Chief O. Ileyemi 4th and 5th November respectively.

4.3 THE NATIONAL WOMEN UNION

The metamorphosis of Abeokuta Women Union into a National Organization as the National Women Union in 1949 gave Mrs Kuti a nation-wide political activity, by incorporating women from other region to demand for their rights and engage in active political participation. Her political activities influenced some women from other regions to participate in politics. For instance Mrs Margaret Ekpo who was the national Secretary of the NWU and also President of the Aba Branch, confessed thus in a letter to Mrs Kuti after her visit to Aba to inaugurate the Aba branch of the NWU. Expo

> I cannot explain to you what new spirit you have poured into me. I am now 100 times stronger than before. I have printed our constitution into English, Efik and Ibo. I want also to surprise women in Aba on the 14th of January to tell them of the wonderful aspiration I have derived from you.[63]

This awareness according to Mrs. Ekpo resulted to her nomination into the Eastern House of Chiefs that year in Enugu, to represent women's interest. It was an epochal decision[64]. She represented women in the Eastern House of Chiefs from 1954 to 1957. This singular decision also opened the door for

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[63] Letter from Mrs. Ekpo to Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti (manuscript) U.I Library. 1949
[64] Ekpo, M.: *Breaking barriers; an Autobiography.* Baaj and omnix, 2003 p. 24

women to be appointed as Chiefs, a dramatic change in the history of women and Nigeria. In addition, between 1957 and 1958, she was selected as one of the delegates of the NCNC to the Nigerian constitutional conference held in Lancaster House London[65].

Janet Okala, the founder of the Enugu Women Association formed in 1945 was later changed to Nigerian Women Union Enugu branch to honour Mrs Kuti's visit to Enugu. She admitted that, "Before that time the women at Enugu had no right to probe into the affairs of the country, Mrs. Kuti on her arrival educated us"[66].

As early as 1948 Mrs Kuti received a request from a group of women in Kano to aid them in establishing a branch of AWU there. Another Kano resident Alhaji Alibabaru sent a correspondence to Mrs Kuti congratulating her on her work with the Abeokuta women, and soliciting her help in organizing Hausa women in the north. This shows that the activities of the AWU had really gone a long way to impact on women in the North to demand for their rights. Hence, this urge by Northern women prompted, NEPU to affiliate with the NWU"[67]

All these and other reasons made Mrs Kuti to achieve a national framework in the emancipation of women and also in focusing on national issues. Thus between 1948 and 1953 branches of NWU extended to different parts of the country.

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[65] Ibid, p. 36
[66] Letter from Mrs. J. Okala to Mrs. Olufunmilayo Kuti (Manuscript) U.I Library. 1947
[67] Sklar, R: *Nigerian Political Parties: Formation and Activities.* Princeton, 1963, p. 419

Firstly, the NWU was extended to Egbado, Ijebu-Ode, Ijebu-Remo, where women were encouraged to agitate against tax payment and the SNA. Next they extended their mission to Enugu, Aba, Calabar, Benin, Jos, Ikare, Onitsha, Kano, Kaduna, Kafanchan, and also to Funtua, Ilorin, Jebba, Ilesha, Ekiti, Asaba, Abakalaki and Lagos as branches were established. Women such as Hajia Gambo Sawaba, Janet Okala, Margrette Ekpo etc. were directly influenced by Mrs. Kuti. Hence, her desire for unity among Nigerian women, to champion the cause of womanhood would have become a fallacy, without incorporating women from other regions and ethnic background. The diffusion of women from different ethnic background, extending from the West to the East and then to the North, gave her the platform to embark on unity campaign for Nigeria, the NWU was formed on this basis. In one of her inaugural speech of the NWU, she admonished the women stating that women leaders must place themselves on the same level as the poorest women[68] a campaign against class formation which was already adopted in the AWU.

The political objectives of the NWU included the achievement of franchise for women, abolition of electoral colleges, the allocation of a definite proportion of political representation to women, with women being allowed to nominate their own representatives in the local council.[69]

She criticized the political parties especially the NCNC to which she belonged, to give women adequate representation. It was this agitation that

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[68] Mba, N.E. & Odim Johnson, C: *For Women and the Nation*..... p. 100
[69] NWU demand for political democracy (manuscript) 1949

prompted the nomination of women as members of conferences. Such as the nomination of Mrs. Keziah Fashina, Mrs. Henrietta Lawson, Mary Ededem as individual members at various conventions between 1954 and 1959, while the AG took a cue from this to nominate Mrs. Esan as AG's unofficial adviser to the 1958 constitutional conference along with Mallama Ina Musa an AG woman from Zaria and the first Northern woman to attend a constitutional conference, while Hannah Otudor along with Dr. Udoma and Dr. Okoi Akrikpo represented Calabar - Ogoja - Rivers[70]. But the appointment of women into conferences was not enough as she declared during the London constitutional conference in 1957 that

> The three political parties excluded women from the delegations as they are unofficial advisers and observers, they are not even allowed near the hall, they could not express the views of women. Government should guarantee adequate female representation in all legislatures[71].

Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti was not satisfied with women nomination into committees thus she targeted and put in more energies to influence political parties to include women into its rank of decision makers, not only on matters that affected them, but on issues that concerns the nation. She wrote frequently to NCNC leaders for women to be nominated as

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[70] Mba, N.E.: *Nigerian Women Mobilized*.....p. 261
[71] Mba, N.E. & Odim Johnson, C: *For Women and the Nation*. p.111-112

candidates for local, regional and federal elections. For instance in 1958, NWU petitioned the NCNC headquarters about the refusal of the branch in Sapale to sponsor Felicia Obua as a candidate for the Western region local elections[72]. In 1959, the NCNC nominated two women to contest into the Lagos town council, Mrs. Adebisi Adebiyi (first Yoruba female Lawyer). She was nominated as a candidate for ward A but lost the election, while Mrs. Lawson Henrietta, the niece to Herbert Macaulay and Grand daughter of Bishop Ajayi Crowder was nominated as candidate for Ward H. She defeated her opponent, a male by 1,807 to 1,788 votes[73]. Her victory was attributed to the fact that she was related to Herbert Macaulay, a respected nationalist leader and not because, she was a woman. Moreover, she won with a mere margin of nine votes. This shows the stiff competition that arose in the political process against women. Mrs. Ekpo was a victim of such experiences in the 1959 federal elections, she contested for the Aba North constituency against Felix Okoronkwo, and a dispute ensued between them as who should be nominated for the elective post. The dispute was carried to a NEC meeting in Warri, where Okoronkwo was selected because according to Mrs. Ekpo, she was a woman and Okoronkwo used bribery and political pressure tactics[74]. The AG also took a cue from the NCNC to involve women in politics, as women were allowed to contest in local council elections. Mrs. Esan was nominated to

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[72] Mba, N.E. & Odim Johnson, C: *For Women and the Nation*....., p. 104
[73] Mba, N.E: *Nigerian Women Mobilized; Women's political activity in southern Nigeria 1900 – 1965*. Berkely, 1982, p.208.
[74] Ibid, p.24

contest for election for Ward SWA in Ibadan in 1958 and in 1959 federal election she contested in one of the Ibadan constituencies, but lost both. Miss R.T. Brown was also nominated as AG candidate for Port Harcourt but also lost. The problem around this lose of election by the women is basically because of the claimed irrelevance of women in politics, thus they were faced with intense oppositions from the men even though they were nominated by the party. Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti summed up, the general scenario hindering women from political participation in a 1961 article

> That men do not want women to take part in
> our legislation; they want women as
> mere voters, ordinary election tools[75].

Women constitute a large number of the population that is more than half, hence this number is crucial in determining winnings in the electoral process. The representatives of women in the political parties were taking on campaign tours to canvass women to vote for the party's choice who was always a male. Despite their active role in this, they were denied representation.

However, despite the effort of Mrs. Kuti Female representation in the political process is still very low and moreover, they are not allowed election into offices or be part of decision making process. Currently Nigeria is still battling with active female representation to contest as presidents, governors etc. although there are few who have been able to make a mark such as, the

[75] Mba, N.E. & Odim Johnson, C: For Women and the Nation .....p. 117

deputy governor of Osun State, Erelu Olushola Obada, former deputy governor of Lagos State, Mrs. Akerele Buknor, Mrs. Pamela Sadauki former Deputy Governor of Kaduna State etc. Active female representation in politics was informed and propelled by Mrs. Kuti.

As a result of the network of her activities she embarked on the formation of the FNWS which was an umbrella organization of different women associations from different regions of the country. This was in the bid to incorporate women of diverse interests and groups without sentiments.

4.4 FEDERATION OF NIGERIAN WOMEN SOCIETIES

In 1953 Federation of Nigerian women Societies (FNWS) was formed. After a two day conference held between August 5 – 7 in Abeokuta which was attended by four hundred delegates from fifteen provinces, and several organizations including the Women's Movement founded by Elizabeth Adekogbe in Ibadan 1952. The objectives of the FNWS include encouraging the women folk of Nigeria to take part in the political, social, cultural and economic life of their country, to create facilities for female education and generally to raise the status of women and to win equal opportunities. It also resolved that women should be represented in all local councils with a proportion of the set in all legislative houses allocated to them and with women selecting their own candidates.

Secondly, there should be universal adult suffrage, with symbols introduced in elections for the benefit of illiterate voters. Thirdly whenever a law was to be introduced, the FNWS should be informed and its opinion

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sought[76]. The FNWS worked along with other women organizations such as the NWU to express their petitions and grievances of those located at different regions of the country. Prior to the formation of the FNWS, Mrs Kuti established a small Newspaper called The Nigerian Women between 1951 and 1952, in which women issues were advocated, however, only few issues were published before it waned out. The FNWS was not affiliated with any political party although attempts were made by the NCNC to incorporate the women's association into its women wing, but Olufunmilayo denounced such act stating at the 2nd annual conference of FNWS in Enugu that:

> The FNWS is independent --- ready to corporate and support any political party that works for the upliftment and progress of womanhood and for the happiness of Nigerian citizen as a whole.[77]

There was no clear cut demarcation in the activities of NWU and FNWS as Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti served as president of both organizations. The FNWS and NWU mounted pressure on the colonial government and Nigerian government and local councils, to give franchise to all women especially women in the north, who had been denied franchise. In 1959, they called on the Northern Regional government to repeal the law disfranchising women in the region.[78]

> Women are earnestly praying for the day when

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[76] Resolution of the FNWS Conference August 5th to 7th 1953. (manuscripts)
[77] Resolution of the Second FNWS Annual Conference July 30th to 31st 1954, Enugu.
[78] Joint Delegation of FNWS and NEPU women, August 19th 1958. (manuscripts)

there will be universal adult suffrage, so that
once again they can assist the men to do things
properly[79].

This was expressed by Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti, an attempt on the need for women to be given the right to vote. In Southern Nigeria, it was only women who could pay tax that were eligible to vote while in the North, women were totally debarred from voting as a result of religious and cultural norm that placed them exclusively to their homes, while men that were taxable were eligible to vote. In short there was no universal adult suffrage for both men and women in Nigeria during the colonial period. Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti saw the need for universal adult suffrage as a critical and vital tool in the political process of Nigeria and thus put in her energies to inform this.

In an Ibadan conference in 1950 as a representative of Abeokuta province. She spoke on the right of women as well as men to vote and also criticized the proposed system of indirect election through electoral colleges as undemocratic. The Electoral College was a policy that allows only those who could pay tax to vote that is, both male and female that was taxable. Only few in Lagos and Calabar were eligible to vote.

However, this posits that as men were compelled to pay tax, only few women could pay tax in the southern region. In the North only male tax payers could vote, but the women were totally denied voting rights. Olufunmilayo

[79] Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti, "Women should play a bigger part" 1015 (manuscript) 1951

Ransome-Kuti pointed out that Majority of women were eliminated from the whole scenario as there were only few women who paid income tax.[80] This portrayed the general trend in the political process as women were denied franchise. Thus she admonished various women associations and also the political parties to focus on the demand for franchise, not for women alone but a universal adult suffrage, so that all mature or adult citizens of the country will have the right to choose whoever they will, to rule them and also be part of the political process,[81] during the transition to independence which was crucial to the history of Nigeria.

The NCNC supported this campaign for universal adult suffrage and was publicized extensively in the West African Pilot (Azikwe owned Newspaper). The NCNC, with the collaboration of Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti and women associations pressed for the implementation of the adult suffrage. In 1951, the colonial administration extended limited franchise, for only those that could pay tax, consequently in 1954 universal suffrage was implemented for the first time. This was only limited to the Eastern region, while in the West there was a taxation requirement for women. In 1959, adult suffrage was extended to the West, hence, both men and women irrespective of whether they could pay tax or not, were given franchise to vote from the age of 18 years of age which is still practiced till date, as for the Northern region, only male tax payers could vote. In Southwestern Nigeria, full franchise for

[80] Ibid.
[81] NWU "Demand for Political Democracy" (manuscript) 1953

women opened the door for female councilors to emerge. In Ibadan and Osogbo there were four women each, Oyo, Abeokuta, Ado, Gbonye had 3 women each, Ifelodun and Shaki had 2 women each, while Ondo, Akure, Ilesha, Ila and Idare had 1 female representation each.[82] Although, the year for the emergence of female councilors was not stated and facts did not show whether all of them or few of them won the position they contested for. But it is assumed that it was the period of the federal elections at the eve of independence that is in 1959 after full franchise was given to women to vote and be voted for in southern Nigeria.

Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti, was not pleased with the situation in the Northern region, and thus not satisfied with the exclusion of Northern region from adult suffrage. She concentrated more effort in enlightening women on the need for Northern region to benefit from the adult suffrage. Unrelentless campaign ensued. At this junction, the NCNC and AG backed off from the demand for full franchise in the North, especially for women. This went in a long way to prove their adherence to ethnic politics. On the other hand the cultural and religious demand of the region, did not allow women to be part of the political process and it was this belief that NPC advocated and supported. Although NEPU a socialist oriented party in the North, kicked against this cultural norm and gave room for women into its party.

The NPC dominated the politics in the Northern region and totally banned women from public or political participation. The NPC viewed women

[82] Western Region Women Councilors (manuscript). See also Appendix.

who participated in politics as prostitutes. Hajia Gambo Sawaba a female politician in the North, who belonged to the NEPU, was always accused of being a prostitute by the NPC. Notwithstanding, she puts in her energy to be politically active, as she was influenced by Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti.

The women organization of the NEPU affiliated with FNWS to champion the course of universal adult suffrage for the Northern region Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti questioned the activities of NPC who totally denounced women emancipation cum political participation. In 1958, she led a delegation of FNWS and NEPU women to the office of the Northern region premier in Kaduna. With a position that, the premier should approve of full franchise for women and until the franchise was given, the northern region should agree to a reduction in the number of its seats in the federal house of representative, since representation in the house was supposed to be proportional to the voting population. Stressing that if women were not allowed to vote they should not be included in the population count in the North. This statement was not acceptable to the Northern leaders especially the NPC, because based only on its male population northern region's representation at the national level will be cut by half. Thus they did not hearken to the delegation's demands. This shows that the female population is crucial to winning and hence, the women's numerical strength was used as a weapon or tool to achieve that aim.

After a year, in August, 1959 without anything done, the delegation embarked on another visit, but this time to the Governor-general to solicit for

his approval and wanted him to advice the constitutional conference going on at that time to ensure that the number of seats allocated to the Northern region in the enlarged house should be drastically reduced and that seats should be reserved for women in both legislative houses[83]. At a press conference, Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti declared that

> If the constitutional conference still rejected our demand , for franchise, we have friends among the British (this shows that she was also an international personality and well respected) we can write to them to see what they can do for us[84]

Whether this attempt was made or not, is not known.

After Independence in 1960 she continued with her campaign and solicited for the support of the civilian government to introduce Universal Adult Suffrage in the North, but all her appeals were sidelined. With the overthrow of the civilian rule in 1966, and the establishment of Military rule, she continued with her intense agitation, but it was unfulfilled due to the outbreak of the civil war 1966 – 1970. The effects of the war destabilized the whole polity. Effort was not made by the military government in power to incorporate Northern region women into the electoral process. After the civil war, the mission of 'reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation was the focus of the military government in power. But the crux of the matter is that,

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[83] West African Pilot, August 21, 1959.
[84] Mba, N.E. & Odim Johnson, C: *For Women and the Nation*..... p.168

the effort and appeal of Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti along with her women association did not yield immediate result until 1977 when universal adult suffrage was given to the Northern region. The gap between the Northern and Southern region in gaining universal adult suffrage is alarmingly wide, a period of twenty-two years. However, the effort to achieve the universal adult suffrage for Nigeria as a whole should be linked to the vital role Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti played in the agitation. She was so critical in the emancipation of the whole country towards progress.

In addition, the use of symbol during elections was introduced and seriously advocated by Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti. She expressed that symbols should be introduced in elections for the benefit of illiterate voters.[85] Demanding that universal adult suffrage will not be effective, without the voter's knowledge of identifying who to vote for. As a matter of fact, the largest number of people especially the women was illiterate. Thus it is only the educated elite that can identify parties by their names, while the illiterate masses will be left in obscurity. The use of symbols is of great benefit to the large number of voters, who will easily identify the symbols representing the parties. This was part of the resolutions of the FNWS in 1953. Hence, this has been adopted into Nigeria's electoral system and it is used till date.

In essence, Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti's role in the political development of Nigeria is very tremendous in the area of universal adult suffrage and the use of symbol in the Electoral process. These achievements

[85] Resolution of the FNWS Conference August 5th to 7th 1953. (manuscripts)

are significant part of a democratic government. The Universal Adult Suffrage is one of the instruments of a democratic society for expression in electing political representatives into power or government.

Another major contribution of Mrs Kuti was in 1957, on June 2nd she supported the call for full self government for Nigeria by 1959.[86] In 1957 only the Southern region was granted Self Government. Thus by 1959 the Northern region was also granted self government in preparation for independence in 1960.

The FNWS accused the colonial government for excluding women from partaking in responsible jobs for building an independent Nigeria and also non-provision of adequate facilities such as education, health facilities etc. In addition, that women were banned from serving on commissions and committees in connection with the preparation for independence.[87] They had played tremendous part in the struggle to achieve independence and to bring about better living conditions for the people. For instance, it was due to the inadequacies of educational facilities for women and the society at large that prompted Mrs Kuti to establish schools in Abeokuta especially the Mrs Kuti's class in 1928 and Rev. I.O. Kuti Memorial Evening School in 1957

As the President of the FNWS Mrs Kuti was able to organize and mobilize women against the ills in the society. In the year 1959, a declaration was made by the French government to embark on an Atomic Bomb Test in

[86] Interview with Prince Adebowale Ogunkehin 23rd July, 2007
[87] West African Pilot September, 8 1959

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the Sahara. Women led by Mrs Kuti protested against such act, which would be indicting to the nation. The FNWS organized series of meetings between July and September that year to protest against this act. They called on all political parties to incite them against the colonial government's approval of such dehumanizing and destructive act with reference to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki experience in Japan. Mrs. Kuti in her address in one of the conferences announced that the FNWS will sponsor a united front of all women in the Federation for the purpose of organizing country-wide demonstrations against the bomb test.[88] One of such demonstrations was the declaration of September 7 and 11 as days for national mourning. This according to Mrs Kuti would show the country's practical aggression against the decision of the French Government to test atomic devices in the Sahara desert. The resolution called for the total closure of all markets during the period and the boycott of all French goods.[89]

All the activities of the women organization she established ranging from the LC, AWU, NWU and FNWS, she was able to articulate the interest of women and thus encourage other women organizations to champion the cause of womanhood. As a matter of fact women organizations and parties began to spring up during that time. For instance, the Nigerian Women Party by Lady Oyinkan Abayomi in 1944, centered on the improvement of women and the demand of franchise for women a policy upheld by Olufunmilayo.

[88] West African Pilot July, 4 and 21 1959
[89] Ibid

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Lady Oyinkan expressed that women are being cheated by men and the government. Women in Nigeria have been neglected politically, socially and economically, despite the fact that a large number of them are house owners they have no representation in the town council and no consideration has been given to provide them with seats in the legislative house[90]. In addition, Olaniwun Oluwole, formed the Nigerian Commoners Liberal Party (NCLP) in 1954 to counter the male dominated political parties AG, NCNC, NPC and also opposed the demand for self government in 1956 by Anthony Enahoro of the AG and supported by the NCNC. She had the welfare of the masses at heart and strongly worked towards the emancipation and unity of Nigeria. She opposed regionalization which was part of the colonial political system by demanding for the scrapping of the McPherson's constitution and return to old legislative council and a continuation of British rule.[91] With the belief that Nigerians are not yet mature to rule themselves, based on the general political scenario of the period. Imbalances from the political parties, as they become instruments of maneuver of the resources and the people of Nigeria for their personal gains during the period of transition to independence or decolonization period.

Enugu Women's Association formed in 1945 by Janet Okala, G.I. Okoye and Madam Peter Okoye were also inspired by Mrs. Kuti to champion the interest of women. This association was later affiliated to the NWU in

[90]Odim-Johnson, C: "Lady Oyinkan Abayomi".....p. 158
[91] Mba, N.E.: Nigerian Women Mobilized.....p 78

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1949. Janet Okala attested to the fact that Mrs. Kuti inspired the Enugu women to be politically active. The Women's Movement formed by Elizabeth Adekogbe in Ibadan in 1952 was another inspiration gotten from Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti, on the need for women emancipation in the political process. This movement initially became part of the FNWS when it attended the first conference organized by Olufunmilayo in 1953, inviting all women organizations in Nigeria to form the FNWS. She described the conference as a parliament of the women of Nigeria where the voice of all the Nigerian women will be heard and known. She further stressed that the organization is a combination --- it does not debar anyone form carrying on with her own private organizations. However, there was battle of wills between Adekogbe and Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti, but Olufunmilayo won due to the already gained popularity as a result of her activism. Elizabeth Adekogbe had to withdraw with her association and thus affiliated with the AG Women Association.[92]

Her autocratic leadership position in the women organizations generated rivalry between her and other women such as Amelia Odumosu and Eniola Soyinka who were part of the executives of the AWU and NWU and thus they deflected. This totalitarian leadership role does not conform to democratic principles as she expressed her motives towards democratic government. This is simply a contradiction in what she advocated. This resulted to the emergence of another women organization in 1959, the

[92] Mba, N.E & Odim-Johnson, C: For Women and the Nation..... p. 101

Nigerian Council of Women Societies (NCWS). The emergence of this organization was the initiative of Olufunmilayo's rivals and political opponents. Elizabeth Adegoke who deflected from FNWS due to power tussle between her and Olufunmilayo. Others were Mrs. T.O Ogunlesi, Mrs. Wura Ola Esan of the Action Group Women Association, Oyinkan Abayomi and Kofoworola Ademoko. However, the organization was less active in either articulating women's interests or attempting to influence the government as was the NWU, and its leadership lacked the charismatic Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti. However, the NCWS built on the foundation laid by Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti in the emancipation of women into the political process.

Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti was a dynamic woman who was concerned with the plight of not only the women but also of all people. She abhors and eschews any discriminating practices against the people and thus puts in all effort to denounce it. As a result of this quality, she gained maximum popularity and commanded deep and great respect among the people. Olufunmilayo was a politician that fought for the cause of the masses and also sought for their welfare. Thus she represented them in every matter that concerns them in the society, this could be vividly seen in her political activities[93] not only in Nigeria but beyond. This could attest to the fact that she was not just a national figure but an international icon.

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[93] Interview with Jibril, S. 2nd November, 2008.

4.5 PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NIGERIA CITIZENS

Mrs Kuti was closely associated with the formation of the NCNC in which she was an active member. Although, she was not the leader of the women's wing, her association played a pivoted role along with the NCNC in the nationalist struggle. She was the only woman representative on the delegation to London in 1947 to propose for the review of the Richards' constitution of British divide and rule policy. This shows the respect she commanded in the NCNC. She was also nominated by the Resident of Abeokuta to represent Abeokuta province at the constitutional conference in Ibadan, on a proposed new constitution from 1948 to 1951 called by Sir McPherson. She was thus the only female representative at the Western Regional Conference among 27 males, where she argued against the Electoral College system and the requirement that a candidate for election should lodge a deposit. And also demanded constantly that women should be given franchise. In addition, she objected to any traditional ruler standing for election,[94] thus, cubing their political ambition. Although her representation and participation in politics brought about a dramatic change in Nigerian politics, which was male dominated, as female participation was still low.

In 1956, she was elected treasurer of the Western Working Committee of NCNC and was also made the leader of the opposition party on the Egba council between 1958 and 1960. Her intense agitation for full franchise for

[94] Mba, N.E:: "Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti"..... p. 144

women, with the cooperation of other women such as Mrs Margaret Ekpo, Mrs Hienrietta Lawson, Mrs Keziah Fashina, Hajia Gambo Sawaba and Mrs Janet Okala. Full franchise for women was achieved in southern Nigeria in 1959, while in the Northern Region it was achieved in 1977.

As a matter of fact, despite the full franchise given to women in southern Nigerian at the eve of independence women were denied political participation at independence, a struggle which they actively participated in. The political activities of Mrs Kuti began to dwindle at the eve of independence. In 1959, she contested for a seat in the House of Representatives supported by the Egba NCNC Secretariat, but the NCNC National Executive decided to choose a male candidate named Mr. Akande, forgetting her tremendous contribution to the NCNC in the struggle for independence and also in the Egba local politics. A serious debate ensued between the two candidates, but Mr. Akande prevailed against Mrs Kuti due to the support he got from the National Executive of the NCNC. This event infuriated Mrs Kuti and thus, she decided to contest the election on an independent platform. The rift in Egba NCNC led to disunity among the party members and thus, this stood as a setback for the party to win the election. Consequently, the loss of the election led to the expulsion of Mrs Kuti from the NCNC and hence culminated to the formation of her own party, Commoners Peoples Party (CPP). The symbol of a Lion was used for the party, to signify strength, an appellation she earned 'lioness'. The objectives of the CPP were:

- To cater for the interest of the common people.
- To cater for the sound education and health of the common people
- To see that the common people are no longer victimized and oppressed.
- To fight for and protect the natural rights of all people irrespective of creed, tribe and sex[95].

These objectives are not feminist in focus, but to address the problems of the Nigerian people as a whole and projected a united Nigeria as she championed the cause of the Nigerian people irrespective of their ethnic affiliation and religious background. It is saddening that the political party only lasted a little over a year, due to lack of support from both the women who had soon forgotten her achievements on their behalf and also the men, whom they struggled together with, in the agitation for Nigerian's Independence and importantly, the rigidness of the NPC, NCNC and AG in dominating the political front in Nigeria. Among her party's political activity during its existence was a letter written to the AG accusing the party of victimizing the NPC members in the West and their arbitrary tax assessment on the masses.[96] A legacy of colonialism which the political parties adopted, that is, the exploitation of the masses, by a few opportune class, that is non provision of social amenities for the people and the siphoning of public funds for individual use.

[95] CPP Constitution (manuscript) U. I Library, 1959
[96] Why should AG accuse the NPC? (manuscript) see Appendix

Another significant contribution of Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti was that she was a non conformist to ethnic politics, practiced by the three dominant political parties AG, NCNC and NPC each controlling the government in its home region. As a matter of fact, the formation of the NCNC, and its ideology was on the platform of anti-ethnic principles, as its founding fathers cut across Nigeria extending to Cameroon. Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti and her husband were part of this formation and thus, pursued a united nationalist front along with nationalists like Nnamdi Azikwe, Ernest Okoli, Herbert Macaulay, Aminu Kano etc. The NCNC articulated the interest of the Nigerian people on a national front without ethnic bias. In some instances when NCNC was drifting into ethnic politics, Olufunmilayo deemed it fit to criticize the party's activities, especially when other political parties were established and were affiliated to their regions NPC to the Northern region, AG to the West and NCNC subsequently joined the trail to the East. However, with this development Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti did not drift to AG, which was the political party from her region and importantly led by an Egba. She remained loyal and faithful to the NCNC, and put in her energies to make sure NCNC focused its activities on a united Nigeria. When she was banned from the NCNC, she did not affiliate herself to the AG, she rather established a political party of her own, which shows that she was not tuned to ethicized party politics. Due to the intense pressure against the survival of her party, Mrs Kuti affiliated it with the Dynamic Party to contest elections, but

not much could be achieved as the three major political parties, AG, NCNC and NPC dominated the political scene, thus, her party folded up in no time.

The victimization of women and the attempt to sideline them from the political process, did not end with colonialism, it was transferred to independent Nigeria. After independence, due to the dominance of the male folk in the political system and the dominance of the three major political parties in the politics of Nigeria, Mrs Kuti left the arena of politics to become a full time social activist.

Her focus and contribution for a united Nigeria, could also be traced to the civil war years between 1967 and 1970, Mrs. Kuti uplifted the unity of Nigeria despite the attempt for a split by the Biafra of Eastern Nigeria. On behalf of the FNWS, Olufunmilayo made speeches and sent telegrams calling for an end to the war, when the Biafran and Nigerian negotiating teams met in Kampala in 1968. She also sent an identical telegram to Anthony Enahoro of the Federal Government and Sir Louis Mbanefo of Biafra. In one of her speeches she declared:

> Nigerian women implore you to find
>
> solutions to our country's problems,
>
> may peace and love reign again[97].

Women were worse affected by the civil war, they were displaced as refugees, victims of hunger, diseases etc. most of them were pregnant and with children.

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[97] Simola R: "The Construction of a Nigerian Nationalist and Feminist....." ,p.111

Throughout her life, before her demise in 1978 Olufunmilayo has been a staunch promoter and supporter of unity in Nigeria, despite the different ethnic groups. This could be vividly seen in the network of women, in her associations whom she referred to as her friends, such as Margaret Ekpo, Janet Okala, Felicia Emodi, Hajia Gambo Sawaba and most importantly, the masses etc all these women had deep respect for her charisma to champion the emancipation of Nigeria.

4.6 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA

On the African continent, Mrs Kuti had a land mark. She was a true Pan-Africanist, who worked and shared the view of Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana on the unity and freedom of the African continent from colonial enslavement. When any section of African people is still in slavery (colonialism) no independent section can truly be happy by Kwame Nkurumah. Her close association with Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana was gingered in 1946 when WASU organized a conference in England to bring together West Africans living in the United Kingdom. Consequently, when Nkrumah became the President of Ghana in 1957, he invited Olufunmilayo to a meeting at Flagstaff House to discuss the formation of a Ghanaian women organization and at the inaugural meeting Nkrumah credited Olufunmilayo for inspiring the formation of a women organization in Ghana. Mrs Kuti also visited and conferred with African women organizations all over Africa, maintaining a close relationship with women in Algeria, Egypt and Ghana

because, the situation of Nigerian women during colonialism was the same with other countries in Africa: exploitation and oppression.

Moreover, the general phenomenon in Africa was colonialism and the struggle to overthrow it. This goes to show that Olufunmilayo had a direct influence on women emancipation in Africa. She also denounced vehemently the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa in 1960, when a riot was organized to protest against Apartheid laws on 21 March, 1960 by the Southern African Nationalist, the Pan-African congress (PAC) and the African Nationalist Congress (ANC) at Sharpeville, an African township thirty miles from Johannesburg. The police opened fire on a large crowd, killed 69 and wounding 180 people.[98] Mrs Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti was deeply embittered against apartheid rule in South Africa which ruthlessly reduced the indigenous people to servitude. She attacked every form of injustice, oppression and exploitation of the people not only in Nigeria but beyond.

4.7 INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Mrs Kuti was not only a strong national character, but an exceptional international woman. Thus she was widely known internationally and well respected.

Her first international affiliation was to the West Africa Student Union founded by Ladipo Solanke in Britain, who was also a friend of the Ransome Kutis. She and her husband were founding members of this organization in

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[98] Legum, C: "Nationalism in South Africa" in Anene, J.C. and Brown, G (eds) *Africa in the 19th and 20th Century* University of Ibadan, p.437.

Nigeria. WASU composed of many West Africans such as Kwame Nkrumah, among others. Moreso Mr. and Mrs. Kuti along with Nnamdi Azikwe, Chief H.O. Davies, Dr. Akintola Maja, Korsah H.A. of Gold Coast, Dr. E.A. Taylor-Cummings of Sierra Leone were life time members of WASU. It included the membership of Alake of Abeokuta, Emir of Kano and the Ashantehene of Ghana. The most interesting thing about WASU is that it laid the foundation for grooming political nationalists in West Africa who were in the fore front of the struggle for the independence of their countries. According to G.O. Olusanya, WASU was a union that contributed significantly to the stimulation of political consciousness in West Africa.[99] As it aimed at generating an anti-colonial consciousness both in the British West Africa among the traditional and educated elite and among the West African students in Great Britain. This aim prompted the establishment of a branch in Nigeria, particularly in Ijebu Ode where Reverend and Mrs Ransome-Kuti were founding members.

Her selection to be part of the delegation to Britain to contest against the Richards constitution in 1947 was due to her international influence, that is her close connection to Creech Jones whom she and her husband maintained constant correspondence. The relationship between Ladipo Solanke and the Ransome-Kuti's was a strong one which was groomed due to constant correspondence between them. During the visit of the Ransome-Kutis to England especially Reverend I.O. Ransome-Kuti during NUT tour of England

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[99] Olusanya, G.O: *The West African Student Union and the politics of Decolonization.. 1925-1958.* Ibadan, 1982. p 30

Schools, Solanke took him on tour, to meet European friends who are in sympathy with the WASU and also members of the Labour Party such as Sir, Ronald Gould, Fenner Brockway, Hinden, Creech Jones, Sorensen Reginald etc. Solanke's relationship with the Ransome-Kuti was so intimate that he called Oladotun kuti "my constant comrade" and Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti "my wife". Thus, the relationship between Ladipo Solanke and the Ransome-Kuti's helped the Kutis to have an international affiliation. The Ransome-Kuti's helped to sell pansies for the WASU so as to raise funds for WASU students. Copies of the WASU Newsletter were also sent to Olufunmilayo to sell.

She was the only Nigerian woman and perhaps the first African woman to travel to the USSR, China, Poland, Yugoslavia and East Berlin[100] and also met with Mao Tse Tung on her visit to China, at the period Communism was at its rise. Capitalism dominated the world at that time and till date and the emergence of communism stood as a threat to it, until it collapsed.

On several occasions, her passport was seized by the British colonial government. For instance in 1957 the colonial government refused to renew her passport at the time needed, but, it was later renewed due to intense pressure. In 1958, she was also denied a visa by the United States government

[100] Simola, R:. "The construction of a Nigerian Nationalist and feminist.....p.111 and Interview with Evangelist Oluwakayode Omobalogun 25th October, 2008.

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as a result of her affiliation to the communist bloc, during an invitation to an International Women Organization Conference.[101]

Controversies have been posited on whether Mrs Kuti was a communist. Nina Mba puts it that Mrs Kuti was never of a communist party, nor did she support communism.[102] From a critical observation, Mrs Kuti, who was once asked, if she was a communist, admitted that her father had been a farmer in the African communal system and asked whether that made him a communist, if so she was a communist.[103] Interestingly, Mrs Kuti's life long activities political, social and economic activities were centered on the plight of the masses and the equality of all people irrespective of sex, an objective upheld by communism which upheld the mutual and communal co-existence of people in the society. Her affiliation with the communist countries and the Labour party in the United States and Britain also supports the claim that she was a communist. This could also be evidently seen in the name of her once existed political party, Commoners Peoples Party a party that objectively focused on the majority of the people in the society over and against the privileged and benefited few. In addition, she was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize in 1955, all these posits her communist orientation and characteristics, which can never be denied.

Through the efforts of Mrs Kuti, the FNWS gained international affiliation to the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) since

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[101] Ibid
[102] Mba, N.E: " Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti".....p. 145
[103] Ibid

1947 and she was made the vice president of the organization in 1953. In 1947, during the NCNC delegation to London, she met with Violet Creech Jones (wife of Creech Jones) and a meeting was arranged to meet the various women organizations such as the Women Parliamentary Committee where she talked to them about the predicament of women in Nigeria. That the status and situation of women in Nigeria were better during the pre-colonial era than during the colonial era. In addition wrote an article on Nigerian women for the Daily Worker Newspaper in Britain.[104] She also addressed a group of women journalists, the London Federation of Young Farmer Club, the National Federation of Women Institute and the National Union of Townswomen Guild. She visited several factories and Day Care centers, the Association of Country Women of the World. At one factory in Surrey, she arrived at 11.00a.m to address the workers and stayed till closing at 5.00p.m. At a special reception held by lord Major of Manchester on September 20, 1947 she was asked by a special guest of the Mayor to talk about the problems of women in Nigeria and the Cameroun.[105] She maintained constant correspondence with the countries abroad, even after her death for fifteen years International Women Magazines were sent to her home.[106] This shows the extent of her gained popularity in the international arena.

Olufunmilayo met with her untimely death in 1978. She was living in the house of one of her sons, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, when the Nigerian

[104] Interview with Prince Adebowale Ogunkehin 23rd July, 2007
[105] West African Pilot September 20, 1947
[106] Interview with Evangelist David Oluwakayode Omobalogun 25th October, 2008

Government sent soldiers to ransack Fela's house, because of the song Zombi, which he sang to accuse and insult the Nigerian Government of their oppressive act against the masses in 1977. Mrs Kuti protested against the soldiers' entry into the house, they consequently threw her down from a storey building, thus sustained injuries which culminated into a stroke.[107] It was made clear that she did not survive from the stroke, later died on 13th April, 1978[108]. Mrs Kuti is seen as the inspiration to Fela's social activism and frequent attacks on the Nigerian government through his music.

CONCLUSION

Mrs Kuti committed herself to the development of women, national independence, African unity and freedom and international progress. She was a woman to be reckoned with, whose activities can never be over emphasized.

She laid down the legacy and foundation for women organizations, in which women came together to demand for their rights and impacted on the society at large. Women organizations such as the NCWS, NAWOJ, and FOWAN etc took a cue from her activities. The introduction of the Universal Adult Suffrage, the introduction of symbols in the Electorate, promoting unity in diversity, advocating against ethnic politics and many more were her contributions to the political development of Nigeria. Her role in the political development of Nigeria was beyond feminism as many literatures project her.

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[107] Interview with Chief E.O Shonekan 23rd October, 2008
[108] Interview with Evangelist David Oluwakayode Omobalogun 25th October, 2008

CHAPTER FIVE

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The involvement of Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti in politics during the period of study was conditioned and spurred by the situation or problems associated with colonialism. Colonialism was mainly centered on servitude, oppression, racism, and exploitation etc. of the African people. The colonized were adversely affected and impoverished of their natural resources for the enrichment of the metropolis. Importantly, women were worst hit by the colonial policies adopted that construed the Nigerian populace to slavery. Thus it was this scenario that spurred up the rise of Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti to agitate against colonial policies that were indicting to the people.

Another determinant factor that influenced Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti's involvement in politics was as a result of the influence of women leaders during the pre colonial period for instance Queen Amina of Zazzau, Princess Inkpi of Igala land, Moremi of Ile Ife, Queen Kombassa of Bonny. In addition her immediate predecessors such as Iyalode Efunsetan Aniwura and Madam Tinubu, who belonged to the same ethnic group with Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti, that is Egba in Abeokuta. Their character and achievements spurred up the potentials in Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti on the need for positive change such as freedom, progress, etc against colonial principles of exploitation and enslavement etc. Significantly, the character trait of assertiveness, bravery, strong will etc are more visible among the Egba people due to certain factors. The Egba people were

among the first set of people that came in contact with external influence for instance during slave trade; some engaged in slave trade, while some were taken away as slaves. Secondly, the influence of Western Education and also missionary contact was more visible than any other part of Nigeria. This boils down to the motto that signifies Abeokuta or rather Ogun State (the home of the Egbas) as the Gate way state.

Colonial rule denied the indigenous or Traditional rulers political relevance as their powers and authority were subdued under the control of the colonial officers such as District Officers, Residents etc. The Traditional rulers mainly served as "puppets or stooges" for the colonial officers to carry out and effect colonial policies on the people. Such as Taxation, forced labor, enforcement of cash crop production etc. in their area of jurisdiction. As a matter of fact these phenomena made the people to see some of their traditional leaders who were to represent them and ensure their welfare as threats and enemies.

Thus, it was on these basis and other reasons examined that influenced Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti to represent the people and voice out their grievances against colonialism along with other Nationalists of her time such as Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Herbert Macaulay, Anthony Enahoro, Aminu Kano, Tafawa Balewa, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Margaret Ekpo, Janet Okala, Adunni Oluwole etc. These people focused on addressing the imbalance caused by colonialism and also demanded for freedom and independence for the country.

The establishment of the Ladies Club which metamorphosised into Abeokuta Women Union, the Nigerian Women Union, and Federation of Nigerian Women Societies, including the Common Peoples Party all formed by Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti. Her involvement in NCNC were platforms which she used to agitate against colonial policies that construed the Nigerian people to servitude and at the same time oppressively exploited them of their Natural resources, etc.

Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti discharged her quota for the development of Nigeria as examined such as the establishment of Mrs. Kuti's class, primary school and Reverend Israel Ransome Kuti Grammar School in order to address the inadequate provision of Western educational system by the colonialists, so as to boost educational development, promoted economic empowerment for the less privileged, fought against injustice etc. Importantly, Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti played a tremendous role in the political development of Nigeria. The fight for National freedom from colonial domination, the agitation against tax on women, the abdication of Alake Ademola II that consequently brought about the introduction of the A U D C. A total departure from autocratic rule to a Government of Democratic principle, where people will be fully represented. Moreover, the establishment of the A U D C opened the way for female representation in the political system of Nigeria. Women of Nigeria were able to regain their lost political relevance which colonialism had usurped from them.

In addition, Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti projected anti-ethnic political principles. This could be seen in her campaign for a united Nigeria, her agitation

for the introduction of a Universal Adult Suffrage into the electoral system. She was also a voice that was reckoned with on the international level both in Africa and beyond.

Indeed, Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti was a woman who was politically active during the colonial period and was able to discharge political activities positively for the political development of Nigeria. A politician who believed in the rule of law and social justice and importantly, she was a voice for the masses.

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1. Prince Adebowale Ogunkehin. He is the Secretary to Ogunkehin Ruling House currently ruling Egbaland. The interview was conducted in the Alake's Palace in Abeokuta on 23rd July, 2007. He is 65 years old.

2. Evangelist David Oluwakayode Omobalogun. He is the Nephew to Rev I O Ransome Kuti, he is about 70 years of age, a Farmer as well as a Clergy. He lives in the Rev I O Ransome Kuti Family house in Abeokuta. The Interview was conducted on 25th October, 2008.

3. Alhaji M.A. Majekodunmi. The interview was conducted in his home in Abeokuta on 29th October, 2008. He is a prominent Chief in Egbaland and also a Businessman. He is over 60 years of age.

4. Chief E.O. Shonekan. He is over 50 years old. He is also a prominent indigene of Itoko in Abeokura, and a Businessman. The interview was conducted on 23rd October, 2008.

5. Mrs Sarah Jibril (Politician). She is a politician who has contested for Presidential Elections in Nigeria. She is an advocate of social justice, equality and peace. The Interview was conducted on 2nd November, 2008.

6. Chief S. O Sokalu. The interview was conducted on 4th November, 2008 in his home in Itoko, Abeokuta. He is a business man and also a titled Chief in Abeokuta. He is about 60 years of age and a Businessman.

7. Prince Kola Adewale. He is 50 years old and the Vice Principal of St Peters Secondary School, Olomore, Abeokuta. He is an indigene of Owu in Abeokuta, the interview was conducted in his house on 6th November, 2008.

8. Mr. J.A. Coker. He is from Itoko in Abeokuta and 50 years old. He is Self-employed as a Technician. The interview was conducted in his office on 4th November, 2008.

9. Chief O Ileyemi. The interview was conducted in his office on 5th November, 2008. He is an indigene of and a titled chief of Aiyetoro in Abeokuta. He works as an Architect at the Ogun State Town Planning Office.

10. Mr. A Abati. A Site Technician at the Ministry of Housing, Abeokuta, above 40 years and lives in Abeokuta. The interview was conducted on 4th November, 2008.

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MRS OLUFUNMILAYO RANSOME-KUTI'S FAMILY 'ORIKI'

(SONG OF PRAISE OF A PERSONALITY)

Iya wa

Igbehin Motu

Ka abere ajeji

Antara le anbebi ara oko

Omo apaja si muna

A pa Oluwo satete kan

Aje nba lo ki nbari feran enise

Omo ojoru rojoru sa

Omo Ekun gengen

Omo olobi woroko eba ona

Eyi feni awo eni

Eranko asaje

Omo atori meran je

Omo afedan keke koi memu

Omo sakiki

Omo oro gba

Omo Balogun, Eyi gbori olori

O wa tire morun penpen

Omo adagba gedegede soro

Agba landa li jo yi won bi yeye mi.

Translated thus:

Our mother of Igbehin Motu

This Motu was comforting to all

Let's ask of the stranger

We are selling this city dwellers and putting the family in the village

He who killed dog and put on the fire side

He killed the chief priest (Oluwo) in a nearby area

Had I witchcraft to devour human flesh.

The child of a witch who bows to a more potent witch.

The child of powerful tiger

The child of a bent kola tree owner by the roadside

The kola nuts that wants us drops in our luggage

The kola nuts that do not are eaten up by animals.

He who eat animal from the head

He who uses liver to drink palm wine

The child with great honor

The dedicated child of Oro deity

The child of Balogun, who beheaded others head.

Leaving his own on the neck firmly

He who is fully matured before performing the oro rites

We are now becoming of age, when was my mother given birth to?

Translated by Dr P A Matemilola of the Department of Yoruba, Federal College of Education, Zaria. On 15th October, 2008. He is an indigene of Abeokuta.

KASHIM IBRAHIM LI

EGBA WOMEN'S UNION

CONSTITUTION -RULES AND REGULATIONS

Motto: Unity, Cooperation, Selfless Service and Democracy.

Aims and objects of the Union:

1. To establish and maintain unity and cooperation among all women in Egbaland.
2. To defend, protect, preserve and promote the social, economic, cultural and political rights and interest of the women in Egbaland.
3. To encourage mass education among the women through teaching its members to read and write.
4. To cooperate with all organisations seeking and fighting genuinely and selflessly for the economic and political freedom and independence of the people.
5. To raise and maintain necessary and adequate fund to carry out the aims and objects of the Union.

Membership:

Membership is open to all women in Egbaland (or in Abeokuta Province) irrespective of tribe, creed or status, the admission fee being two shillings and six pence.

Officers: The Officers of the Union shall be comprised of a Federal President, a Treasurer and a Secretary. This number may be increased as circumstances demand.

The Executive Committee:

The following shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Union:- The Federal President, The Treasurer, The Secretary, one representative from each of the various branches of the Union.

Patrons: Persons may be selected from the prominent members of the community to become Patrons of the Union.

Yearly Subscription:

Each member shall pay a yearly subscription of 1/- to the fund of the Union.

Meetings: The ordinary general meeting of the Union shall be held once every month on thelast Omida Market Day.

Special notice or announcement shall always be made in respect of holding any emergency or extraordinary meeting.

Special Rules: All complaints and reports shall always be made kno to the Secretary who will, in turn, present same to either the Executive Committee or the General Meeting as the case may be.

No member of the Union should think herself better than others, all must move freely and happily.

There should be moderation in the way the members dress for public occasions.

P.T.O.

All members must obey any order given by the leader of the Union so long it is for the good of the members.

All meetings summoned by the Union must be promptly attended by all.

Any member who does not obey any law or order made by the Union will be liable for the Union's censure.

The President shall always be the Union's surety.

The above rules and regulations may be amended on the advice of the Executive Committee of the Union.

中华全国民主妇女联合会
ВСЕКИТАЙСКАЯ ДЕМОКРАТИЧЕСКАЯ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ ЖЕНЩИН
ALL-CHINA DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S FEDERATION
FEDERATION NATIONALE DES FEMMES CHINOISES DEMOCRATES

25 Shih Chia Hutung,
Peking, China.
Cables: 1244 Peking

July 19, 1956

Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti,
President,
Federation of The Nigerian Women's Organizations,
Isabo Road,
Kentor,
Abeokuta,
NIGERIA.

Dear friend,

We have received with great pleasure yours of June 7th and 20th. These cordial letters of yours reminded us of your cheerful voice and sweet smiles as well as the enthusiastic speeches you had delivered no-matter-whether on the platform or at the commission meetings or at the rallies. All these have left us very deep impressions. We Chinese women are indeed very happy to have had the opportunity of receiving our African sisters when the WIDF Council met in Peking. Although that was the first time we received our Nigerian sisters, we found it very easy for us to understand each other. Inspite of your short stay in China, we were happy to have already established an unforgettable friendship between us.

We were very glad to learn from your letters that since your return to Africa you have done a great deal for the promotion of the understanding and friendship between the peoples of Nigeria and China. We are very grateful to you for conveying the friendship of the people and women of China to those of Nigeria. Such effort of yours is undoubtedly of great benefit to promoting the understanding and friendship between the people and women of China and Nigeria. We hope that as a result of your kind effort in this respect, the women of China and Nigeria will henceforth march forward hand in hand in the interest of the cause in defence of world peace and of the rights of women and children.

I am enclosing herewith 2 photos we took for you during your stay in China, which we hope you will keep as a souvenir of our friendship.

Please give our love to Mrs. Princewell and her baby Abiona.

中华全国民主妇女联合会

ВСЕКИТАЙСКАЯ ДЕМОКРАТИЧЕСКАЯ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ ЖЕНЩИН

ALL-CHINA DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S FEDERATION

Looking forward to hearing from you from time to time and with best wishes to you for many more successes and the best of health.

Very sincerely yours,

25 [illegible]
Peking,
[illegible]

July 19, 1956

Tsao Meng-chun 曹孟君
Member of Secretariat
All-China Democratic Women's Federation.

К О М И Т Е Т Н А Б Ъ Л Г А Р С К И Т Е Ж Е Н И
C O M I T É D E S F E M M E S B U L G A R E S
C O M M I T T E E O F B U L G A R I A N W O M E N

Бул. Патриарх Ефтимий 82
Bd. Patriarche Eftimi 82

Телефони: 85-42-30
Téléphones: 85-43-50

№ ..... София, 20.3.1965
Sofia

Mrs. Fumilayo Ransome Kuti
Nigerian Women's Union
15, Isabo Road - Kemta
A B E O K U T A

Dear friend,

Thank you so much for the cordial letter which you sent after the Session of the Council of WIDF. We are glad you were pleased with your stay in our country and honestly believe that the friendship between Bulgarian and Nigerian women will consolidate still more in future.

The resolution taken at the Session were widely popularized among the women in our country through the press, radio and television. Colume three of our magasine "The Woman Today" has on its top cover a photo of yourself together with Mrs. Kapila Khandvala and Mrs. Zinaida Fedorovna. Here enclosed you will find a copy of this volume which we send to you with friendly regards.

We have already started our preparations for the solemn celebration of the 20th anniversary of WIDF. We have stipulated to carry out a wide activity for popularizing among our women and public in general the activities of WIDF and its national organizations. In connection with this we have provided for the issuing of a pamphlet relatig to life and activities of WIDF, the publishing of articles, photos and others about different national organizations in our magasines and dailies. We have also envisaged a special broadcast and television programme about women's struggles for peace, equal rights and better life, as well as about celebrated functionaries of women movements in various countries.

We shall be very thankful if you kindly send some information or other materials on the participation of Nigerian women in the activities of WIDF within this period of 20 years. You may as well send some biographical data of reknown Nigerian women. We shall also appriciate very much to have some reminiscences of yours, referring to the activities of WIDF or meetings you have had with women prominent in the international women movement (say M-me Cotton, Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturie Dolores Ibarruri or others).

Our women will be very interested to get acquainted in detail with life work and activities of the women in your country.

May we hope to receive your materials by the end of May at the latest ?

We believe that you and your family are in good health. Looking forward to hear soon from you I remain, dear friend,

sincerely yours,

SECRETARY: М.Д.Стефкова

(Marta Heliaskova)

WESTERN STATE OF NIGERIA WOMEN COUNCILLORS

IBADAN CITY

1. Mrs. J.E. Bolarinwa, Alafia Institute, P.O. Box 719, Ibadan.
2. Alhaja Humoani Alaga, 30 Lebanon Street, Gbagi, Ibadan.
3. Mrs. Joke Ayoade, ABC Chemist, Okeado, Ibadan.
4. Mrs. Y. Omisade, Yejide Girls' Grammar School, Ibadan.

IJEBU

1. Chief (Mrs.) E.O. Soyanwo, Proprietress, Ola-Olu Nursery School, Igbeba Road, Ijebu-Ode.
2. Mrs. F. Obisanya, Itele Oshunmaiyegun.
3. Madam Bernice Talabi, Ojowo, Ijebu-Igbo.
4. Mrs. S.A. Adaramaja, St. Theresa's College, Ibadan.
5. Mrs. J.M. Adegboye, Igbobini, Ijaw-Apoi.

ONDO

Mrs. F.A. Fashida, St. Helen's College, Ondo.

OYO

Mrs. G.E. Popoola, Ilora First Baptist School, Ilora.
Mrs. Deborah Amao, Abiola Memorial Clinic, Oyo.
Mrs. F.T. Akande (B.A. Hons.), Iseyin Grammar School, Iseyin.

ABEOKUTA

Dr. (Mrs.) F. Ransome-Kuti, Rev. Kuti Memorial Grammar School, Abeokuta.
Mrs. V. Popoola, Lisabi Grammar School, Abeokuta.
Mrs. J. Osibo, Leader of the Women's Association, OWODE.

AKURE

Mrs. J.E. Ayeni, Sewing Mistress, Akure.

ILA

Mrs. Ayoka Efunmade, Ila-Orangun.

ILESHA

Mrs. Mabel Aluko, E147, Ita Ogo, Ilesha.

OSHOGBO

1. Chief (Mrs.) L.A. Adejumo, School Proprietress, Oshogbo.
2. Mrs. Dupe Agbabiaka, Trader, Oba.
3. Mrs. E.O. Ojo, Baptist Girls' High School, Oshogbo.
4. Miss Mosun Omobiyi, Dept. of African Studies, University of Ife.

IFELODUN - SHAKI

1. Mrs. T.O. Odeinde, B.Sc., Librarian, University of Ibadan.
2. Chief (Mrs.) Janet Akinrinade, Businesswoman, Oyo (Rep. Otu).

IDANRE

Mrs. C.O. Durojaiye, Lady Chairman, Idanre Market Women Association (Iroyo).

/DO

1. Mrs. Dupe Babatola, Proprietress, Ajitadidun Nursey School, Ado.
2. Mrs. Beatrice Jiradu, c/o Chief Aniwuloye, Aniwuloye Trading Stores, Market Square, Ado-Ekiti.

/P.T.O.

3. Mrs. Aboko Alade, Chairman of Igode Baptist Women Union.

OGBOMOSO

1. Mrs. C.O. Efun, Ilase Quarters, Odo-Ekiti.
2. " B.A. Akanle, St. Louis Grammar School, Ikerre.
3. " Julianah Folorunso Adu, Secretary, National Council of Women Societies, Ikerre Branch.

Dr. Mrs. F. Ransome-Kuti,
Rev. Kuti Memorial Gram. Sch.,
Abeokuta.

NIGERIA

UBRARY

PRICE: TWO PENCE — FRIDAY, JULY 31, 1959

ANTI-BOMB TEST MEETING TODAY

Officials Quit Lying AG

KADUNA, July 30.—An Action Group Organizing Secretary for Kaduri, Kaduna South, Mallam Bassoni Dabiri, drove to the NCNC and NEPU Secretariat and announced his resignation from the AG and declaration for the NCNC-NEPU Alliance.

"The Action Group has never spoken the truth and will never learn how to speak the truth," Mallam Dabiri declared. "I have come to join the party of truth, progress and commonness," he added.

Another AG leader, Mr Moses Rwang, former member of the Northern House of Assembly and Organizing Secretary of the AG-UMBC Alliance, has also resigned from the AG-UMBC Alliance.

Mr Rwang accused the Action Group of feeding the people of the Middle Belt with lies and of misleading and threatening their traditions.

He described the Action Group-UMBC Alliance as a union between a hyena and a goat.

Famed Physicist Arrives Tomorrow

Mr J. P. Stephenson, a Senior Physics and Gaitskell Master at the City of London School, arrives at Ikeja Airport tomorrow. He is visiting Nigeria under the auspices of the British Council and the Western Regional Ministry of Education. In Lagos, Mr Stephenson will give demonstrations, talks to students, graduate and non-graduate teachers. Later he will go on to Ibadan, where he will give a series of lectures in science teachers.

This is Mr Stephenson's second visit to Nigeria, as in 1955 he carried out a successful tour for the British Council. In addition to his work at the City of London School, Mr Stephenson is Educational Consultant to UNESCO, and he is author of the UNESCO publication *"Suggestions for Science Teachers in the Devastated Areas,"* which has been translated into a great number of languages. He is the Permanent Film Adviser to the Electrical Development Association and has also acted as Film Adviser to the United Kingdom Ministry of Education.

Women Invite All Shades Of Opinion

ALL Nigerian major political parties—the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, Northern Peoples Congress, Northern Elements Progressive Union, Action Group, the Kamerun National Democratic Party, the Kamerun National Congress, the Kamerun Peoples Party, together with the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria, women organisations, and social and welfare bodies, have been invited to attend a special meeting TODAY, at the Exhibition Centre, Marina, to discuss the question of setting up a NIGERIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR PROTEST AGAINST ATOMIC BOMB TEST IN SAHARA.

The meeting which will open at 5 p.m. is sponsored by the Federation of Nigeria Women Organisations.

In their letter of invitation the Women's Federation described the French Government's decision to test the atomic bomb in the Sahara as "one of the gravest decisions" in the life of the nation.

It said that the Federation believed "that any nation that wishes to test its bombs on our soil of *Mother Africa* in spite of that nation's complete understanding of its evil effect, is in fact equally interested in seeing that our continent is completely wiped out from the face of the earth."

Last week, the Women's Federation announced at a press conference that they would organise a country-wide demonstration and boycott of French goods in protest against the French Government's decision to test the atomic bomb in the Sahara.

The Federation also plans to lead a delegation to the Governor-General, the Prime Minister of the Federation, the Regional Premiers to urge them to take immediate action against the proposed Sahara atom-bomb test.

Leading members of political parties and some Ministers of State, including the President-General of the Women's Federation, Mrs Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, are expected to address today's meeting.

INTOLERABLE

"Yesterday, Mr R.C. Okwu, Eastern Nigeria Minister of State responsible for Information and Broadcasting, called for the views of the United States Government on the obstinacy of the French Government to go ahead with the bomb in spite of African protests.

In a statement issued in Enugu, the Minister said that next week's meeting of the Federal Government "must treat the grave situation with the urgency and seriousness it deserves. Nigeria must now stop more protests which no one cares to heed, and organise more positively to meet the grave challenge of French atom bomb test in the Sahara. . . . The issue for Nigeria now is 'to be or not to be.'"

The statement concludes:

"This is why Britain has merely conveyed to the French Government the views of the Federation, and the representations of the 40 million Nigerians on the proposed atom-bomb test in the Sahara without supporting same, must give every Nigerian a rude shock. If the British Government is not with us, as the saying goes, she must then be against us and with the French.

"This is intolerable, to say the least. Since the British Government is still responsible for our External Affairs, she cannot, in an issue of this kind where the lives of 40 million people are concerned, shirk her responsibility. These shocking revelations seem to dovetail perfectly with the French Consul-General's tactless behaviour to the protest demonstration of the Nigerian workers in Lagos recently.

"Britain's recent undertaking to give Nigeria a £15 million sterling loan is magnanimous enough but is far less valuable to Nigeria than bringing pressure to bear on France to discontinue with the plan for the Sahara atom bomb test.

"The amount of the proximate and remote damages which the French atom bomb test radio-active fall-out may cause to the lives and vegetation of Nigeria will exceedingly huge amount. In a few months from now the matter will be with us and why well come taken with a gift of radioactive fall-out from across the Sahara."

5 Years Jail Sentence For Rape Quashed

The Federal Supreme Court sitting in Lagos has quashed the sentence of five years' imprisonment passed on an Assistant Officer, Owen Stanley Wilson, Secretary, Nigerian Railway Corporation Service, Mubai near Port Harcourt in the Eastern Region.

On April 15, this year, the Port Harcourt Assizes sent Oxford-educated Wilson to jail on charges of attempted rape. He was also sentenced to nine months' imprisonment for indecent assault—a charge to which he had pleaded guilty. Mr S. O. Lambo argued the appeal.

NCNC Meetings

A general meeting of the NCNC "H" Ward Lagos, will take place today, at 155, Bamgbose Street, Lagos, at 5.30 p.m.

Messrs J. M. Johnson, T. O. S. Benson and Chief Fagbenro Beyioku will address the meeting on the forthcoming LTC election.

X X X X X

There will be an executive meeting of the NCNC, "E" Ward, Abule-Ijesha, today, at 7, Kayode Street, Abule-Ijesha, at 5 p.m.

Unidentified Motorist Kills Cyclist

Twenty-five-year-old Joseph Idowu, a clerk under the Railway Corporation, was killed in a road accident last Wednesday night, a few yards from his up, King George Avenue residence in Yaba, close to the Alagomeji bus-stop.

Joseph who was riding a bicycle borrowed from a friend was knocked down dead by an unidentified Volkswagon car aimed at the frontage of his residence.

A [illegible] of the Federal Works Department, who [illegible] the accident, was riding when he was [illegible] aware of the [illegible] swept off the road with [illegible] injuries.

He was rushed to the hospital unconscious.

There had been no light in the area for sometime. About one and three quarter hour later, the police arrived and [illegible] the dead and the injured to the General [illegible]

Africa Is Trained

ESUA TEL

WASHINGTON, July [illegible] including a promin[illegible] that the major problem[illegible] is the shortage of trained

The educators—[illegible] Nigeria and five other countries of Africa—voiced this view outlining the educational problems of their countries during a news conference at the headquarters of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP).

INSUFFICIENT TEACHERS

The educators are members of a committee of 24 currently meeting here this week to complete plans for the establishment of a permanent commission to study the educational problems of Africa.

In response to questions, Cora



If you make purchases at our Store during this LUCKY WEEK

27th JULY — 1st AUGUST, 1959

and keep all the Receipts and Cash-memos that we give you in respect of [illegible] you might be LUCKY

AN APOLOGY

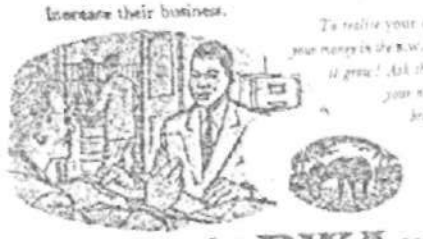
On Tuesday, June 10, 1958, this newspaper published a front page article captioned *"Action Group Threatens Crisis To Win over the Government: Secret Behind Plan Disclosed."*

A portion of the article reads: "Political observers believe that the motive behind the delegation to the Government concerns the Igo Idunganran Civil Case, the Ilorin boundary and other issues affecting, directly or indirectly, the Action Group. It is believed also that the party may endeavour to use the power politics to enable the Government to yield to certain demands which the Action Groups feel must be conceded in order to avert a constitutional crisis. Apart from the walk-out threat reliable sources believe also that Action Group Ministers



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Nigerian Women Petition Queen On Sahara A-Test

THE Federation of Nigerian Women Organisations has sent a protest cable on behalf of "millions of Nigerian mothers and children" to Her Majesty the Queen urging her as the head of the Commonwealth and also "as a mother", to protect the lives of Nigerians from the imminent dangers facing the human race in this country following the decision of the French Government to test atomic bomb in the Sahara Desert.

The cable, copy of which was released yesterday after a press conference by the President-General of the Federation, Mrs Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti reads:

"Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth through Colonial Secretary and Prime Minister London. The Federation of Nigerian Women Organisations on behalf of millions of Nigerian mothers and children protest vehemently against French Government's decision to test atomic bombs in Sahara. Nigerian women pray Your Majesty as leader of Commonwealth to protect the lives of Nigerians and persuade French Government countermand test forthwith. With our independence next October we prefer developing our resources and raising our living standards not being maimed and rendered useless. Tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki still a challenge to mankind. Your Majesty as a mother we appeal please help."

Another protest cable was also sent to the Conservative Party, the Labour Party, the Trades Union Congress of United Kingdom, the Co-operative Movement of Great Britain, the Movement for Colonial Freedom led by Mr Fenner Brockway and the British Women Movement.

Copy of the cable reads:

"The Federation of Nigerian Women Organisations on behalf of Nigerian mothers and children vehemently protest against French Government's decision to test atomic bombs in the Sahara. Nigerian Women pray your organisation to mobilise British public opinion and protest against the proposed test and ask the French Government to cease same forthwith. With our independence next October we prefer developing our natural resources and raising our standards of living not as Algeria and France are now to live in oppression and not to be rendered maimed and useless. We believe that the French Government's decision to test atomic bombs in the Sahara is to destroy the natural resources and the lives of Africans, terrorise the people's demand for national independence and intensify the dying colonialism in Africa. Remember that the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are still a challenge to mankind and your protest can help."

Country-wide Demonstration

Mrs Ransome-Kuti announced that the Federation will sponsor a united front of all women in the Federation for the purposes of organising country-wide demonstrations against the bomb test. The united front would also send delegations to all the Governments of the Federation to take immediate action against the French plan to poison Nigeria and other parts of West Africa.



MRS KUTI

The Federation, it is learnt, plans to send a delegation each to the Governor-General of the Federation and the French Consul General.

A country-wide boycott of French goods and French citizens is planned by the Federation. Details were not announced at the press conference but the women leaders disclosed that the plans to be executed would be handled by the united front spear-headed by the Federation.

Late yesterday evening, it was learnt that a joint-meeting of all Lagos market women and all other bodies representing women in Lagos will take place towards the end of next week to mobilise the women in Lagos.

The joint-meeting will cut through the political parties embracing the NCNC Women Association, the DEMO-Market Women Organisation, the Action Group Market Women Organisation, the Muslim Women Organisation, the NEPU Women Wing and the NPC Women Wing.

NCNC Ward Picks Officers

The following were elected officers for NCNC "E" Ward, Lagos branch at a meeting held at the National headquarters of the party recently.

Councillor G. F. Opara, Chairman; Messrs B. K. Dawodu, First Vice-Chairman; J. I. Ope Second Vice-Chairman; J. O. O. Shotayo, General Secretary; R. O. Onuoha, Secretary; L. Iroha, Assistant Secretary; G. L. Opara, Financial Secretary; A. Lawal, Treasurer; Bani M. Ihenacho, Publicity Secretary, and G. U. Ozigbo, Auditor.

Executive members are Messrs J. A. Adejbayo, H. C. Okoro, E. I. Henshaw, A. Ogunbiyi and Young Amey.

2 Killed In Cameroons Attacks

YAOUNDE, (French Cameroons) July 24.—Two people were killed and one injured in three separate attacks against local inhabitants of the Bamileke Region of the Cameroons on Monday, it was learned here today.—Reuter

ON THE AIR

SATURDAY, JULY 25

5.55 a.m. Programme Parade, 6.00 a.m. Family Prayers, 6.10 a.m. Interlude, 6.15 a.m. Reading from the Holy Qur'an in Hausa, 6.27 a.m. Interlude, 6.30 a.m. National News, 6.40 a.m. Dance Music, 7.00 a.m. World News and commentary, 7.15 a.m. The Sunny side of the Street, 8.00 a.m. World News and from the Editorials, 8.15 a.m. Interlude, 8.30 a.m. Rhythm is their business the Eric Delaney band, 9.00 a.m. *Close Down.*

10.30 a.m. Otuema-Eze Ibo short story written by V. Ekwereku, 10.45 a.m. Joe Nez Entertains, 11.00 a.m. For Children Tortoise meets the Elephant *Records for Children*, 11.30 a.m. Cameroons Music introduced by David Endeley, 11.45 a.m. To be announced, 12.00 noon World News, 12.09 p.m. From the Nigerian Editorials, 12.15 p.m. Features for fifty-nine, 12.30 p.m. Music from the Shows, 1.00 p.m. National News, 1.15 p.m. News in Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba, 1.30 p.m. "Mailboat Days" a play for radio written by Christian Orodile and produced by Yemi Lisadu, 2.00 p.m. World News and commentary, 2.15 p.m. Listeners' Choice.

2.45 p.m. Topic of the week a commentary on current affairs by Ademola Banjo, 3.00 p.m. National News, 3.15 p.m. Dance Music, 3.45 p.m. News in Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba, 4.15 p.m. Islam and Allah a talk for Muslims by Alfa M. B. Ameen, 4.30 p.m. Light Music, 4.55 p.m. Association Football commentary from KGV Stadium, Lagos, 6.45 p.m. Studio Service, 6.54 p.m. From the Nigerian Editorials, 7.00 p.m. World News, 7.09 p.m. National News, 7.30 p.m. Youth Half Hour, 8.00 p.m. The Nigerian Minstrel Party, 8.15 p.m. Oau Women's Singing Party, 8.30 p.m. For Lagos Listeners, 9.00 p.m. Nigerian Newsreel, 9.15 p.m. Light music, 9.30 p.m. Palace of Varieties, 10.00 p.m. National News, 10.15 p.m. News in Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba, 10.30 p.m. Youth makes Music, the London Junior Orchestra.

Sir Roy Admits World

BUT THEY ARE IGNORANT

Sir James Tells UK Press

LONDON, AUG. 31.—SIR JAMES ROBERTSON, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION OF NIGERIA, SAID TODAY THE NIGERIAN PEOPLE HAVE A "GENUINE FEAR" OF FRENCH PLANS TO EXPLODE AN ATOM BOMB IN THE SAHARA DESERT. SIR JAMES ROBERTSON WAS QUESTIONED BY REPORTERS AT LONDON AIRPORT ON HIS ARRIVAL HERE FROM LAGOS FOR A HOLIDAY.

"The African people are very frightened about the bomb and don't quite know what it means"? he said. "It has been explained that the explosion would occur many hundreds of miles away from them but this does not go down with a comparatively ignorant people."

He said that a motion had been passed in Nigeria's House of Representatives calling on the British Government to do its best to prevent the A-bomb explosion in the Sahara.

Ready To Die

Yesterday two thousand people joined in a demonstration at Trafalgar Square in protest against French plans for atom bomb testing in the Sahara Desert.

They heard Miss Avril Carter, Secretary of the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear Weapons, say that [illegible] Organisations were prepared to sacrifice their lives for what is necessary.

They cheered when she said that the Direct Action Committee was considering sending a team of people to the Sahara to stage an on-the-spot protest demonstration against the test. It would be a dangerous venture", she said. "But ultimately the hope of ridding the world of nuclear weapons rests on people rising up against their governments and showing them that they do not want the weapons."

Mr G. A. Fagbure, a representative of the Nigeria Federal Commissioner in London, said the Nigerian Government and people are very bitter about the proposed Sahara bomb test by France.

He explained that the people of Nigeria were aware of the danger of such a bomb test as the radioactive fallouts would be blown across the Sahara by the harmatan wind thereby affecting the lives of the people of Nigeria and West Africa as a whole.

He said that the Nigerian Government was disappointed that the British Government did not support her protest.

"France has no right to endanger the lives of the peoples of Nigeria only to raise their national prestige" he added.

Other speakers at the meeting included Canon John Collins, Chairman of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Precentor of St. Paul's Cathedral, Dr Donald Soper, British Methodist leader, and Mr Kweku Acquah, a representative of the Ghana Convention People's Party.

Mr J. E. Jantua, Ghana's Ambassador to France, flew to London at the weekend for consultations with Mr Ako Adjei, Ghana's Minister for Foreign Affairs [illegible] today.

Observers here believe the talks may have had something to do with the [illegible] African governments to France's proposed nuclear tests in the Sahara. Mr Adjei who arrived here on Saturday is scheduled to fly to New York on Thursday.



S R JAMES ROBERTSON

Women Call For National Mourning

In Lagos the third annual conference of the Federation of Nigerian Women Organisations which ended here on Sunday adopted a resolution calling on all Nigerian women to declare the period between September 7 and 11, as one of national mourning.

This would show the country's practical demonstration against the decision of the French Government to test [illegible] devices in the Sahara.

The resolution also called for the closure of all [illegible] during the period, and a boycott of [illegible] goods.

Other resolutions taken at the conference called on the Northern Regional Government to repeal the law disfranchising women in the Region, accused the Federal and Regional Governments of excluding women from partaking in many "responsible jobs for the building of an independent Nigeria", deplored the "inadequate facilities provided for Nigerian women, mothers and children in the case of health and welfare, and condemned the Federal Government for failing to appoint women to serve on commissions and committees in connection with the preparations for next year's independence.

PENSIONERS TO GET QUICKER ATTENTION

THE Treasury Division of the Federal Ministry of Finance have been taking photographs of more than 2,000 Federal Government pensioners for the purpose of issuing to them identity cards to facilitate faster means of paying monthly pensions. The taking of photographs which started last month is to continue till October.

The Senior Executive Officer, (Pensions), Mr H. L. Browning said yesterday morning that the object of issuing the identity cards was to facilitate quick payment to the right people. Each identity card would contain a photograph of the pensioner, his serial number, and other particulars, such as the description of his office and his home address.

A duplicate copy of the photograph and particulars in each card would be kept in the Treasury Division for easy reference when necessary. Photographs of pensioners who are too old to present themselves at the Treasury, would be taken in their houses.

Mr Browning added, that persons claiming pensions on behalf of old pensioners who are unable

ANNOUNCEMENT

THIS is to inform the general public that MR T. N. IJELE a Representative of the West African Pilot Limited, Yaba, has officially been stationed at Enugu.

Advertisement, Photo for Block and News can be sent to us through him.

HELLO! HELLO!!

CHARITY LUCKY POOLS:

The Leading Sweepstake Pools in Nigeria—

Call It 'Eko' Not 'Lagos'

LONDON, Aug. 31.—The Nigerian Union of Great Britain and Ireland has called on the Nigerian Council of Ministers to change the name of the Nigerian federal capital from Lagos to EKO, and to change all other foreign names in Nigeria to indigenous ones. This should be done in recognition of next year's independence, said a resolution issued by the Union today.

The resolution was among those passed at the recent fifth annual Summer School and Congress of the Union held in Birmingham. Another resolution called on Nigerians in Great Britain and Ireland to stage a protest march to the French Embassy in London against the proposed atom bomb test in the Sahara desert by France.

The Congress condemned the present arrangements for the Nigerian National Shipping Line and the West Africa (Nigeria) Air Lines and called on the Nigerian Government to re-examine the arrangements for these two Lines. It added that the present arrangements infringe the sovereignty of Nigeria before it is achieved, and complained that it included monopoly combines as members.—Reuter.

Libelled NFA

LAGOS HIGH COURT YESTE[illegible]

A SUM OF £2,000 DAMAGES, [illegible] COSTS TO MR DARBY ALLEN, [illegible] NIGERIA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION [illegible] GOVERNMENT PRINTER FOR A LIB[illegible] ENTITLED "RESHUFFLE IN N.A." [illegible] APPEARED IN THE DAILY [illegible] 7, THIS YEAR.

The article suggested improper conduct on the part of Mr Allen, who had sued for £10,000 damages.

x x x

A WEST AFRICAN PILOT staff photographer, Ablodun Durojaiye, made a brief appearance yesterday at a Yaba magistrate court to answer to charges of alleged wilful obstruction and assault on a constable "while acting in the execution of his lawful duty."

Further hearing was adjourned till September 25 and Bail was granted in the sum of £50 and one surety.

Charged with Durojaiye on a similar count, was Suarawu Adebiyi, who was also granted bail in the sum of £70 and one surety.

The incident took place on July 10 this year at Saho Roundabout, along King George Avenue following a motor accident in which a police van knocked down a Yaba barber who later died in the hospital.

Durojaiye was taking pictures

£6,240 Already [illegible] Lebanese Monu[illegible]

THE Lebanese Consul to Nigeria, Mr [illegible] has appealed to members of the Leb[illegible] throughout the country to send [illegible] towards the fund being raised by t[illegible] erect a monument in Lagos to [illegible] pendence celebrations next year.

He said such contributions should either be sent to him at the Consulate, 6, Maye Street, Yaba, or direct to the Lebanese

WHY SHOULD ACTION GROUP ACCUSE THE N.P.C. FOR OPPRESSION AND VICTIMISATION OF THEIR OPPONENTS IN THE NORTH WHEN THEY ARE WORSE IN THE WEST.

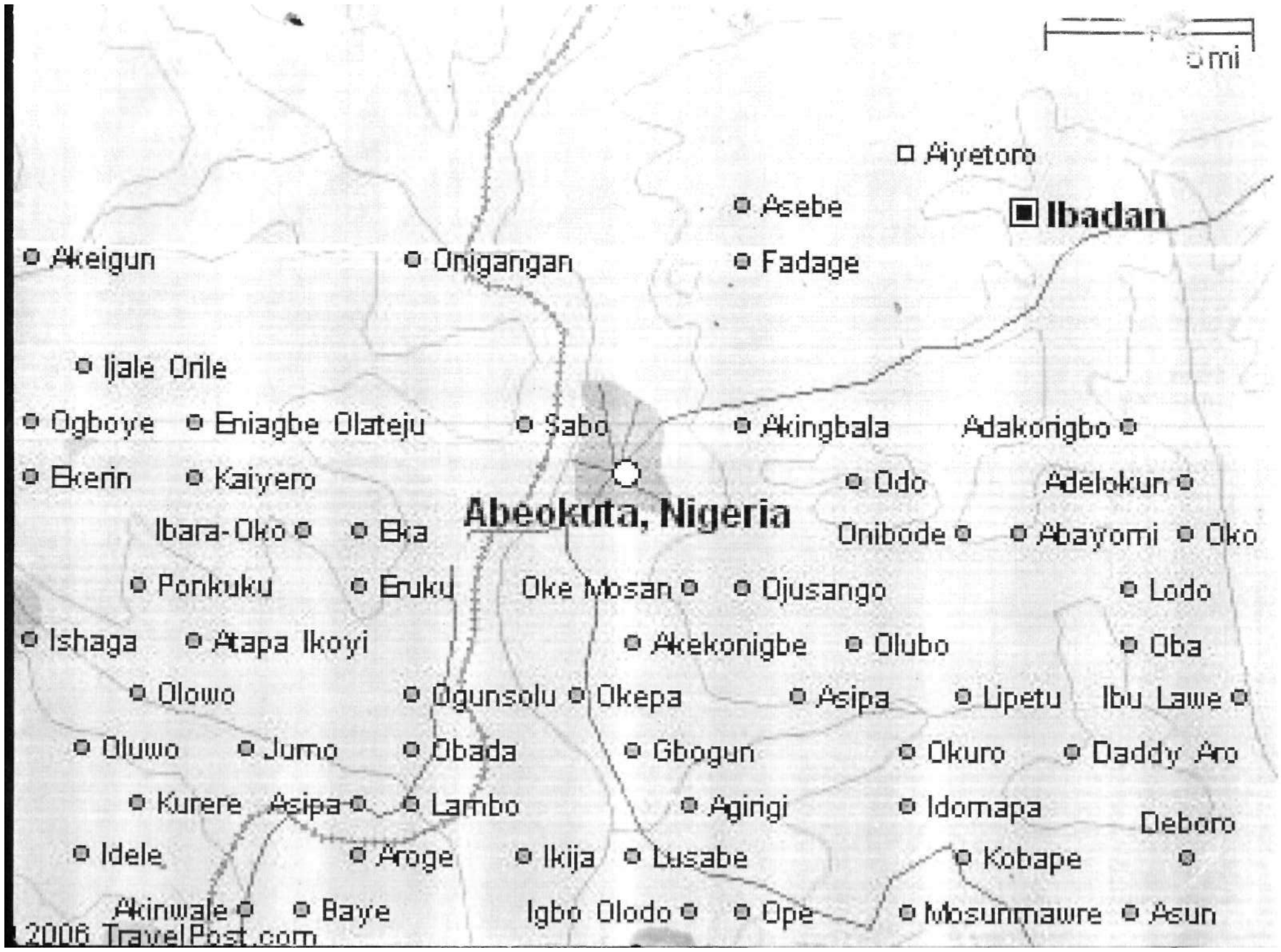
It appearss rather funny that the Action Group which oppresses its opponents seriously by ways of Arbitrary assessments and other Measures of Victimisation in the Western Region now accuses the N.P.C.

Thousands of poor people have been rendered much poorer by Arbitrary taxation. Thousands of our poor women were alleged to be arrested by sanitory inspectors and heavily fined in Customary Courts simply because they arennot Action Group members.

Charity begins at home is a wise adage. If the Action Group knows well that Victimisation and oppression are wrong let them start an example in their own region. Let the Action Group removes the beam in its eyes before trying to remove the mote in another man's eyes.

E. O. Agbinoke

Sec. C.P.P. Abeokuta


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Atapa Ikoyi
Akekonigbe
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Oba
Olowo
Ogunsolu
Okepa
Asipa
Lipetu
Ibu Lawe
Oluwo
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Obada
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