

NATIONALISTS IN NIGERIA FROM 1914 – 1960

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the nationalists in Nigeria from 1914-1960 .the country we now called Nigeria was not in existing before 1914. Prior to that lime we only have a various group of people located in various geographical zones, these people were organized under different political units. What we have before colonialism was a different kingdom, empires and states. For example the Old Oyo empire, the Kanem- Borno empire. The Hausa state, Benin kingdom, Niger-delta state, Igala kingdom and Jukun Empire.

Keywords: Nationalism, Nationalists, Colonialism, Colonial Rule and Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Colonialism was strongly resisted by the then leaders of these traditional Nigeria. Example of these rulers includes King Jaja of Opobo. Nana of Itsekiri, NagwamutSe of Kwantagora and Attahiru of Sokoto. History refers to these people and their accomplice basilic early or proto-nationalist. But because of the highly sophisticated modern warfare owned by colonialist they were able to override them and brought these various political units under one political entity. Not-with-standing the country we now call Nigeria was blessed with other nationalists who are intelligent fearless. Dedicated courageous and educated. These people who history will never forget in the political history of Nigeria. These include people like Herbert Macaulay Amino Kano, Obafemi Awolowo, Ahmudu Bello (Sardauna of Sokoto), Nnamdi Azikiwe. Abubakar Talawa Balewa. Ernest Ekoli. James Churchill Vaughan. Anthony Enahoro. AlvanIkoku etc.

Sir Herbert Macaulay

Herbert Samuel Heels Macaulay (November 14. 1 864- May 7. 1946 was a Nigerian nationalist, politician. engineer. journalist, and musician and architect .and considered by many Nigerians as the founder of Nigerian nationalism (Aderinto, 2015) Macaulay was born in Lagos on November 14, 1864, to Sierra Leone Creole parents. He was the grandson of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowder and the son of the founder of the first secondary school in Nigeria, the CMS Grammar School, Lagos. After going to a Christian missionary school, he

took a job as a clerk at the Lagos Department of Public Works. From 1891 to 1894 he studied civil engineering in Plymouth, England. On his return, he worked for the Crown as a land inspector. He left his position in 1898 due to growing distaste for Nigeria's position as a British colony. Macaulay was one of the first Nigerian nationalists and for most of his life a strong opponent of British rule in Nigeria. Macaulay became very popular and on June 24, 1923, he founded the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), the first Nigerian political party. The party won all the seats in the elections of 1923, 1928 and 1933. In October 1938 the more radical Nigerian Youth Movement. Fought and won elections for the Lagos Town Council, ending the dominance of Macaulay and his National Democratic Party. In 1944 Macaulay founded the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) together with Nnamdi Azikiwe and became its secretary-general. The NCNC was a patriotic organization designed to bring together Nigerians of all stripes to demand independence. In 1946 Macaulay fell ill in Kano and later died in Lagos. The leadership of the NCNC went to Azikiwe, who later became the first President of Nigeria (nairaland.com, 2016)

Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello (1909-1966)

The Nigerian political Leader Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello (1909-1966) was the leading Northern spokesman during Nigerians' drives to gain independence from the British. Ahmadu Bello was born in Rabah, North West State, a descendant of Uthman Bn Fodio, the renowned 19th-century Moslem leader of Northern Nigeria. Bello received his education first at the Sokoto Provincial School. Then at Katsina Teacher Training College. In 1934. After teaching several years in the Sokoto Middle School. He entered the emirate administration as district head of Rabah. In 1938 he made an unsuccessful claim to the office of Sultan Sokoto. The new sultan immediately conferred upon him the traditional, now Honorary, title of Sarkauna and elevated him to the Sokoto Native Authority Council (I3BC Hausa News, 2010). Bello became involved in broader political concerns. In 1945 he assisted in the formation of the Youth Social Circle in Sokoto, a discussion group of Northern educators and civil servants. In 1948 this organization affiliated with the newly founded Northern People's Congress (NPC), originally conceived as a cultural organization but destined to become the leading political party in Northern Nigeria. Bello became increasingly active in the NPC and ultimately its president. In 1949 he was elected by the Sokoto Native Authority to the Northern House of Assembly. During the 1949-1950 discussions of constitutional reform, he became a leading spokesperson for, the Northern view of the federal government. In 1952 in the first elections held in Northern Nigeria, he was elected to the Northern House of Assembly, where he became a member of the regional executive council and minister of works. In the following year, he accepted the regional portfolio of community development and local government. In 1954 he became the first premier of Northern Nigeria, a position he held until his death (Paden, 1986). In another version of Ahmadu Bello biography, it had been said that, as a president of the NPC and premier of the Northern Region, Bello was perhaps the most politically powerful person in Nigeria during the first 5 years of independence. Despite this, his role in national politics remained anomalous. He had an expressed distaste for the Southern style of politics and had no desire for participation in the federal government, which would require his residence in Lagos. Although he participated in national discussions on constitutional reform and from 1952 to 1959 was a member of the Federal House of Representatives, he was concerned primarily with the development of the North and the protection of that region from what he considered Southern incursions. Therefore, when

Nigeria became independent in 1960, Bello chose to remain premier of the Northern Region, while the deputy president of the NPC, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, became prime minister of the Federation (BBC Hausa, 2010)

In 1964 Bello led the NPC into an alliance with the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) of the Western Region. The coalition party, called the Nigerian National Alliance won a clear majority in the federal elections of 1964. In the fall of 1965, the NNDP claimed victory in a hotly disputed regional election, and the western region lapsed into chaos. Bello's attempt to support his political allies on this occasion was immediate, though not sole, cause for an attempted coup d'état in January 1966, during which Bello was assassinated.

Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe

Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe (November 16, 1904 — May 11, 1996), usually referred to as Nnamdi Azikiwe and popularly known as was one of the leading figures of modern Nigerian nationalism who became the first President of Nigeria after Nigeria secured its independence from the United Kingdom on 1 October 1960, holding the presidency throughout the Nigerian First Republic. Azikiwe was born on - November 16, 1904, in Zungeru, Northern Nigeria. His parents were Igbo; his father Obed-Edom Chukwuemeka Azikiwe (1879—1958) a clerk in the British Administration of Nigeria and his mother was Rachel Ogbenye Azikiwe. After studying at Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar, Azikiwe went to the United States. While there he attended Howard University, Washington DC before enrolling and graduating - from Lincoln University, Pennsylvania in 1930. He obtained a Master's degree in 1933 from the University of Pennsylvania. He worked as an instructor at Lincoln before returning to Nigeria. After teaching at Lincoln, Azikiwe, in November 1934, took the position of editor for the African Morning Post, a daily newspaper in Accra, Ghana. In that position, he promoted a pro-African nationalist agenda. Smertin, has described his writing there: "In his passionately denunciatory articles and public statements he censured the existing colonial order: the restrictions on the Africans' right to express their opinions, and racial discrimination also criticized those Africans who belonged to the 'elite' of colonial society and favoured retaining the existing order, as they regarded it as the basis of their well-being." He returned to Lagos, Nigeria, in 1937 and founded the West African Pilot which he used as a vehicle to foster Nigerian nationalism. He founded the Zik Group of Newspapers, publishing multiple newspapers in cities across the country. Azikiwe became active in the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), the first genuinely nationalist organization in Nigeria. However, in 1941 he backed Samuel Akinsanya to be NYM candidate for a vacant seat in the Legislative Council, but the executive selected Ernest Ikoli instead. Azikiwe and Akinsanya both resigned from the NYM among accusations of discrimination against non-Lagos members, taking most non-Yoruba members with them. After successful journalism. Azikiwe entered into politics, co-founding the National and the Cameroons (NCNC) alongside Herbert Macaulay in 1944. He became the secretary-general of the National Council in 1946 and was elected to Legislative Council of Nigeria in the year. In 1951, he became the leader of the opposition to the government of Obafemi Awolowo in the Western Region's House of Assembly. In 1952 he moved to the Eastern Region, and was elected to the position of Chief Minister and in 1955 became Premier of Nigerian Eastern Region. On November 16, 1960, he became the Governor-General and on the same day became the first Nigerian named to the Queen's Privy Council. With the proclamation of a

republic in 1963, he became the first President of while Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was the Prime Minister. Azikiwe and his civilian colleagues were removed from power in the military coup of January 15, 1966. During the Biafran (1967—1970) war of secession, Azikiwe became a spokesman for the nascent republic and an adviser to its leader Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. After the war, he served as Chancellor of Lagos University from 1972 to 1976. He joined the Nigerian People's Party in 1977, making unsuccessful bids for the presidency in 1979 and again in 1983. He left politics involuntarily after the military coup on December 31, 1981. He died on May 11, 1996 at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, in Enugu, Enugu State, after a protracted illness.

Alvan Ikoku

Alvan Ikoku was a Nigerian educator, statesman, activist and politician. Born on August 19, 1900 in Arochuku, present-day Abia State. From 1911 to 1914, he was educated at the Arochuku Government Primary School and from 1915 to 1920. He attended Hope Waddell College, Calabar where he was a student under James Emmanuel Aggrey and was mates with Akanu Ibiam and Eyo Eyo Esua. In 1920, he received his first teaching appointment with the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria and Church of Scotland at Itigidi and two years later became a senior tutor at St. Paul's Teachers Training College, Awka, Anambra State. While teaching at Awka, Ikoku earned his University of London degree in Philosophy in 1928. Through its external programme, soon after, in 1931, Ikoku established a Co-Educational Secondary School in West Africa: the Aggrey Memorial Secondary School located in Arochuku and named after his mentor James E.K. Aggrey, an eminent Ghanaian educationist (Falola, 1999). In 1946, after several constitutional changes allowing more Nigerians in the legislative chambers, he was nominated to the Eastern Nigeria House of Assembly and assigned to the ministry of education. In 1947 he became part of the Legislative Council in Lagos as one of three representatives of the Eastern Region. Ikoku fostered considerable government interest in the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), becoming instrumental in the Legislative Council's acceptance of 44 NUT 'proposals amending various educational ordinances. He did encounter resistance through much of the 1950s when the Colonial Government repeatedly rejected his NUT recommendations to introduce uniform education in Nigeria. After national independence, Ikoku and his union were vindicated, when these recommendations became the basis for education policy in the new nation. Upon retiring from government politics, Ikoku served on various educational bodies in the country. He was a member of the West African Educational Council (WAEC) and the Council of the University of Ibadan as well as Chairman, Board of Governors of the Aviation Training Centre. Honors for his contribution to education in Nigeria include an honorary Doctorate in Law (1965) at a special convocation of the University of Ibadan, the establishment of the Alvan Ikoku College of Education, and his commemoration on a bill of Nigerian currency, the Ten Naira note. He died on November 18, 1971 (ibid, 1999)

Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (Prime minister of Nigeria)

Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, (born 1912, Bauchi, Northern Nigeria died January 1966, near Ifo, Nigeria), Nigerian politician, deputy leader of the Northern People's Congress (NPC), and the first federal prime minister (1957-66). A commoner by birth, an unusual origin for a political leader in the NPC. Balewa was both a defender of northern special interests and an

advocate of reform and Nigerian unity (Encyclopedia Britannica 2015). Further explain that Balewa as a teacher by profession and was one of the first Northern Nigerians to be sent to the London University Institute of Education (1945). ON his return in 1946 he was elected to the House of Assembly of the Northern Region and in 1947 was one of its five representative council to the Central Legislative Council in Lagos. He was re-elected to the assembly in 1951 despite the hospitality of some conservative emirs of the generally Muslim North.

From 1952 until his death. Balewa served in the federal government. He was a minister of works and of transport in the middle 1950s, and then. As leader of the NPC in the House of Representative, he was made the first prime minister of Nigeria in 1957. After the pre-independence elections of 1959, he again became prime minister in a coalition government of the NPC and Nnamdi Azikiwe's National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons and he continued to hold that position after Nigeria was Officially granted independence in 1960. As Prime Minister of Nigeria. He had his powers circumscribed by the federal structure of the government, which reserved more authority for the regions. Balewa period unable to mitigate the growing tensions of 1964-66, manifested by a partial boycott of the election in 1964, army unrest, and outbreaks of violence in the Western Region. He was killed in the first of two Nigerian army Coups in 1966. In another source Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the First Prime Minister of independent Nigeria (1960-1966) was born in Tafawa Balewa, a town in Bauchi State, and was educated as a teacher. He later became a politician and was. Elected to the Northern Region's House of Assembly in 1947, and in 1951, to the Federal House of Representatives. He was a founder and until his death, the deputy president of the Northern People's Congress. Tafawa Balewa became Prime Minister in 1957. And at independence in 1960, he remained in the post. Sir Tafawa Balewa was widely admired for his simplicity and humility. He was murdered in January 1966 military coup (naira land 2016)

Chief Obafemi Jeremiah Oyeniyi Awolowo, GCFR (1909— 1987)

Chief Obafemi Jeremiah Oyeniyi Awolowo, was a Nigerian nationalist and statesman who played a key role in Nigeria's independence movement, the First and Second Republics and the Civil War. He is most notable as the outstanding first premier at the Western Region but was also a successful federal commissioner for finance and vice president of the Federal Executive Council in the Civil War and as thrice a major contender for his country's highest office. A native of Ikenne in Ogun State of south-western Nigeria. He started his career, like some of his Well-known contemporaries as a nationalist in the Nigerian Youth Movement in which he rose to become Western Provincial Secretary Awolowo was responsible for much of the progressive social legislation that has made Nigeria a modern nation (Booth. 1981). He was the Leader of Government business and Minister of Local Government Finance and first Premier of the Western Region under Nigerian parliamentary system, from 1952 to 1959. He was the official Leader the Opposition in the federal parliament to the Balewa government from 1959 to 1963. In recognition of all these, Awolowo was the first individual in the modern era to be named Leader of the Yoruba (Yoruba: Asiwaju Awon Yoruba or Asiwaju Omo Oduwa) (Historic dictionary of the British Empire, 2016)

Obafemi Awolowo was born on 6 March 1909 in Ikenne, in the present-day Ogun State of Nigeria. His father was a farmer and sawyer who died when Obafemi was about seven years old. He attended various schools and then became a teacher in Abeokuta, after which he

qualified as a shorthand typist. Subsequently, he served as a clerk at the famous Wesley College, as well as a correspondent for the Nigerian Times. It was after this that he embarked on various business ventures to help raise funds to travel to the UK for further studies (Sklar, 2004 and Glickman, 1992)

Following his education at Wesley College, Ibadan (a teachers' college). In 1927, he enrolled at the University of London as an External Student and graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com.), he went to the UK in 1944 to study law at the University of London and was called to the Bar by the Honorable Society of the Inner Temple on 19 November 1946. In 1949 Awolowo founded the Nigerian Tribune, the oldest surviving private Nigerian newspaper, which he used to spread nationalist consciousness among his fellow Nigerians (Nigerian tribute. 2011. Glickman. 1992 and Shillington, 2013). While in London, Awolowo formed in 1947 the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, an association dedicated to the preservation and advancement of Yoruba culture in the new world conditions. Thereafter, he founded the Action Group in 1951. This party, alone among the major political parties, demanded immediate independence based on federalism. He led the Action Group (which was also the first Nigerian party to write and present an election manifesto) to victory in the Western Regional elections of 1951 and was named Leader of Government Business and, minister for Local Government and Finance, ultimately becoming the first premier of the Region when it was elevated to a federating unit. As the leader of the Action Group, Awolowo represented the Western Nigerian in all the constitutional conferences intended to advance Nigeria on the path to independence. He was the official Leader of the opposition to the Balewa Government from 1959 to 1963 after he had left the Western Region to contest elections to the prime minister ship of Nigeria at the center. He was chosen by the Yoruba elite as their political leader or, formally, Leader of the Yorubas, during the peak goodwill period following his release from imprisonment for about three years on the charge of plotting to overthrow the national government, and was later appointed Federal Commissioner for Finance and Vice-President of the Federal Executive Council in Yakubu Gowon's Federal Military Government during the Civil War. In those capacities, he played a major role in preserving the Nigerian federation. As chairman and presidential candidate of the Unity Party of Nigeria, which contested the elections of 1979 and 1983 on a welfare platform, Awolowo polled the second-highest number of votes. He retired from politics on the termination of the Second Republic in 1983.

Awolowo remains perhaps Nigeria's most controversial politician. He has been attacked for electorally defeating Nnamdi Azikiwe, a then more nationally prominent political figure and an Igbo from the neighboring Eastern Region, in the contest to control the West, Awolowo's home region. He has also come under attacks from these crusaders for what they alleged to be his hard-line stance against the secessionist Igbo's of the Eastern Region in the Civil War. He was equally regarded by most Hausa-Fulani politicians as the major threat to the ethno-religious hegemony of their people in Nigeria. Nevertheless, he is widely revered for his strong nationalist activism, which roused the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) nationalists out of their complacency and helped hasten the march to independence. This was attained in 1960 following early home rule for the people of the Western Region which Awolowo secured in 1957. He is also admired for his major role in serving the federation in the Civil War and for his dynamic and welfare leadership. In particular, he pioneered Nigeria's free primary education and free health care programmes and

implemented the first minimum-wage policy by a Nigerian government at any level; also established the first television service in Africa and the first — Nigerian university (The University of Ibadan) whose creation was not even recommended by the Federal Government of the day.

Awolowo was Nigerians foremost federalist. In his "Path to Nigerian Freedom" (1947)— the first systematic federalist manifesto by a Nigerian politician — he advocated federalism as the only basis for equitable national integration and, as head of the Action Group, he led demands for a federal constitution which was introduced in the 1954 Lyttleton Constitution, following primarily the model proposed by the Western Region delegation led by him. As premier, he proved to be and was viewed as a man of vision and a dynamic administrator. Awolowo was also the country's leading social democratic politician. He supported limited public ownership and limited central planning in government. He believed that the state should channel Nigeria's resources into education and state-led infrastructural development (BOOTH, 1981) Controversially, and at considerable, expense, he introduced free primary education for all and free health care for children in the Western Region, established the first television service in Africa in 1959, and the Oduduwa Group, all of which were financed from the highly lucrative cocoa industry which was the mainstay of the regional economy (Wikipedia, 2016) Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Osun State (formerly University of Ife), Obafemi Awolowo Stadium (formerly the Liberty Stadium) and the Obafemi Awolowo Institute of Government and Public Policy in Lekki, Lagos State. His portrait is on the ₦1.00 naira note, He was also the author of several publications on the political structure and future prospects of Nigeria, the most prominent of which are Path to Nigerian Freedom, Thoughts on the Nigerian Constitution, Strategies and Tactics of the People's Republic of Nigeria. In 1992, the Obafemi Awolowo Foundation was founded as an independent, non-profit, non-partisan organization committed to furthering the symbiotic interaction of public policy and relevant scholarship with a view to promoting the overall development of the Nigerian nation. The Foundation was launched by the President of Nigeria at that time, General Ibrahim Babangida, at the Liberty Stadium, Ibadan however, his most important requests (Styled Awoism) are his exemplary integrity, his welfares, his contributions to hastening the process of decolonization and his consistent and reasoned advocacy of federalism based on ethno linguistic self-determination and uniting politically strong states-as the best basis for Nigerian unity. Awolowo died peacefully at his Ikenne home, the Efunyela Hall (so named after his mother), on 9 May 1987, at the age of 78 and was laid to rest in Ikenne, amid tributes across political and ethnoreligious divides.

Ernest Ikoli

Ernest Ikoli (1893 — 1960) was a Nigerian nationalist and pioneering journalist. He was the president of the Nigerian Youth Movement and in 1942, represented Lagos in the legislative council. The lie was sometimes called the Làsiki of Lagos for the intellectual aloofness in partisan journalism sometimes evident in his writings in the 1940s and 1950s, he was a resident correspondent of the London Times. He was born at Nembe in present-day Bayelsa State in 1893. He was educated at Bonny Government School, Rivers State and Kings College, Lagos where he emerged as a bright student. After completing his studies at King's College, he became a mathematics and science tutor at the school - a post which he left to pursue a career in Journalism after a perceived racial slight from one the school's teachers.

Ikoli is remembered today as one of the pacesetters of Nigerian journalism and the independence struggle. He was the first editor of the Daily Times of Nigeria and the publisher of the now-defunct African Messenger. Prior to joining the Daily Times and publishing, he worked as an editorial assistant at the Lagos Weekly Record (another paper which has since disappeared). In 1942 he was elected onto the Legislative Council and was re-elected in 1946. In the 1930s he was one of the founders of the Nigerian Youth Movement and as once the movement's president. During this period, the movement was engaged in an intense power struggle with Herbert Macaulay's NNDP. Ikoli later left the Daily Times and founded the weekly Service in 1934 prior to which he had started his own paper, the Daily Telegraph. Ernest Ikoli started the Nigerian Youth Movement with other prominent Nigerians like H.O Davis, J.C. Vaughn and Oba (Wikipedia 2016.)

Samuel Akinsaya (aka General Saki). The movement originally started as the Lagos youth movement, it was partly formed to voice concerns about the lacklustre colonial higher education policy. 'The movement was largely Lagos based but as varied members entered the organization, it metamorphosed to become the Nigerian Youth Movement; a political action group with a nationalistic flavor and outlook. Nnamdi Azikiwe, an important political personality joined the group in 1936 and brought in a large followership. In 1941, when Sir Kofu Abayomi, a Lagos leader of the movement, resigned his position at the legislative council, an election was held among NYM members to select a candidate to contest the seat. In the primary election, Samuel Akinsanya collated the most votes, second was Ernest Ikoli, but with the support of H.O Davis, Awolowo, Akintola and a few others, the central committee of the organization which had the right to review the results presented Ernest Ikoli as the movement's candidate. Though Oba Akinsanya immediately congratulated Mrikoli, he later reneged and contested but lost the seat as an independent candidate with the support of his primary backer, Nnamdi Azikiwe. The loss of Akinsanya in the election led to his exit from the movement, Azikiwe also left the movement; both took away most of their supporters (Nairalaiid, 2015).

Chief Anthony Enahoro

Chief Anthony Enahoro, (22 July 1923-15 December 2010) was Nigeria's foremost anti-colonial and pro-democracy activists, he was born the eldest of twelve children in Uromi in the present Edo State of Nigeria. Chief Enahoro has had a long and distinguished career in the press, politics, the civil service and the pro-democracy movement. Educated at the Government School Uromi, Government School Owo and King's College, Lagos, Chief Enahoro became the editor of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's newspaper, the Southern Nigerian Defender, Ebadan, in 1944 at the age of 21, thus becoming Nigeria's youngest editor ever. later became the editor of Zik's Cornet, Kano, 1945-9, also associate editor West African Pilot, Lagos, editor-in-chief Morning Star from 1950-53. And In 1953, Chief Anthony Enahoro became the first to move the motion for Nigeria's independence and consequences, he has been regarded by academics and many Nigerians as the Hither of "Nigeria State" Though his motion was rejected by Parliament and the northern MP's staged a walkout as a consequence of the attempt. The actual successful movement of the motion for Nigeria's independence did not take place until 1958.

Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, (1900-1978)

Born Francis Abigail Olufunmilayo Thomas to Daniel Olumeyuwa Thomas and Lucretia PhyLlis Omoyeni Adeosolu. was a teacher, political mpaighlel, women's rights activist and traditional aristocrat. She served with distinction as one of the most prominent leaders of her generation. She was also the first woman in Nigeria to drive a car (Wikipedia 2016). Ransome Kuti's political activism led to her being described as the doyenne of female rights in Nigeria, as well as to her being regarded as "The Mother of Africa." Early on, she was a very powerful force advocating for the Nigerian woman's right to vote. She was described in 1947, by the West African Pilot as the "Lioness of Lisabi" for her leadership of the women of the Egba clan that she belonged to on a campaign against their arbitrary taxation. That struggle led to the abdication of the Egba high king ObaAdemola II in 1949 (ibid's 2016)

Kuti was the mother of the activists Fela. Anikulapo Kuti, a musician, Beko Ransome-Kuti, a doctor, and Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti, a doctor and a former health minister of Nigeria. Francis Abigail Olufunmilayo Thomas was born on 25 October 1900, in Abeokuta. Her father was a son of a returned slave from Sierra Leone. Who traced is ancestral history back to Abeokuta in what is today Ogun state. Nigeria. She attended the Abeokuta Grammar school for secondary education, and later went to England for further studies. She soon returned to Nigeria and became a teacher. On 20 January 1925. She married the Reverend Israel Oludotun Ransome-Kuti. He also defended the commoners of his country. And was one of the founders of both the Nigeria Union of Teachers and of the Nigerian Union of Students (Strobel. 2001 and Emma. 1997)

Ransome-Kuti received the national honour of membership in the Order of Nigeria in 1965. The University of Ibadan bestowed upon her the honorary doctorate of laws in 1968. She also held a seat in the Western House of Chiefs of Nigeria as an Oloye of the Yoruba people. Throughout her career. she was known as an educator and activist. She and Elizabeth Adekogbe provided dynamic leadership for women's right in the 1950s. She founded an organization for women in Abeokuta. With a membership tally of more than 20,000 individuals spanning both literate and illiterate women, Ransome-Kuti launched the organization into public consciousness when she rallied women against price controls L that were hurting the female merchants of the Abeokuta markets. Trade was one of the major occupations of women in Western Nigeria at the time. In 1939, she led a protest against Native Authorities especiali against the Alake of England. She presented documents alleging able of authority by the Make, who had been granted the right to collect the taxes by his colonial suzerain, the Government of the United Kingdom. Lie subsequently relinquished his crown for a time due to the affair. She! Also oversaw the successful abolishing of separate tax rates for women. In 1953, she founded the Federation of Nigerian Women Societies. This subsequently formed an alliance with the Women's International Democratic Federation. Funmilayo Ransome Kuti campaigned for women's votes. She was for many years a member of the ruling National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons party but was later expelled when she was not elected to a federal parliamentary seat. At the NCNC, she was the treasurer and subsequent president of the Western NCNC women's Association. After her suspension, her political voice was 'diminished due to the direction of national politics, as both of the more powerful members c' the opposition, Awolowo and Adegbenro. Had support close by. However, she never truly ended her activism. In the 1950s she was one of the few women elected to the house of chiefs. At the time, this was one of her homeland's most influential bodies.

She founded the egba or Abeokuta women's Union along with Eniola Soyinka (her sister-in-law and the mother of the Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka) This organization is said to have once had a membership of 20,000 women. Among other things, Funmiayo Ransom Kuli organized workshops for a few illiterate market women. She continued to campaign against taxes and price controls.

During the Cold War and before the independence of her country Funmilayo Kuti travelled widely and angered the Nigerian as well as British and American Government by her contacts with the Eastern Bloc. This included her travel to the former USSR, Hungary and China where she met Mao Zedong. In 1956, her passport was not renewed by the government because it was said that "it can be assumed that it is her intention to influence women with communist ideas and policies." She was also refused U.S. visa because the American government alleged that she was communist. Prior to independence she founded the Commoners Peoples Party in an attempt to challenge the ruling NCNC, ultimately denying them victory in her area. She received 4,665 votes to the NCNC's 9,755, thus allowing the opposition Action Group (which had 0,443 votes) to win. She was one of the delegates who negotiated Nigeria's independence with the British government.

In old age her activism was overshadowed by that of her three sons, who provided effective opposition to various Nigerian military juntas. In 1978 Funmilayo O was thrown from a third-floor window of her son Fela's compound, a commune known as the Kalakuta Republic, when it was stormed by one thousand armed military personnel. She lapsed into a coma in February of that year, and died on 13 April 1978, -as a result of her injuries. The following are some of her achievements during and after her death. Proposed N 5000 note-controversy. One of the women elected to the native House of Chiefs, serving as an Oloye of the Yoruba people. Ranking member of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons. Treasurer and President Western Women Association of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons.

Madam Alimotu Pelewura (1865-1951)

Alimotu Pelewura (d. 1951) was a Nigerian trader who was the leader of Lagos market women. Advocacy group and was also a political ally of Herbert Macaulay. The market women association of which Pelewura was the head was one of the most important women's organizations in Lagos during the colonial period.

Pelewura was born in Lagos to a large polygynous family; she was the elder of two children born by her biological mother. Her mother was a fish trader and Pelewura also chose fish trading as an occupation. By 1900 she had become an important market women leader and trader and in 1910 was given a title by Oba Eshugbayi Eleko. In the 1920s, she was the leader of the Ereko market and with the support of Herbert Macaulay. She rose to become the leader of the newly formed Lagos Market Women Association (LMWA). The Lagos Market Women's Association was founded in the 1920s by Pelewura and a few other market leaders. Pelewura, a fish trader (wasalaga head) of the Ereko market was the association's premier president during her reign, LMWA protested against imposed taxation and price controls of produce both incidents she believed would impact negatively on the livelihood of

women. In 1932, Pelewura led market women in protest against direct, government taxation of women. When rumours surfaced about a proposed tax on women, Pelewura was a member of a committee that marched of the colonial government house in protest against taxation on women. That same year and as a result of her leadership of the protest. She became a member of the Ilu Committee organized by the Oba of Lagos serving as a representation of women in the traditional council. In the mid 1930s, she led a protest against the relocation of the Ereko market to the Oluwole area of Lagos. Pelewura and some Ereko market women attempted to physically block any relocation action by authorities which caused Pelewura and other protesters to be detained. The market women in Lagos rallied in her support and she and other women who were detained were released.

In 1940 the colonial government proposed a new taxation plan for women who earned above 50 pounds. Female taxation was a novelty in Yoruba land and the women again rose in protest. Pelewura and other women objected because of the novelty and the challenging economic difficulties as a result of World War II which had resulted in an increase in unemployment. Though not many market women among the 8000 plus members of her organization earned above 50 pounds, she felt it could be a slippery slope towards full taxation of women. However, on taxation of women. The colonial government did not budge but responded by increasing the taxable income to those earning more than 200 pounds.

In 1939, Pelewura became an executive member of the Nigerian Union of Young Democrats. Militant and youthful parts that were closely aligned with NNDC. She sometimes acted as a speaker in NNDC candidates even though women were disenfranchised. She was also briefly a member of the Oyinkan Abayomi led Nigerian Women's Party. During World War II, inflation rose in Lagos as a result of food scarcity. In 1941, to control the wartime economy, the government enacted a flexible price control policy on certain food products that will be reviewed periodically. Due to widespread opposition and non-adherence to the policy, the government made plans to control the sale of food products through multinationals. The market women led by Pelewura objected to the policy stating that it will deprive women of needed income. However, the colonial government was adamant on keeping the price regulation of produce. The situation led to conflicts between LWMA and the colonial government. Pelewura died in 1951, she was succeeded by one of her followers, Ahibatu Mogaji (Ekwaku, 2011, Johnson, 1978, Mogaji 2016 and Smith, 2008).

CONCLUSION

Conclusively Nigeria has many nationalists who strived to see the progress and unity of the country. They are over thousands of nationalists but for the purpose of this discussion we limit our self to those old one who always history remembered as Nigerian heroes. Some of them appeared in the national currency where other some important places and event named after them.

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