

For Women and The Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria.
By Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Emma Mba: (University of Chicago Press, 1997).

The biography, *For Women and The Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria*, by historians Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Emma Mba focuses on the life of Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti (FRK), a western-educated feminist and activist who fought for her countrywomen's suffrage and equal rights during the struggle for nationalism in Nigeria. She was born in the British-ruled Nigeria and died in the independent Federal Republic of Nigeria.¹ Johnson-Odim and Mba explain how FRK created various clubs and organizations to promote women's suffrage and nationalism in order to reverse the impact of colonialism and its ideology. She created a "young ladies club" for the daughters of the elite Ijebu-Ode with the purpose of creating traditional Christian wives but the club steadily became more politicised and changed its name to Abeokuta Women's Union (AWU). This group radicalized its members' perspective on gender and aimed to demystify colonialism and imperialistic ideology.² Women under FRK's leadership began organizing mass demonstrations and AWU became the Nigerian Women's Union with the emphasis on enfranchisement of women. FRK also went on to create the West African Students Union which was a nationalist and anti-colonialist organization.

Organizing the book in seven chapters, Johnson-Odim and Mba seek to portray Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti's personal and political life and how her activism led to changes in Nigeria. Chapter one discusses the historical background that led to the emergence of FRK political career³. Chapter two serves as a background information on Funmilayo Ransome-Kutie and her family, from their lineage to their religion and to her education⁴. Chapter three describes

¹ Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Emma Mba, *For Women and The Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 1.

² *Ibid.*, 38.

³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴ *For Women and The Nation*, Johnson-Odim and Mba, 26-30.

Funmilayo Ransome-Kutie's dilemma of trying to balance her time and energy between her family as a housewife, her teaching job, and her participation in political programs⁵. Chapter four showcases how FRK's courage and determination gave her recognition both nationally and internationally as a heroine for fighting for women's rights⁶. Chapter five discusses how and why FRK lost commanding influence in national politics during the Nigerian Civil War⁷. Chapter six explores FRK's active role as political figure in the international scene and although she had the option to move elsewhere, she chose to remain in Nigeria and continued to work from there⁸. The final chapter, details Rasome-Kuit's contribution to Nigerian education, Aberokuta Grammar School and her conflicts with the brutal Nigerian dictatorship which is believed to have precipitated her death⁹. This chapter also discusses how Rasome-Kuit's children have continued their parents legacy by being active in protest against human rights violations¹⁰.

The historians, Johnson-Odim and Mba were able to connect Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti's personal life and political views to the movement that emphasized the enfranchisement of women and anticolonialism ideas in Nigeria. This book is a bibliography of Funmilayo Ransome-Kuit that details how her political activities and ideas encouraged others to fight colonialism and demand women suffrage in Nigeria. This book would be a great read for anyone interested in women studies and African studies with an emphasis in Nigeria or for anyone who is interested in knowing more about Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and how her involvement in politics has shaped Nigerian politics for the better.

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⁵Ibid., 58.

⁶ Ibid., 94.

⁷ Ibid., 122.

⁸ Ibid., 151.

⁹ Ibid., 168.

¹⁰ Ibid., 178.

¹¹ The author, being also an editor, recused themselves from the editing process regarding this article. It received no special treatment and was required to conform to all standard requirements.