

Monuments & Metamorphosis

SOME of the pictures forming the proceeding album originated from Mrs Olu-

funmilayo Ransome-Kuti's private collection. They tell in part the stories of the Kuti family beginning from Fela Ransome (Anikulapo) Kuti's grandfather, Josiah,

a Reverend canon under the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) whose ministry dates back to the turn of the century with headquarters in Ake, Abeokuta

but also with evangelistic thrusts in other towns and villages in the province. Josiah's son, Oludotun Daodu also an ordained priest under the Anglican Communion was to pioneer and head one of the earliest privately run Secondary Grammar Schools in the entire region, Abeokuta Grammar School in Igbein Abeokuta, supported by his wife Olufunmilayo, who administered the junior section of the school. Much of the family history is rendered in the autobi-



Notes by
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ography by a cousin of the Kutis, the playwright Wole Soyinka in *Ake The Years of Childhood* (Rex Collings 1981, London). Soyinka himself a son of the headmaster of the Ake Mission School was raised in the Ake

Parsonage, surrounded by the Ake orchards and rockcrest buildings once inhabited by the very Rev. J.J. Ransome-Kuti and before that, the Bishop Ajayi Crowther. Accounts of the events leading to the formation of the Egba Women's Union under the leadership of Mrs Olu (Funmilayo) Ransome kuti and Eniola Soyinka, the playwright's mother, along with the Union's initial literacy campaign among its ranks - to which Soyinka was enlisted as a boy instructor and latterly at the height of the crises as an errand boy - including a detailed report on the women's uprising itself, and others, abound in the narration.

RIGHT:

*The Reverend Josiah Ransome-Kuti. Fela once told the popular music scholar and guitarist, John Collins (see *Diary on the Black President Film*) that he was determined to undo the entire missionary work of his grandfather.*



LEFT:

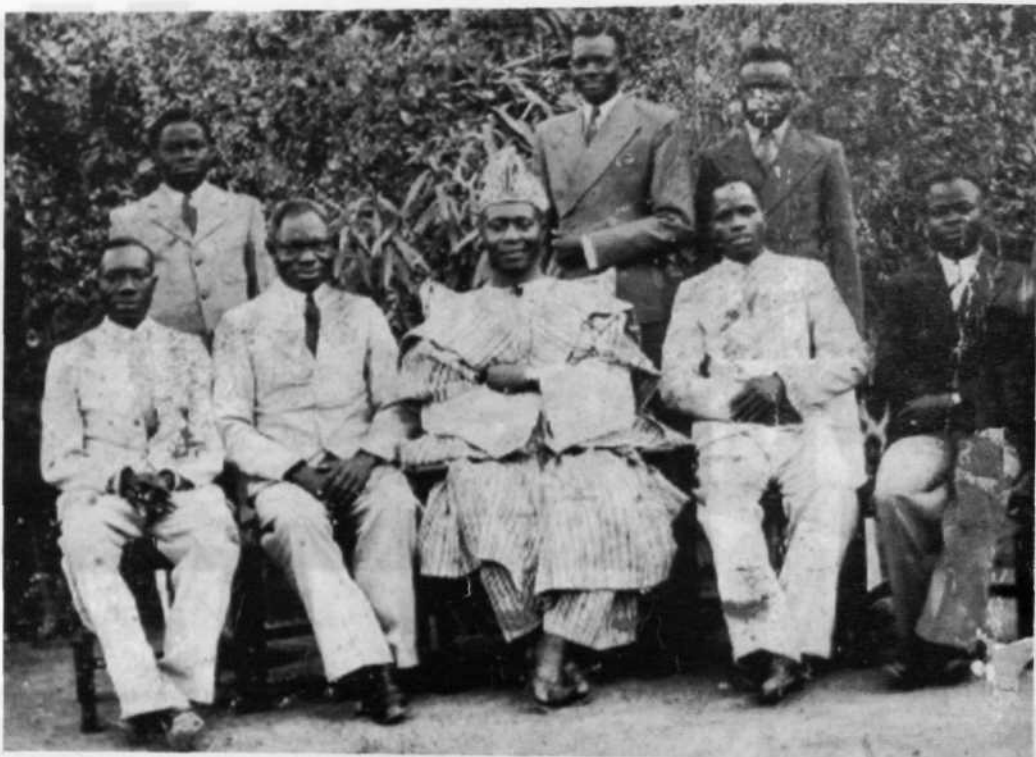
Mrs Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti's mother.



BELOW:

Mrs Kuti and a friend, at home within the AGS compound. Soyinka and other sources recount the high level of discipline at the AGS as evidenced by the neat lawns and whitewashed stones peeping in from the background of the photograph.





ABOVE:

Reverend Oludotun Daodu Ransome Kuti (front row, middle with members of staff of Abeokuta Grammar School, AGS).

BELOW:

Reverend and Mrs Kuti (middle) with the prefects of Abeokuta Grammar School.





LEFT:

Mrs Kuti is reputed to be the first Nigerian woman ever to own and drive a motor car.

BELOW:

Rev Kuti addressing Egba chiefs on matters surrounding the welfare of the peasants of Abeokuta and Ijebu-Ode.

NEXT PAGE, TOP:

Mr Somoye (the Dansaki Egba and vice-president of the Majeobaje Society) speaking to the members of the women's union in the Ake Church square on 26th April, 1948. On the extreme right of photograph is the Ake cenotaph.

NEXT PAGE, BOTTOM:

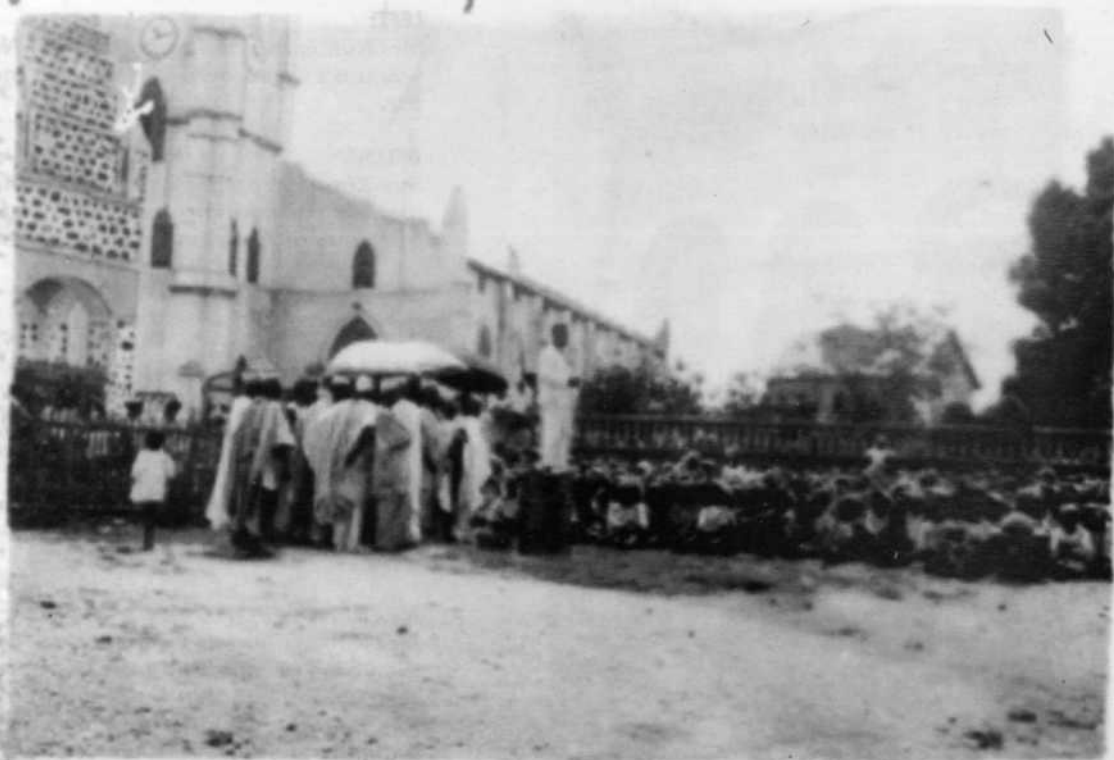
Mrs Kuti visiting at Agenebode. Obviously, the vision of mobilising the women was not restricted to Egbaland, providing a possible explanation for why the effects of the women's defiance of the colonial establishment in Egbaland rapidly carried through the Western region and was eventually routed into Nigeria's statutory books both as universal adult suffrage and abolition of poll tax on women.

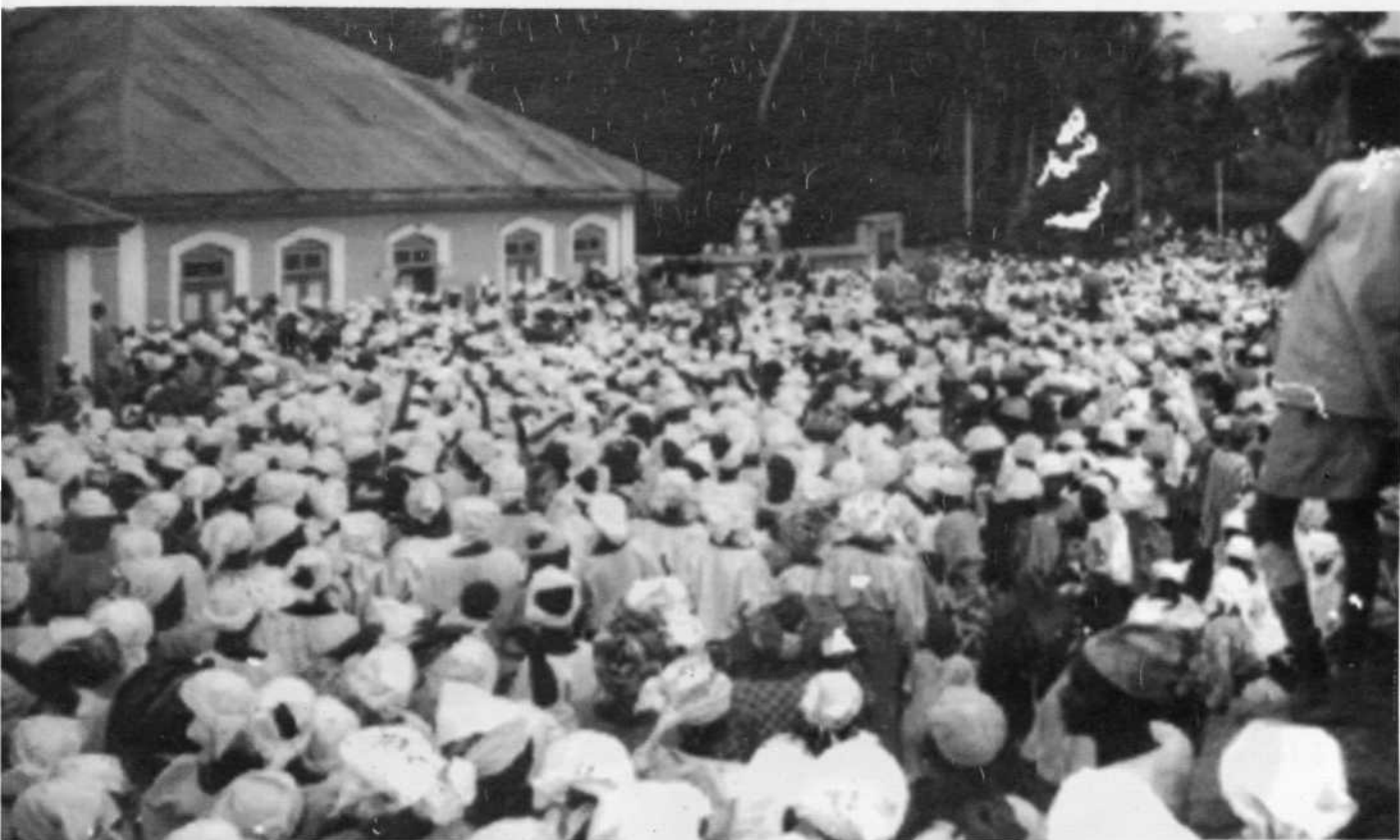
OVE: mobilising all classes of Egba women, both the wives of the illiterate, and the onikaba, the educated. Great speeches by the women's leaders are all included in Wole Soyinka's eye-witness accounts recorded in Ake. Soyinka told the writer - during the scripting of Ake for Nigerian Television - that the speeches were double-checked by the writer's mother, Iniola, 'the Wild Chicken'.

LOW (left and) incarcerated w

1940.







ABOVE:
Mobilising all classes of Egba women, both the *aroso* or the illiterate, and the *onikaba*, the educated. Great speeches by the women's leaders are all included in Wole Soyinka's eye-witness accounts recorded in *Ake*. (Soyinka told the writer - during the scripting of *Ake* for Nigerian Television - that the speeches were doubled-checked with his mother Eniola, 'the Wild Christian'.)

BELOW (left and right):
Incarcerated women from orile *Oko* in Ile-Ife prison. These pictures are dated February 13 1949.





Police and palace guards rehearsing in Abeokuta to keep the peace at the height of the women's uprising.

Loyalists to the ousted Alake of Egbaland, Oba Ademola, mainly palace guards and chiefs keep vigil just before the king's successful ouster.



***Mrs & Rev Kuti receiving the first Nigerian
premier, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa most
probably sometime in 1961.***



*Mrs Kuti in the midst of a 1963
women's conference in the USSR.*





ABOVE:

Fela and Remi (formerly Remi Taylor) Ransome Kuti in London, probably taken in 1960. photograph was sent by Fela to mum, marked 'from Fela and Remi' in Fela's blue ink cursive.

NEXT PAGE, TOP:

Ceremonies marking the anniversary of Rev Kuti's death, probably 1963. Mrs. Kuti is 5th from left, Fela newly returned from England holding son Femi in 6th place. Mrs Eniola Soyinka and her own daughter Folabo in the 7th and 8th positions.

NEXT PAGE, BOTTOM LEFT:

The older Kuti boys, Olikoye (Nigeria's former Health Minister, on the left) and (Olufela), donning Abeokuta pupil uniforms.

NEXT PAGE, BOTTOM RIGHT:

Rev and Mrs Kuti's grandchild, Frances aged 3, under the watchful eyes of 'auntie Betty,' Beaumaris, 1953. Frances latterly Frances Kuboye the well-known singer and television hostess died in the week following the burial of her uncle, Fela.



RIGHT:
Anniversary
supplications at St
David's. Fela 2nd from
right at front row.



LEFT:
Tombstone benediction for Rev
Kuti, Fela praying 3rd from
left with Remi. Mrs Kuti is 4th
from right.

BELOW:
Church foyer pose. Fela and
Remi (front row right) with
daughter, Sola. Sola also
died in Lagos, of cancer, in
the weeks following the
death of her father.





Fela on keyboards, right, performing to the pupils of Mrs Kuti's school.