

“SORROW, TEARS, AND BLOOD”

Fela Anikulapo Kuti and Protest in Nigeria

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Figure 23.1 FelaKuti with Africa '70.

This chapter examines the protest music of Fela Anikulapo Kuti (1938–1997), variously described as Africa’s “most controversial musician” and “most challenging and charismatic popular music performer.”¹ He assumed multiple and often contradictory identities, ranging from rebel, martyr, visionary, revolutionary, and hero, to playboy, rock star, social pervert, troublemaker, and trickster.² Scholars from the humanities and social science have adopted diverse approaches in studying his music and career. Indeed, he is arguably Africa’s most studied musical artiste of the twentieth century.³ Fela’s protest music is grounded in the idiom and realities of Africa’s post-colonial challenges of underdevelopment, corruption, military dictatorship, and abuse of rights—to mention but a few. A dogged fighter to the core, he spent the last twenty-five years of his musical career exposing—through music—the impact of neo-colonialism on Africa’s development, while situating Africa and Africans within global politics and cultural production. In fact, he believed in the power of music in instilling political correctness and sparking a revolution.⁴ Fela did not just criticize African leaders and Western collaborators for their leadership ineptitude: he launched an unsuccessful and unpopular bid to become Nigeria’s president during the 1970s and 1980s.

Fela’s musical career did not start in Nigeria. He formed his first band “Kola Lobitos” while studying at Trinity College of Music, London, between 1958 and 1963. His London clientele included African and West Indian students who enjoyed his uncommon blend of jazz and “highlife music,” the latter being a genre that features a fusion of many different African traditional style, Latin guitar, jazz, and brass-band music. In 1963, he relocated his band to Lagos, Nigeria, but failed to impress audience who were reluctant to substitute the highly popular highlife music with Fela’s awkward experimentation, which was neither jazz nor highlife.⁵ Fela probably decided to blend jazz with highlife because he could not compete with well-established highlife artistes of the period, such as Victor Olaiya and Bobby Benson, among others. In addition, Fela’s style could not favorably compete with Juju, another popular urban music with superstars such as King Sunny Ade and Ebenezer Obey.⁶ However, a breakthrough came in the early 1970s, when he invented “Afrobeat,” a style based on chant, call and response vocals, complex interactive rhythms, American styled funk, and traditional rhythms.⁷

Although most of his songs dealt specifically with political situation in Nigeria, his audience and imaginations transcended the physical and cultural geography of Africa’s most populous country. He realized that Black people, regardless of where they live, experienced similar forms of institutionalized oppression, hence his message appealed to the sentiments of individuals and groups across the African continent and beyond. Fela committed his career to putting Africa on the world map by internationalizing the everyday social realities that people confronted. His resistance music operated at three interrelated levels. First, he perceived himself as a teacher/preacher, instructing and educating the public about issues around poverty, West-

ern cultural implantation, neocolonialism, and underdevelopment.⁸ Second, he channeled his artistic energy directly towards criticizing the Nigerian authorities for abuse of rights, maladministration, and corruption.⁹ Lastly, he attempted to become Nigeria's president by floating an unregistered political party named Movement of the People (MOP) during Nigeria's Second Republic (1979–1983).¹⁰ But this rough schematization of Fela's musical expression is inadequate. He also composed hit songs dealing with sex, love, gender, and the impact of foreign religions on indigenous lifestyle.¹¹ For the purposes of this chapter, we shall be dealing with the first two typologies since they boldly speak to his philosophy as a resistance artiste and his self-imposed responsibility as the “liberator of the masses.”

Political and Sociocultural Context to Fela's Protest Music: Military Dictatorship, Underdevelopment, and Re-Discovering Africa

Fela's musical career was shaped by his family background, the political situation in Nigeria from the 1960s, and, lastly, his exposure to Black Power and the ideologies of the civil right movement during a trip to the United States in 1969. Fela's mother, Funmilayo Ransome Kuti (FRK, 1900–1978), was his earliest role model for “social protest, opposition to repressive authority, a distrust of the ruling class, and the use of ridicule and sexual innuendo as political tools.”¹² She was a renowned women's right activist and one of Nigeria's most fearless anticolonial figures. She founded the Abeokuta Women's Union and led women to protest against several draconian policies of the colonial regime. Aside local politics and her campaign for the improvement of women's welfare, FRK was well known internationally for supporting labor movements. She travelled extensively in communist countries during the 1960s and 1970s, when the Cold War degenerated into large scale violence across the globe. In 1970, FRK was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in recognition of her “noble activities for many years in promoting friendship and mutual cooperation between Nigeria and the Soviet Union.”¹³ She died in 1978 from injuries she sustained when armed military men invaded Fela's home during one of the numerous violent attacks against his criticism of government ineptitude. Fela's father (Israel Oladotun Ransome Kuti) was a well-known labor leader and the pioneering president of the Nigerian Union of Teachers. In sum, Fela grew up learning about issues of social justice and state-sponsored violence against often defenseless citizens.

Fela's musical career was also shaped by the political situation in Nigeria and, indeed, Africa, from the 1960s. The immediate post-independence period in Africa was characterized by enormous crises of underdevelopment. Military dictatorship consumed legitimate democratic governments which were frequently accused of corruption and ethnic bigotry.¹⁴ Illegitimate military regimes, civil wars, and political

instability shattered the hope that the newly independent countries would use their enormous human and natural resources to launch sustainable development projects after political disengagement from European colonial rule.¹⁵ With particular reference to Nigeria, the two successive military coups of 1966, which paved the way for the intervention of the military in politics, was followed by a thirty-month civil war between July 1967 and January 1970. Military dictatorship in Nigeria, as elsewhere in Africa, intensified the abuse of rights and violence against the citizenry. But, more importantly, the embezzlement of state resources and corruption impoverished the people, created a vicious cycle of social unrest, crime, and public disorder. As we shall see, Fela's main detractors were the military leaders, and their local and international collaborators who aided the looting of the nation's treasury. Unlike many African leaders, who used civil wars, military takeover of government, and guerilla warfare to seek justice from the state, Fela's only weapon was music.

Fela's visit to the US in 1969 left an indelible imprint on his ideology towards injustice and the common problems facing Black people, both in continental Africa and the diaspora. He attended several meetings with civil rights leaders and members of the Black Panthers, took part in protests, and witnessed the racial discrimination against Black people in America. He was also exposed to the works of leading African Americans, such as Malcolm X and Karenga Mualani. Although Fela was born and raised in Nigeria, Afrocentric consciousness did not mean much to him until he experienced how African Americans were reconnecting to their African roots. According to Niyi Coker, in one of the most detailed biographies of Fela, "It is right to say that Fela actually discovered Africa and all it had to offer from as far away as Los Angeles."¹⁶ Through an African American lady, Sandra Izsadore (formerly Smith), who would later become his lover, Fela embarked on a re-Africanization which manifested in his attitude, music, and lifestyle.¹⁷ Scholars have argued that his US trip significantly influenced his rebel posture after 1970.¹⁸

Fela returned from his US trip in 1970 and began a process that would completely change the face of his musical career and African popular culture. First, he invented Afrobeat, and changed the name of his band "Kola Lobitos" to "Nigeria 70" and, later, "Africa 70," in a bid to highlight the African component of his style.¹⁹ At the same time, he began to raise the "clenched fist" of the Black Power salute. He also changed the name of the club in which he performed from "Afrospot" to "African Shrine." Before, during, and after performances, he would perform rituals eulogizing prominent African leaders and pan-Africanists like Kwame Nkrumah and Sekou Toure. The renaming of his band and site of performance transcended the desire to openly identify with African traditional religion and culture. He believed that resistance to all forms of state violence must start from self-reclamation of African dignity and pride. Hence, highlighting one's Africanness or a re-Africanization supplied the language and energy required to protest against underdevelopment and the de-Africanization caused by colonialism and the introduction of Christianity and Islam,

the two most popular foreign religions. His first protest music, which was titled "Black Man's Cry" and composed in 1971, extolled the beauty of Black skin, while decrying modern slavery and servitude.²⁰

"Sorrow Tears and Blood": The Abuse of Human Rights and the Military Dictatorship

Fela did not begin to have direct confrontations with the Nigerian government until 1974, when he criticized the military government for its policies.²¹ The government of General Yakubu Gowon (1966–1975) was not only dictatorial, by not returning Nigeria to democratic rule, but it inflicted enormous pain on the people. It was not unusual for Nigerians to be harassed and assaulted on the streets by military personnel under the pretext of maintaining law and order. Fela found the government's violence against its own people disgusting. He granted critical interviews to both the print and electronic media, and was gradually gaining attention as a public "intellectual."

By 1974, the authorities were tired of accommodating Fela's public criticism. Checking or arresting him did not present them with significant problems. Fela and his band members openly used marijuana (a controlled substance) both on stage and in their private residence; the Nigerian Indian Hemp Decrees of 1966 provides for a fifteen year term of imprisonment for anyone convicted of using marijuana. In addition, Fela indulged in open and reckless sexual conduct with underage girls, most of whom were runaways.²² Both the authorities and some of the educated elite saw his public sexuality as a threat to mainstream ideals of sexual morality and respectability. If the government and elite frowned at his commoditization of the female body and his almost naked appearance on stage, millions of Nigerians enjoyed his social deviance, the provocative sexual humor of his lyrics, and images such as those on the album "Expensive Shit" (1975), which featured photos of over two dozen breast-displaying women.²³ Fela's quest to "un-silence" sexuality through his sexually revealing appearance and lifestyle earned him an eccentric fame in a sexually conservative society that considered sex as a subject and performance reserved for the "private" space.

On 30 April 1974, Fela's residence on Agege Motor Road was invaded by over fifty policemen and soldiers under the pretext of enforcing marijuana and child protection laws. While adults and male residents were jailed, the underage girls were taken to the Welfare Department for rehabilitation. Fela was arrested, released, and rearrested several times between 1974 and 1976. So bad were the injuries he sustained during a November 1974 arrest that he had to be hospitalized before he was formally charged to court. The circumstances of his arrest and his experience under the Nigerian criminal justice system influenced the titles and lyrics of three songs, namely "Alagbon Close" (1975), "Expensive Shit" (1975), and "Kalakuta Show"

(1976). “Alagbon Close” was the location of the police station in which he was held, while Kalakuta was the name of the section of the jail in which he was kept. “Expensive Shit” euphemizes the desperation of the police in establishing Fela’s use of marijuana by collecting and examining samples of his feces. These three songs detailed the conditions of Nigerian jails, the manner in which suspects were treated, and the violence perpetrated by the police and the criminal justice system in general. In “Alagbon Close,” Fela sang about how taxpayers’ money was used to procure equipment, such as guns, which were, in turn, employed in terrorizing them. Satirically and confrontationally, Fela sang about the unprofessional manner in which law enforcement officers handled often law abiding citizens.²⁴

It is important to note that Fela did not introduce protest music into Nigerian popular culture. The hundreds of Nigerian cultures have diverse methods of criticizing the authorities, dating back centuries. Among the Yoruba, Fela’s ethnic group, performances by such masquerades as Gelede helped check the excesses of community leaders.²⁵ Traditional Yoruba artistes enjoyed “poetic freedom” to criticize the chiefs and call their attention to issues of public importance. Fela borrowed elements of the Yoruba culture of artistic resistance and blended it with his own in order to create a distinctive vocabulary and performance appropriate to the audience and political landscape of the 1970s. However, unlike the Yoruba protest music, which was mostly satirical, Fela, in addition to satirical composition, adopted a boldly confrontation style. If Yoruba protest songs rarely mentioned names when criticizing authorities, and were mostly proverbial, Fela would mention the names of important law enforcement officers and leaders, and accuse them of corruption and hypocrisy.²⁶ He would call them such unprintable names as “thieves” and “rogues.”²⁷

“Alagbon Close,” “Expensive Shit,” and “Kalakuta Show” were all highly successful songs, aired in public places and college campuses across the country. In many obvious ways, he helped intensify the distrust for the military regime. Through music, Fela promoted his self-appointed role as the mouthpiece and representative of the Nigerian masses. He was among the few Nigerians that could confront the government overtly, while daring all anticipated backlash. For him, music was the weapon of choice to instill political “correctness” and get the authorities to implement citizen-centered development policies. By singing in Pidgin English—a corrupted version of the standard British English mixed with local dialects spoken in various parts of Africa and the Caribbean—Fela not only broke the barriers of Nigeria’s rigid multi-linguistic existence, but also was able to effectively connect with the Nigerian masses who used this hybrid language in their everyday human communication. If the lyrics of Fela’s protest music plainly revealed his philosophy as a resistance artiste, his appearance and stage performance added a subculture character to his iconic personality. On stage, “his lips pouted petulantly, his jaw was thrust out defiantly ... his every gesture proclaimed a defiance and assertion of self.”²⁸

While Fela's rebel music and art increased his popularity among the Nigerian masses, they nevertheless intensified authorities' antipathy for him. In 1976, he released another song, "Zombie," which humorously described the rank and file of the Nigerian army as unintelligent individuals who would yield to the orders of their superiors because they had "no brake, no jam, no sense."²⁹ The song was so popular that it motivated civilians to ridicule and shout out "Zombie!" to soldiers on the streets. In addition, Fela's refusal to participate in the steering committee of the second world Festival of Black Arts and Culture (FESTAC), because the committee was headed by a military general—who was mainly interested in stealing public money by awarding contracts to his cronies—rather than an artiste, intensified his unpopularity among government officials. Although he refused to participate in the planning of FESTAC and in numerous events, international visitors (such as the American Stevie Wonder) came to see him play at the shrine. It was public knowledge that authorities were unhappy that Fela almost stole their show.³⁰

However, as previously mentioned, Fela's "reckless" public persona, and the composition of his household (a majority of whom were runaways and homeless youths) gave the government leeway to violently attack him under the pretext of enforcing law and order. A disagreement between a member of his band and a soldier was all that about a thousand heavily armed soldiers needed to invade his residence on 18 February 1977. They raped the women and threw his seventy-seven year old mother out of the first floor window. She would later die of the injuries sustained during the rowdy attack. About sixty residents of the house were removed, paraded naked, and later incarcerated unjustly. Fela immortalized this attack in his song, "Sorrow, Tears, and Blood" (1977), and he detailed the manner in which the most violent government sponsored attack against him was executed in an interview published in 1982:

The soldiers were everywhere! All in the yard, inside the house, in all the rooms on the ground floor. They beat up the girls, raped some of them and did horrors to them, man, they beat the boys. Then they stormed upstairs. They beat my brother, Dr. Beko, who was trying to protect my mother. They fractured his leg, his arm ... I could hear my own bones being broken by the blows! Then, the whole Kalakuta Republic [Fela's residence]—at 14A Agege Motor Road Surulere—went up in flames. The soldiers had set fire to the house ... First the hospital. Then prison. I stayed in jail for twenty-seven fuckin' days with wounds all over my body and several bone fractures ... I was told by my lawyer that all of my people who were in the house were either in hospitals or in jail ... I was taken to the court and charged. Imagine, I—not the army—was taken to court.^{31,32}

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Fela continued to use his experience of state-sponsored violence to preach against the abuse of rights. After returning from jail

in 1989, he released “Beats of No Nation,” describing the outside world (life outside jail) as more brutal than the inside world (jail). He painted life outside jail as a “crazy world,” inhabited by General Buhari (the military head of state), his lieutenant General Idiagbon, and corrupt law enforcement officers, whom he labeled “animals in human skin.” Buhari’s short-lived regime (1983–1985) continued the age-old practice of imposing social order by violently attacking citizens. He introduced a program “War against Indiscipline” which, like traffic regulations of the 1970s, sought to control people’s public conduct by allowing military personnel to violently dispense “justice on the spot.” Fela felt that a responsible government should not label its citizens as “useless, senseless and indiscipline[d].”

“Suffering and S[h]miling,” Poverty, Underdevelopment, and the Culture of Corruption

There is a considerable overlap between Fela’s protest songs on dictatorship and abuse of rights, and those that detailed the agony of everyday life for the Nigerian people. Indeed, extreme poverty—attributable to a deep-rooted culture of corruption at virtually all levels of society—created tension between the state and the citizenry. Crime and civil disobedience, which the military attempted to coercively contain, was precipitated by poverty and unemployment. Nigeria, like most countries in Africa, is an economic paradox: while it derived enormous wealth from oil, its citizens wallowed in untold hardship.³³ During the 1970s, a period that coincided with Fela’s ascendancy as a rebel artiste *par excellence*, revenue from oil quadrupled,³⁴ rising from 196.4 million naira in 1970 to 15.234 billion naira in 1980.³⁵ Oil money was not channeled towards a large scale and sustainable program of poverty alleviation, job creation, and infrastructure development; rather it was siphoned into the private pockets of the ruling elite.

Fela’s songs of poverty and corruption can be grouped into two overlapping categories, based on the audience. One set of songs was directed to the Nigerian masses, while the other addressed the authorities. While the first challenged the masses to stand for their rights in a revolutionary manner, the latter exposed the shady deals of the authorities. Put together, Fela intended to use his music to create political change by inciting the poor to challenge their oppressors. In a song titled, “No Bread,” released in 1976, he unleashes a lyrical depiction of the physical appearance and mentality of a typical Nigerian who is completely emaciated due to lack of food. In another song, “Suffering and S[h]miling,” released in 1978, he dissected the contradictory behavior of a Nigerian who resorted to smiling despite undergoing untold hardship and seeking refuge in Christianity and Islam. In his usual confrontational manner, he decried the unequal social and economic relations between the people and religious authorities: while the former encountered difficulties in meeting their daily needs, religious authorities enjoyed the splendor of life.

In three others songs, “Confusion” (1975), “Upside Down” (1976), and “Original Sufferhead” (1991), he painted gloomy pictures of public facilities—such as schools, prisons, and hospitals—chaotic traffic congestion, and the urban lifestyle, using such derogatory words as “pafuka” and “kwench” (broken and destroyed). In “Original Sufferhead,” in particular, he condemned the inadequate supply of electricity, food, water, and accommodation for the “common man.” While the poor were denied water and electricity, the rich (according to Fela) enjoyed an unlimited supply of these basic public amenities. He condemned both the failure of the government to implement a workable agriculture policy and the policy of food importation. Other components of the song included a swipe at inflation and the reliance on external agents, such as the World Bank, to solve the basic problems of development in Nigeria.

A couple of Fela’s songs on poverty, corruption, and underdevelopment, as previously mentioned, were directed at the ruling elite. In “International Thief Thief” (1979), Fela sang about how the Nigerian elite collaborated with multinational corporations to divert wealth meant for local development into private coffers. He boldly called Chief M. K. O. Abiola (a civilian) and General Obasanjo (the military head of state between 1976 and 1979) thieves. Fela’s critique of the discrepancies in the administration of justice is equally interesting. In “Authority Stealing” (1980), he sang that, while the elite who steal millions of naira (Nigerian currency) were usually not arrested or tried in court, common or “small” thieves could be incarcerated for months or even years. The real thieves, Fela maintained, were the rich elite whose greed was responsible for the underdevelopment of his country, not the “small” or petty thieves. He compared the theft *modus operandi* of both the authorities and an armed robber: while the armed robber needed a gun in order to steal, the authorities simply needed a pen—and the pen was capable of stealing far more money than the gun. “If gun steal eighty thousand naira,” “pen will steal two billion naira,” Fela maintained.

Conclusion

Fela was a rebel artiste *par excellence*. From the 1970s to 1997, he directed his artistic energy towards using music as a weapon against the myriad challenges facing the Nigerian state and its citizens. If Nigeria, like other countries in Africa, was underdeveloped, it was because of the violence and corruption of its leaders. The military dictatorship not only prevented Nigerians from choosing their own leaders, but also paved the way for abuse of rights of all kinds. In preaching against underdevelopment, Fela risked a number of consequences, including incarceration and even death. Between 1974, when he was first arrested and incarcerated, and August 1997, when he surrendered to death, he was arraigned in courts about three hundred and fifty-six times.³⁶ Fela died an unhappy man. In his final days, he confessed that all the problems he directed his music against still marred the Nigerian social and political

landscape: Nigeria was still ruled by a dictator (General Sanni Abacha), and state-sanctioned violence against ordinary Nigerians, and Fela himself, remained a tragic fact of life. In fact, Fela was arrested in July 1997, just a month before he died of complications from HIV/AIDS.³⁷

Fela created a counterculture that has favorably weathered decades of backward social and political transformation in Nigeria. The slang he created is still being used in everyday urban social interaction. His songs remain popular across social class, not only because of their deep artistic quality, but also because most, if not all, of the problems he preached against in the 1970s and 1980s remain largely unresolved. Indeed, more Nigerian live in poverty in 2013 than in the 1970s or 1980s. Corruption and embezzlement of public funds has reached an all-time high since the beginning of the new millennium, despite the fact that the country is under “democratic” governance. Fela’s children (Femi and Seun) continue to propagate his message. Although not as eccentric, bold, confrontational, and controversial as their father, Femi and Seun have seen the need to keep the legacy of their father alive, while creating a unique artistic niche for themselves.³⁸

Notes

- 1 Randall F. Grass, “Fela Anikulapo-Kuti: The Art of an Afrobeat Rebel,” *The Drama Review*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (1986): 131–148.
- 2 Trevor Schoonmaker, “Introduction,” in Trevor Schoonmaker, ed., *Fela: From West Africa to West Broadway* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 1.
- 3 See, among others, Sola Olorunyomi, *Afrobeat! Fela and the Imagined Continent* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2003); Niyi Coker, Jr., *A Study of the Music and Social Criticism of African Musician Fela Anikulapo-Kuti* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004); Schoonmaker, ed., *Fela: From West Africa*; Trevor Schoonmaker, *Black President: The Art and Legacy of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti* (New York, New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 2003); Michael Veal, *Fela: The Life and Times of an African Musical Icon* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000); Tejumade Olaniyan, *Arrest the Music! Fela and His Rebel Art* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004); Meghan Langley, “Peace Profile: Fela Kuti, An “Africa Man Original,” *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (2010): 199–204; Myke O. Olatunji, “Yabis Music: An Instrument of Social Change in Nigeria,” *Journal of African Media Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2009): 309–328; Carlos Moore, *Fela: This Bitch of a Life* (London, UK: Omnibus Press, 2010), and Frank Tenaille, *Music is the Weapon of the Future: Fifty Years of African Popular Music* (Chicago, Illinois: Lawrence Hills Books, 2002), 69–76.
- 4 Joseph Shekwo, “Use of Music to Create Political Awareness and Mobilization: A Case Study of Two Nigerian Musicians: Fela Anikulapo-Kuti and Sonny Okosun,” Paper presented at the American Culture Association and Popular Culture Association Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, April 1986.
- 5 For more on highlife, see, among others, Sonny Oti, *Highlife Music in West Africa* (Lagos, Nigeria: Malthouse Press, 2009).

- 6 On juju, see, Christopher Alan Waterman, *Juju: Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music* (Chicago, Illinois: Chicago University Press, 1990).
- 7 Grass, "Fela Anikulapo-Kuti," 134–135.
- 8 Songs in this category include the following, among others: "Confusion" (1975); "Upside Down" (1976); "No Bread/Unnecessary Begging" (1976); "Suffering and S[h]miling" (1978); "No Accommodation for Lagos" (1979); and "Colonial Mentality" (1977).
- 9 Examples include "Alagon Close" (1974); "Expensive Shit" (1975); "Everything Scatter/Who No Know Go Know" (1975); "Sorrow, Tears, and Blood" (1977); "Vagabonds in Power" (1979); "Coffin for the Head of State" (1981); "Beast of No Nation" (1989); "Authority Stealing" (1980); "International Thief Thief" (1979); "Unknown Soldier" (1979); and "Army Arrangement" (1985).
- 10 Songs in this category include "Movement of the People" (1980) and "Movement of the People Political Statement 1" (1990).
- 11 Examples include "Lady" (1977); "Frustration of My Lady" (1970); "Na Poi" (1971); "Shakara Oloje" (1977); "Fefe Naa Efe" (1975); and "Yellow Fever" (1976).
- 12 LaRay Denzer, "Fela, Women, Wives," in *Fela: From West Africa*, 113.
- 13 Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Emma Mba, *For Women and the Nation: Fummilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 173.
- 14 Shekwo, "Use of Music to Create Political," 6.
- 15 Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: International Publishers, 1957), 164.
- 16 Coker, *A Study of the Music*, 29.
- 17 For more on how Sandra Izsadore influenced Fela, see Denzer, "Fela, Women, Wives," in *Fela: From West Africa*, 122–124.
- 18 Durotoye, "Roforofo Fight," 175.
- 19 Moore, *Fela*, 110.
- 20 Moore, *Fela*, 176–177.
- 21 Dorian Lynskey, *33 Revolutions Per Minute: A History of Protest Songs, from Billie Holiday to Green Day* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 237.
- 22 For more on Fela and his "wives," see, Derek Stanovsky "Fela and His Wives: The Import of a Postcolonial Masculinity," *Jouvert: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1998). Available at: <http://english.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v2i1/STAN.HTM>.
- 23 For more on the making of Fela's album jacket, see, Ghariokwu Lemi, "Producing Fela's Album Jackets, in *Fela: From West Africa*, 51–54.
- 24 Durotoye, "Fela Anikulapo-Kuti," 181.
- 25 See Arinpe Adejumo, "Conflict Resolution in Oral Literature: A Review of Some Yoruba Satirical Songs," *Journal of African Poetry*, Vol. 5 (2008): 95–116.
- 26 Grass, *Great Spirit*, 67.
- 27 Example include calling Chief M. K. O. Abiola and General Obasanjo thieves, in "International Thief Thief" (1979).
- 28 Durotoye, "Roforofo Fight," 175.
- 29 Iyorchia D. Ayu, "Creativity and Protest in Popular Culture: The Political Music of Fela Anikulatpo Kuti" (Department of Sociology, University of Jos, Nigeria, 1989), 23–25.
- 30 Lynskey, *33 Revolutions Per Minute*, 239.

- 31 Moore, *Fela: This Bitch of a Life*, 140.
- 32 Olatunji, "Yabis Music," 314.
- 33 According to S. O. Osoba, a frontline neo-Marxist corruption "was the single most significant issue on which the Gowon regime became seriously embattled with the Nigerian public." See S. O. Osoba, "Corruption in Nigeria: Historical Perspectives," *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 23, No. 69 (1996): 377.
- 34 Shekwo, "Use of Music to Create Political," 7.
- 35 Durotoye, "The Political Contexts of Fela's Activism," in Schoonmaker, *Black President*, 45.
- 36 Moore, *Fela*, 283.
- 37 Moore, *Fela*, 283.
- 38 "Femi Kuti @ 50: 'My Pains, My Gains.'" Available at: <http://saharareporters.com/interview/femi-kuti-50-%E2%80%98my-pains-my-gains%E2%80%99-vanguard>.