

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

A CRITIQUE OF THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF

FELA ANIKULAPO-KUTI

BY

INUSAH AWUNI

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THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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JULY, 2014

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

*I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.*

Candidate's Signature:..... Date:.....

Name: Inusah Awuni

### Supervisors' Declaration

*We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Ghana.*

Principal Supervisor's Signature:..... Date:.....

Name: Dr. Osman Alhassan

Co-Supervisor's Signature:.....Date.....

Name: Professor Daniel Avorgbedor

## ABSTRACT

I have argued that since Plato, the main task of political philosophy is to prescribe how the ideal state ought to be attained. Several postcolonial thinkers, activists and theoreticians, notably, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti attempted a prescription of the ideal state suitable for Africa. Thus Fela's political philosophy could be summed up as follows: the realisation of Africa's cultural independence, the unification of continental Africa under democratic governance and Africa's return to the traditional communalism of its ancestors. Noble as Fela's political philosophy may seem, nonetheless, it is replete with some discrepancies. The central objective of this dissertation was to elucidate some of the contradictions inherent in Fela's political philosophy. First, Fela's glorification of traditional African communal past was not borne out of the facts, since such past had been altered by years of acculturation. Besides, such idealisation of Africa's past veiled Fela from seeing that as a result of the Islamic and Euro-Christian imprint, Africa had moved beyond the communal stage. Again, the political kingdom as advocated by Fela was necessary but not sufficient for other independences economic and social. More so, Fela's denunciation of Islam and Christianity for their role in the enslavement and colonisation of Africa was emotional rather than logical. The socio-political divisions among states and empires in what is now geographically Africa were exploited by the slave masters and colonial powers. He again presented a simplistic solution to the triple heritage problem in Africa arising from the Islamic and Euro-Christian influences, since he failed to realise that such influences had taken root. Last but not the least, Fela's contravention of existing morality and the excessive use of marijuana appeared not to have given him much room and space to coherently develop an ideology for his political philosophy.

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## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to Tiswini Jerrilyn Awuni

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 Background to the Study

Political philosophy as an integral part of philosophy is concerned with the quest for the truth about political matters. It is the philosophical investigation of political society as a demand of human nature (Okoro, 2004). All the tools of philosophical investigation are employed to deal with the existing societal problems of political nature. Man, says Aristotle, “is a political animal.” As a social animal, man requires certain basic principles to help him organise and realise his aim in society. At one time or another, societies are confronted with specific social and political problems, and the views expressed by philosophers about these problems are relevant as theoretical guides to such societies in resolving those problems (Okoro, 2004). The ultimate aim of political philosophy is to conceive a good society where people can live happily. Although political philosophy may reflect on the socio-political milieu of an era, society or group of societies, the ideas generated from such reflections may transcend a historical epoch or the peculiar circumstances of a society. Political philosophy cannot be tied down to the political thought of an era or else it will no longer be ethics or applied ethics. It will lose its value as political philosophy. In this wise political philosophy becomes universal because it does not merely reflect on societal structure but also on the socio-psychological and existential necessities of societies in general (Okoro, 2004).

The ultimate and essential questions that are core to political philosophy are, ‘why are political societies formed? In other words, why do men come

together to form political societies? How best are societies to be organised so that the purpose for which they are formed could be realised'? (Omoregbe, 1991, p. 50). These fundamental questions lead to another question, which is, how much of society's common goods can an individual own without depriving others of their fair share? (Omoregbe, 1991). It is this basic question that determines what pattern a society follows, that is, whether capitalist, socialist or the mixed economic model.

The nature of socio-political matters in our days demands the unity of theory and praxis. It is this unity and praxis that makes political philosophy become a model of applied ethics rather than mere arm-chair reflection. Hence, the central task of political philosophy shifts from mere analysis of concepts and the practice of criticism to criticism through practice, that is, from the dissolution of concepts to the dissolution of obsolete social and international institutions (Ogundowole, 1988).

Like philosophy itself, political philosophy is an all-embracing field, covering all spheres of social life. As a disciplinary study of social life, the task of political philosophy includes that of the political scientist, the political sociologist, the political economist, the political psychologist as well as the politician. The political scientist as a political scientist, is an analyst who employs empirical means for the study and analysis of society, just as the politician *qua* politician, is merely concerned with the employment of the tools of other fields for achieving specific goals and ends for the community or the society. Though each of the fields dealing with socio-political matters overlaps with each other, none is as

embracing as political philosophy on matters of human social existence (Okoro, 2004).

As an all-embracing field, political philosophy concerns itself with the formation of ideological and ethical norms and standards, theories of the state its function covers the material, physical and moral exertions to bring about the derived goals that a sociological setup demands (Okoro, 2004). The all-embracing role of political philosophy was recognised in the history of ancient Greek philosophy by Plato when he advocated for a philosopher to be the king in his great work, the *Republic*. In this book Plato contends that

Until philosophers rule as Kings or those who are now called Kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophise, that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide, while the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively are forcibly prevented from doing so, cities will have no rest from evils... nor, I think, will the human race (*Republic*, 473c-d).

The role of political philosophy in nation building or reconstruction cannot be overemphasised. For instance, Machiavelli (1999) believes that everyone deserves a strong and effective government. Hobbes (1996) believes that everyone deserves peace and security. Bentham (1996) thinks that everyone deserves happiness, while Marx (1959) believes in the economic equality of mankind and thus urges, in the interim, the dictatorship of the proletariat. In

Africa on the other hand, Nkrumah (1964) and Fanon (1963) believe in the survival and dignity of the African personality among others.

Some scholars are of the view that the role of the political philosopher is purely theoretical. They are unaware of the aspect of philosophy which deals with 'what is,' 'what ought to be' and 'what there is.' Contrary to this view, the role of the political philosopher, like that of political philosophy and philosophy itself, is all embracing. It consists of theory and practice, action and reflection. This is so because as Nkrumah famously observed, "practice without thought is blind, thought without action is empty" (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 56). Once again, Plato realised the role of the political philosopher as a theoretician and a politician and thus advocated that a philosopher should always oversee the affairs of the state. In the same spirit, after he jointly published the *Communist Manifesto* with Engels, Karl Marx participated in the revolt aimed at overthrowing the 'Kaiser's regime' in Germany. Nkrumah went beyond theory to establish an ideological institute at Winneba, a coastal town in Ghana, the purpose of which was to train politicians in the art of good governance and at the same time liberate the African Personality from mental slavery, in order to enable the African recover his lost dignity and identity.

One of the most essential functions of political philosophy is that it helps us to establish an ideological direction and orientation. Those who are aware of this fundamental role of political philosophy readily comprehend and analyse world socio-political and economic issues be they domestic, regional or international. In doing this, such political philosophers follow their ideological

preferences or direction which mainly consist of ideals, theories, norms and programmes of action.

Fundamentally, political philosophy could be said to have four main features:

- (i) It is itself a social reality. It is an ideology in terms of which certain institutions and practices are justified and others rejected. Hence it is a tool for evaluation.
- (ii) It is an ethic. An articulation of ideals which on various levels of generality and articulation is used in judging man's events, actions and decisions and as goals, guidelines and policies.
- (iii) It theorises about man's society and history, the reason and the need of society and why events and facts are intertwined yet can be differentiated.
- (iv) It designates agencies of action, of the means of reform, revolution and conservation. It contains strategies and programmes that embody both ends and means, and designates the historical levers by which ideals are to be won and maintained after they have been won (Okoro, 2004).

Thus, the basic function of political philosophy is that it tells us how to find out where we stand and where we may be going. It gives us some answers to these questions and prepares us for the unknown future. To examine any political philosophy therefore, one must examine it as an ideology, a statement of ideals, designation of agency or agencies and as a set of social theories (Okoro, 2004). In order to illuminate the topic under consideration, it is advisable that we

distinguish political philosophy from political theory, political science, and an ideology, since these political terminologies have some semantic affinity.

In a more general sense, Sabine (1973) thinks that every political theory could be scrutinised from two angles: as social philosophy and as ideology. As ideology, theories should be seen as psychological phenomena, which transcend fact or falsity. Sabine thinks that theories are beliefs, events in people's minds and factors in their conduct, so that the task of the political philosopher is to ascertain the extent to which these theories help in shaping the political community (Sabine, 1973). In keeping with the above general view, Sabine further observes that

Political theory is, quite simply, man's attempts to consciously understand and solve the problems of his group life and organisation.... It is the disciplined investigation of political problems ... not only to show what a political practice is, but also to show what it means. In showing what a practice means, or what it ought to mean, political theory can alter what it is (Sabine, 1973, pp. 3-5).

I infer from the above quotation that political theory, in a historical sense, has been used to either defend or question existing customs and conventions of a given society at a given time.

On the other hand, political ideology can be seen as a systematic and all-embracing principle which attempts to provide a comprehensive and universally applicable theory of human nature and society, with a detailed programme of

attaining it (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). Marxism provides a classical example of ideology which is summed up in Marx's much quoted contention that philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it (Marx, 1959). In keeping with this practical perspective of ideology, Marx defines ideology as a set of beliefs by which people are led to deceive themselves. These beliefs are imposed on them by the economic conditions in which they live. They are a form of class consciousness and so they are particularistic and false ((Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). Whichever way the equation is balanced, ideologies are meant to influence the world for better or for worse. That explains why in a positive and pragmatic sense, ideologies are seen as rational basis aimed at the ideal state along rational and scientific lines ((Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). In a nutshell, ideologies for the most part are propounded by philosophers and political theoreticians, they are described and marketed by political scientists and implemented by politicians or statesmen (Okoro, 2004). This brings us to the distinction between political philosophy and political science.

Whereas political philosophy is really a discipline setting up norms or ideal standards for society and government, telling us what ought to be the case or what we ought to do, political science explains how governments conduct their affairs and how men behave in their pursuit of actual political objectives, instead of prescribing what governments ought to do and what ought to be our political objectives (Popkin & Stroll, 2000). In brief, political philosophy prescribes how an ideal polity can be attained whereas political science merely describes a

particular form of institution. For instance, when Plato suggested in *The Republic*, that the philosopher kings should conduct the affairs of the state while the guardians and auxiliaries subordinate themselves to the philosopher kings and perform other functions of the state so as to create a harmonious atmosphere in the state, he was actually prescribing how the ideal polity could be brought about. Hence Plato was affirming the prescriptive role of political philosophy when he proposed that the rational element of the soul and the philosopher king for that matter should control the affairs of the body and the state respectively.

It must however be observed that a given political philosophy is largely determined by the prevalent circumstances of a given historical epoch. It is problems of a given period that compel political philosophers to react and then make efforts to address such problems of their time. Thus, political philosophy does two things. It reacts to existing problems such as anarchy, corruption and oppression among others. Secondly, it attempts to provide a theoretical or philosophical blue print to address such existing problems of a given period. For instance, writing at a time of political chaos and moral confusion, Italian unification constituted the fundamental objective of Niccolo Machiavelli. Macchiavelli (1999) perhaps hoped to redeem Italy from poverty and servitude. Hence he dreamt of a united, rejuvenated and glorious Italy. In order to achieve this objective, Macchiavelli thought that the end justified the means. He reasoned that the defence and preservation of the state should be the main preoccupation of the “Prince”. Considerations of justice or injustice, humanity or cruelty, as well as

glory or shame were immaterial in light of protecting the individual's life and liberty (Machiavelli, 1999).

Political philosophy deals with such issues as what ought to be the proper limits of government over members of society and how an ideal state ought to be organised. Should members of parliament be allowed to exercise their franchise according to their conscience, or should they merely reflect the opinions of their constituents, states or provinces? The central task of political philosophy therefore, is to prescribe how an ideal state ought to be organised (Popkin & Stroll, 2000). In general, political philosophy may study the nature of human communities in order to evaluate their aims and modes of operation. In a more general way, political philosophy asks the following questions: What is the relationship between the individual and the state? Can the existence of the state be justified? What principles should guide the operation of government? And what form of constitution should be adopted by government? Or what form of constitution should the ideal state adopt in order that it brings about maximum amount of happiness for its citizens as against greater unhappiness? Or, is the individual's moral quest for maximum happiness best fulfilled in a stateless society? (Popkin & Stroll, 2000).

In order to answer the above questions, political philosophy derives its strength from other branches of philosophy namely, metaphysics, logic, epistemology and ethics. Thus, in order for one to understand the dynamics of political philosophy, some background knowledge of history of political thought

is desirable. Philosophers, before, during and after the era of Plato have been preoccupied with the idea of attaining a strife-free ideal state.

Fela Anikulapo Kuti was one African musician who was preoccupied with a political philosophy not only for his country Nigeria, but a political philosophy for the African continent as a whole. The political philosophy of Fela can be gleaned from his music, popularly called Afrobeat or to use his own expression 'African classical music' (Olorunyomi, 2005, Moore, 2009). Fragments of his political philosophy can be gleaned from articles he authored in two influential Nigerian newspapers, namely, *The Punch* and *Daily Times* from the late 1969-1997. This is so because since time and circumstances play an influential role on the philosophy of a philosopher, one could suggest that Fela's reaction to the neo-colonial system in the form of clashing with the Nigerian military authorities as well as both civilian and military governments in Nigeria did not give him much time to systematise his political philosophy in a coherent treatise. My objective in this work is to extract many of the themes of Fela's political philosophy from his musical works, newspapers as well as certain published books on him, in order to construct a comprehensive and coherent political philosophy.

Fela indicates that Africans and for that matter the post-colonial state had lost its direction. From dress code to governance system, the post-colonial man was imitating the former colonial powers as if the African could not boast of any culture prior to colonisation. Thus, songs like 'Grammartologilisationism is the Boss', 'Mr. Follow Follow', and 'Johnny Just Drop' as well as 'Big Blind Country' were composed to address this state of cultural alienation and

embarrassment that the African found himself. In Fela's view, beautiful African cities such as Oyo, and Benin among others were destroyed by the European colonising powers with the aim that if they (Europeans) wanted to force the African into slavery and colonise his country, then they had to prevent the African from seeing that he was not incapable of creating beauty. Against this backdrop therefore, Fela felt that by copying the culture of the very person who colonised you, you give the impression that you were a savage who stood in need of civilisation from the other side. To remedy this cultural estrangement, Fela called for a return to traditional African communal past. In fact, his call for a return to our ancestral past becomes comprehensible when measured against his frustration with the effects of modernisation as well as the effects of scientific and technological system of production. As he notes: "The right way is the one of our ancestors: traditional technology, or *naturology*. That is the only viable way... Science means pollution! ... There is limit to what Europeans call technological and industrial development. When that limit is achieved, society just crumbles ...." (Moore, 1982, p. 151).

Fela's call for a return to our ancestral lifestyle makes sense when it is measured against the undesirable effects associated with the advancement of science and technology. In other words, such a call for a return to the *status quo ante* cannot easily be dismissed as a nostalgic feeling. In fact, industrial-technology forces contemporary man to revise his relationship with nature. But is such call for the return to the past worth the salt?

## **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Several academic works by notable scholars like Moore (1982a, 2009b), Veal (2000a, 2000b), Collins (2009), Jaboro (2012), and Schoonmaker (2003) among others exist on Fela's biography, his musical accomplishments, his counterculture lifestyle, his Pan African views and his ideological ambivalence among other themes. But an account and critique of the political philosophy of Fela does not appear to interest the authors of most of the literature that have been reviewed. The purpose of this dissertation is to construct and critique the political philosophy of Fela.

## **1.2 Methodology**

The study is largely a library based research. Primary and secondary scholarly works on Fela were collected. This study involved content analysis of the major works and compositions of Fela. Authoritative scholarly works done on Fela's musical compositions were examined. Content analysis is a technique for collecting and analysing the content of a given text. The content thus refers to "words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, or any message that can be communicated. The text is anything written, visual, or spoken that serves as a medium for communication. It includes books, newspaper and magazine articles, advertisements, speeches, official documents, musical lyrics and works of art among others" (Neuman, 2007, p. 227).

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

At the end of the study, the researcher hopes to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To comprehend and articulate the political philosophy of Fela.
- ii. To interrogate Fela's strong conviction that political independence is prerequisite to all other independences
- iii. To demonstrate through critical evaluation, the strengths and weaknesses of Fela's political philosophy

### **1.4 Organisation of the Work**

The work is organised into four chapters. Chapter one comprises the background to the study, statement of the problem, methodology and objectives of the study. Chapter two is comprised of literature review. This chapter reviews relevant literature such as articles, books and other primary and secondary data relating to the political philosophy of Fela. Chapter three attempts a comprehensive and coherent presentation of the political philosophy of Fela. Chapter four, the final chapter of the work, carries out a critique of the political philosophy of Fela.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I attempt to review the existing literature on the topic under consideration. Since the literature on the topic ranges from Fela's biography to his Pan African commitments, I delineate the literature review under certain sub-categories.

### 2.1 Review of Literature on Fela's Biography

Moore (1982a) graphically chronicles the life history of Fela. He examines the circumstances surrounding Fela's birth, his achievements and his sojourn in the USA in the 1960s, his introduction to the Black Power Movement which invariably raised the political consciousness of Fela. Issues covered in this authorised biography include Fela's unconventional behaviour such as his excessive love of women, his marriage to 27 ladies in 1978, the destruction of Fela's communal enclave, the Kalakuta Republic in 1977, his contradictory relationship with his numerous wives on one hand and girlfriends on the other hand, his hedonistic lifestyle as well as Fela's traditional convictions on one hand, and his metaphysical and epistemological views on the other hand. Fela's political views do not even constitute a chapter in Moore's book. However, with hindsight, fragments of political philosophy and bits of Fela's views on Pan Africanism can be gleaned from some few pages in this authorised biographical work. Thus, *Fela, Fela: This Bitch of a Life* provides a rudimentary insight into the topic under consideration.

Moore (2009b) in *Fela: This Bitch of a Life* attempts to revise his 1982 publication of Fela's authorised biography. The difference between this book and the earlier publication is that, Moore devotes the opening chapter of this work to discuss Fela's position on Africa unification. Among other themes, Moore recounts the response of the Nigerian military to Fela's counterculture lifestyle, Fela's excessive smoking of Indian hemp, and his direct condemnation of Nigerian military regimes, particularly, in his 1976 hit song " ombie" a track that directly insults the intelligence of the military who only obey before they could complain (Moore, 2009). While conceding that Fela was a contradiction in several respects, the accusation of Fela being a polygyny and a misogyny his conception of women as mattresses appears to have been carried out of context (Moore, 2009). Like Frantz Fanon before him, Fela, in Moore's opinion obviously identified the ills afflicting post-independent Africa as neo-colonialism and predicted that relatively, the first generation of African leaders would fail to emancipate Africa from colonialism and neo-colonialism.

In 'Colonial Mentality' and 'Teacher Don't Teach me no Nonsense' for example, Fela accused the new elite as follows: "You don be slave from before. Dem don release you now. But you never release yourself" (Moore, 2009, p.13). On the whole, an attempt by Moore to further interrogate Fela's political convictions and attempt to situate them within a political philosophy is lacking in this revised edition.

Jaboro (2012) examines Fela's belief in ancient Egyptian mystery system, especially after 1979 when Fela was introduced to the Ghanaian magician, Kwaku

Addae, Fela's nostalgic feeling for traditional African communal life, and Fela's rise to legendary status that got cut by HIV/AIDS infection in 1997. He particularly discusses certain sections of Fela's music in which Fela mounts an attack on neo-colonialism and African leaders who were agents of this system. Thus songs like 'International Thief Thief' and 'Authourity Stealing' directly attack multinationals like CFAO, UAC, BP, Total, Mobil etc. of not developing African economies (Jaboro, 2012). Jaboro further reinforces passionately Fela's lamentation of poverty, disease, hunger, oppression and confusion in Africa as direct consequences of the operation of the above multinationals in Africa. This book thus recounts Fela's disillusionment with the post-colonial African state and its leaders. This is exactly one function of political philosophy, namely, discontent with 'what is' and a proposition of 'what ought to be'. However, 'what ought to be' with regard to Fela's political philosophy is not given much attention in this work.

## **2.2 Review of Literature on the Evolution of Fela's Political Consciousness**

Veal (2000a) points out that the life and history of Fela gives us an opportunity to comprehend the exceptional and unprecedented way Fela used art as a medium of creating socio-political, cultural and revolutionary consciousness in order to contribute to the intellectual debate on Pan-Africanism. Veal (2000a) wonders whether Fela's life story should be examined as a comedy, tragedy, tragic hero or better still, a character in a literary piece who achieves greatness and lost that greatness due to hamartia. In spite of the difficulty in classifying Fela's political significance, Veal regards Fela's Afrobeat style of music as a

particular version of hybrid music which holds a transformed significance not only for a particular nation-state in post-independent Africa but the entire African continent as a whole. Thus, in the opinion of Veal, the two most fundamental objectives of Fela's art could be summarised in two phrases, namely, a search for the remedy to the problems of the nation-state in post-independent Africa and the realisation of a Pan-African state to serve as a haven for all marginalised and dispossessed Africans the world over.

Veal (2000b) further traces the formation of Fela's social awakening and political consciousness to his childhood exposure to traditional social functions in Abeokuta as well as the influence of his mother's Marxist and Leninist influences on him and urges that "... in order to understand the ideological underpinning of Fela's social mission, his symbolic deconstruction of his elite status, his deviation from the traditional function of the African creative artist, and the varying reception of his message by different sectors of the Nigerian society," then we must look critically at the issue of the social strata of post-independent Nigeria in which Fela was born.

Though Veal's insight into Fela's struggle in post-colonial Nigeria relies more on empirical evidence, nevertheless such a consideration of the life of Fela, especially Fela's analysis of post-independent Africa and his Pan-African orientations will afford us an opportunity to examine the political philosophy of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti.

In "Politics of Womanhood," Nzegwu (2003) critiques Fela's perception of an ideal African woman as encapsulated in one of Fela's hit songs 'Lady'.

Nzegwu builds his critique of Fela's perception of the traditional African woman by comparing the independent roles women played as hardworking domestic servants during the Victorian era in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe on one hand and the role Christianity assign to women on the other. While the former stresses economic independence in women, the latter encourages subservience and economic dependency. Nzegwu thinks that Fela's insistence of an African woman to be submissive to her husband, cook for him and do everything the husband demands, neither reflects the character and role of traditional African woman nor her indigenous nature. Since traditional African women aspire to social and economic independence, Fela's perception of them as being dependent on their husbands for everything misses the point.

Though Nzegwu's critique of Fela's perception of African women is not directly linked to Fela's political philosophy, nonetheless, his exposure of Fela's inadequate comprehension of the real role(s) of an indigenous African woman helps us to situate the place of women in his political philosophy. This will help enrich our critique of the political philosophy of Fela.

In "No Agreement Today, No Agreement Tomorrow: Fela Anikulapo-Kuti and Human Rights Activism in Nigeria," Alimi and Opeyemi (2013) explore the socio-economic problems which characterised postcolonial Nigeria and situate the role Fela Anikulapo-Kuti played as a campaigner against the abuse of human rights in this epoch. The above authors examine the factors which shaped Fela's radicalism and uncompromising attacks of the ruling elite in postcolonial Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. Alimi and Opeyemi (2013) identify these

factors as the strict discipline nature of Fela's parents, Fela's parents anti-colonial stance and Fela's association with a radical newspaper known as *The Planless Times* (Alimi & Opeyemi, 2013). Particularly, Fela's affinity to his mother who took him to several anti-colonial rallies will later play a fundamental role in Fela's denunciation of anything colonialism and imperialism.

Apart from these above domestic forces which had a profound influence on Fela's political consciousness, Alimi and Opeyemi (2013) also identify certain external forces which aided in shaping the human rights activism of Fela. Among these include his exposure to the literature of certain American civil rights activist such as Malcolm X and his introduction to the Black Panthers Group in America. Alimi and Opeyemi (2013) urges that just as Kwame Nkrumah in *Neo-colonialism: Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965) blames colonialism and imperialism for most of the problems Africa faced after the departure of the colonising powers, Fela attributes the socio-economic and political problems facing African people to colonialism and slavery.

Like Veal (1995), Alimi and Opeyemi (2013), offer us a useful medium by which we could easily interpret the message inherent in Fela's songs. In fact, their insight into the multiple forces which shaped Fela's human rights activism and social commentary is useful to our study.

In "Fela's Resistance of Domination", Durotoye (2003) observes the strategies Fela employed in his resistance against domination in postcolonial Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. Durotoye (2003) further examines Fela's resistance against the dominant forces of postcolonial Nigeria by alluding

to Antonio Gramsci's two pillars of hegemony, namely, "coercion" and "intellectual and moral leadership"(Schoonmaker, 2003). That while coercion demands compliance by applying force, intellectual and moral leadership secures the consent of the dominated by a resort to persuasion (Schoonmaker, 2003).

Durotoye (2003) puts Fela's resistance to domination in postcolonial Nigeria into two perspectives. According to Durotoye, the period 1960-1973 could best be described as Fela's "apolitical" years, where Fela's political consciousness had not taken shape yet. Durotoye (2003) regards 1974-1997 as a period which marked Fela's intense political struggle against domination in Nigeria, culminating in his withdrawal and death. In Durotoye's view, from the 1960s to the early 1970s, Fela was more preoccupied with the idea of playing jazz like any other musician before him. Hence it was after his sojourn in the USA which exercised a profound influence in Fela's thought when he incorporated political music into his Afrobeat. This partly explains why Fela's first two songs in the 1970s, namely, "Black Man's Cry" and "Why Black Man Dey Suffer" were less popular with the Nigerian masses because in these songs, Fela laid the blame of Africa's backwardness and underdevelopment on slavery and colonialism (Schoonmaker, 2003).

Concomitantly, Durotoye observes that from 1974 onwards, Fela's building of Kalakuta Republic which was declared independent of the Nigerian Federation and other songs which critiqued domination in postcolonial Nigeria were indication that Fela had become politically conscious and had acquired the capacity to resist domination and in fact, songs like "Alagbon Close" (1974),

“Expensive Shit” (1975), “Kalakuta Show” (1975), “ ombie” (1976), “Sorrow, Tears and Blood” (1977) and “Unknown Soldier” (1979) are all couched and lyricized in politics of resistances against the coercive forces of the Nigerian State. This strategy of resistance, according to Durotoye (2003), continued until Fela withdrew from public life and eventually gave out the ghost from Aids related complications in August 1997.

Durotoye’s insight into Fela’s use of politics of resistance as a weapon in his Afrobeat music adds to our understanding of the overall political agenda of Fela. Indeed, Durotoye’s analysis of Fela’s politics of resistance further sharpens what we set out to achieve, namely, a critique of Fela’s political philosophy. Though Durotoye’s focus on Fela’s politics of resistance in the postcolony constitutes but one of the aspect of our topic under consideration, it is particularly useful in construction and deconstruction of Fela’s political philosophy.

### **2.3 Review of Literature on Fela’s Ideological Orientation**

Palombit (1981) captures Fela’s stance on politics in general, Fela’s Pan-African views, Fela’s revulsion of communism, militarism, capitalism, multinational companies operating in Africa, military rule in Africa as well as the implantation of Islam and Christianity in Africa. Palombit thinks that in Fela’s opinion socio-political and religious forces constitute an obstacle to the overall progress of Africa’s socio-political and economic development. According to Palombit (1981) Fela sees capitalism and communism as two incompatible ideologies that regard Africa as a “... milking cow and territory to settle their differences” (Palombit, 1981, p. 2). Though Pamlobit’s article gives us an insight

into Fela's reception of Pan- Africanism and denunciation of western ideologies such as capitalism among others, and at the same time positions us to construct Fela's political philosophy, nonetheless, Palombit's article, comprising only two pages, does not exhaust the topic under consideration.

In his "Fela Kuti and the oppositional Lyrical Power" Sithole (2012), bemoans the lack of a consistent ideological expression in Fela's political thought which he expressed in his political music with the aim of opposing corruption in the postcolonial African state. This, according to Sithole, appears to constitute a weakness in Fela's political philosophy. Sithole further laments that the failure of the postcolonial African state, especially Nigeria in particular, to genuinely embark on progressive national reconstruction provided a fertile ground for Fela's political music to sprout and attempt to address those failures.

Sithole (2012) urges that though Fela often blamed colonialism for some of Africa's problems, nevertheless, with respect to who should take the ultimate blame for the failure of the postcolonial state in Africa, Fela places the blame on the doorstep of the first and second generation of African leaders such as Obafemi Awolowo, Sani Abacha, Mobutu Seseko, and Thomas Sankara among others. Indeed, the failure of the African postcolonial state has been painstakingly discussed in Claude Ake's book, *Democracy and Development in Africa* where among other factors, Ake (2000) identifies corruption, oppression, incompetent leadership, and lack of political liberties as factors that made development in postcolonial Africa an illusion.

Sithole (2012) also devotes space to examine the rationale behind the formation of Fela's commune which was later named Kalakuta Republic. As to whether the formation of this commune by Fela was imaginary or real, Sithole avoids taking sides and argues that Kalakuta Republic, which was seen by Fela as a state within the Nigerian state, demonstrates some form of defiance against the oppressive and corrupt Nigerian state which managed to cow "... its subjects into objectified submission and legitimised itself even ... [when it was deemed as 'illegitimate']" (Sithole, 2012, p.4).

Sithole (2012) concludes his article and suggests that though Fela's political music, which was vitriolic in character and in content attempts to check the abuse of state's power, corruption and oppression in postcolonial Africa, such political struggle lacked a key and consistent ideology in order to mobilise the masses against oppression and marginalisation.

Sithole's critical stance on Fela's lack of a consistent ideology in the political struggle against repressive forces in postcolonial Africa is refreshing. In fact, such a critical approach in scholarship helps us to sharpen our critique of Fela's political philosophy.

Olaniyan (2001) admits that Fela's "extramusical", "extrasonic" and by extension his unconventional lifestyle often appear to dominate that of his musical aspect. Olaniyan further suggests that a more beneficial or rewarding study of Fela's musical practice is best undertaken by examining the contradictions inherent in such music. Following Howe (1997), Olaniyan argues that there appear to be contradictions in every aspect of Fela's life. Olaniyan thinks, for

instance, that though at the level of personal life Fela spoke against tyranny and the restriction of fundamental human and civil liberties, he "... ran a strictly hierarchical household..." at his commune, the Kalakuta Republic.

Olaniyan finds it difficult to interpret Fela's ideological orientation within a philosophical spectrum. Particularly, the difficulty lies in reconciling Fela's belief in cultural nationalism with his idolisation of two leftist intellectuals, namely, Kwame Nkrumah and Walter Rodney (Olaniyan, 1997). This contradiction in Fela's thought perhaps compelled Howe (1997) to remark that "... Fela had no interest in perfect philosophical correctness and that contradictions of a sometimes painful sort were apparent in Fela's own life and household"(Olaniyan, 1997, p.77). Olaniyan particularly explores Fela's insistence that the only way forward for postcolonial Africa is to return to its precolonial past and wonders whether such an approach could provide effective remedy to the myriad of problems facing postcolonial Africa. Thus, what, in Olaniyan's opinion, spurred Fela's nativist attitude to development include factors such as "tyrannical leadership, political instability, flagrant disregard for rules, economic...malformation, epochal inequalities between the few and the many, impossible cities, recurrent devastating interethnic wars, anti-state rebellions and attendant heart-breaking dispersal of populations..."(Olaniyan, 1997, p.7)

Olaniyan (1997) traces the origin of Fela's cultural nationalism to he (Fela's) association with the Black Power group in 1969 during his sojourn in the United States. That association with the group raised Fela's social awareness and political consciousness which later became useful in his struggle against the

postcolonial state, especially in the 1970s and 80s. According to Olaniyan (1997), though Fela lacks a consistent ideology in his political theorising, Fela's bold exertion had the advantage of taming "modernity, that historical aggressive estern imposition on other lands..." (Olaniyan, 1997, p.83)

Though Olaniyan's study provides useful suggestions and tools to help advance our examination of Fela's political philosophy, especially its identification of antinomies or contradictions inherent in Fela's thought, Olaniyan's over concentration of Fela's contradictions veils him from seeing that consistent contradictions, if maintained consistently, becomes a coherent theory of knowledge. Besides, Olaniyan's exposure of some contradictions in Fela's thought will help enrich our critique of Fela's political philosophy.

In "Rebel with a Cause", Stein (2013) narrates the circumstances which led to his friendship with Fela in London in the 1970s. To Stein, this friendship with Fela gradually led to his appointment as a co-manager of Fela's music. Indeed, Stein graphically chronicled his tour with Fela's musical group and the accomplishment they chalked during such time he spent with the group. Stein describes Fela as an accomplished human right activist whose message was not, and still not, for Africa in particular but for the world at large. Though fragments of Stein's work touches on the political agenda of Fela, his work is basically a polemical narration of Fela's sojourn in London, the United States and beyond. Nonetheless, Stein's capture of Fela's fight for human rights in postcolonial Nigeria helps us in constructing and critiquing Fela's political philosophy.

## **2.4 Review of Literature on Fela's Pan Africanism**

Awuni (2011) in "The Contribution of The Afrobeat Legend, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti to Pan-Africanism", narrates a brief history of Fela from his Abeokuta childhood up-bringing to stardom as a master of classical African music. Awuni (2011) particularly pays attention to how the traditional culture of the Yoruba played an influential role in shaping how Fela fashioned his cultural nationalism and pan- Africanism. Also discussed in this article is how the advancement in science and technology and their negative consequences, especially the destructive tendencies of nuclear weapons, wars and pollution of the environment ultimately compelled Fela to admonish Africans to return to their precolonial past as a solution to the postcolonial problems (Awuni, 2011).

Though Awuni's study is not devoted to discussing the political philosophy of Fela, it is useful to the current study since such exposure of Fela's stance on the ideal solution to postcolonial African problems will aid sharpen our critique of Fela's political philosophy.

Though Veal's (1995) "Jazz Music Influences on the Work of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti" is devoted to examining the specific elements of jazz element in Fela's music, how Fela embraced the jazz element in his music and the extent to which Afrobeat can be called jazz, Veal devotes space in his work to examine the historical and contextual underpinning of most of Fela's tracks. This gives the reader the advantage to easily discern the message Fela tries to portray in most of his compositions or songs. Thus, from Veal's study, songs like 'Movement Against Second Slavery' (MASS), 'Big Blind Country' (BBC), 'Customs Check

Point' (CCP), and 'Beast of No Nation' (BONN) among other songs of Fela can easily be discerned and their philosophical usefulness ascertained.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF FELA ANIKULAPO-KUTI

#### 3.0 Overview

As already argued out in chapter two, political philosophy is that branch of philosophy which prescribes how the ideal state ought to be organised or attained. In its bid to prescribe the ideal state, political philosophy considers existing political arrangement(s) as being inadequate in addressing existing socio-political and economic challenges. For instance, in *The Republic*, Plato's attempt to prescribe an ideal society for the Athenian state was premised on the political and civil instability that characterised Greece after the Peloponnesian War. Similarly, the political philosophy of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti is linked up with the social, political, economic, religious and cultural problems confronting postcolonial Africa when political independence came. I aver that while it is true that most of the issues Fela raised in his political philosophy largely reflected the problems of postcolonial Africa, Fela equally blamed certain precolonial factors such as slavery and racism as historical hangover hindering the material and cultural progress of Africa. Even so, Fela's political philosophy could best be described in the words of Veal (2000) as cultural Pan-Africanism. That is, Fela was convinced that Africans had been uprooted culturally as a result of slavery and colonisation and so the continent needed a cultural re-orientation to fix such cultural estrangement. Though an examination of Fela's political philosophy reveals glaring contradictions and complexities, it is fair to say that it was basically such antinomies in his philosophy which help to make his philosophy exciting.

More so, some scholars such as Omoregbe (1991), Stroll and Popkin (2000), aver that no philosophy can arise out of vacuum. That a given philosophy is to a large extent influenced by the socio-political and economic environment in which the philosopher emerged. Thus such a given philosophy attempts to respond to the problems and challenges of such time and place. Just as African freedom fighters such as Kwame Nkrumah (1964), Julius Nyerere (1968), and Leopold Senghor (1964) constructed their philosophies in the form of *Consciencism*, *Ujamaa* and *Negritude* to address the challenges arising from Africa's slave and colonial past, Fela's Afrobeat, in which he expressed his political philosophy in a form of social criticism, vitriolic attacks of the state and a recommendation for Africans to turn to their ancestral past can be seen in the same light as the solutions put forward by the first generation of African leaders that I have mentioned. Thus, Fela's music, after 1973 was purely political. It was a form of political music that attempted to fix complexities and contradictions of post-colonial Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. What then account for the evolution of politics in Fela's music? I now turn to address how his political consciousness evolved.

### **3.1 The Formation of Fela's Political Consciousness**

Born in 1938 to a middle class family in Abeokuta, Fela had a taste of colonial life since Nigeria was still under the colonial authority of Britain. Since Fela's father, Rev. Israel Ransome Kuti and mother, Funmilayo Ransome Kuti were both influential personalities and Anglicans, they were determined to bring up all their four children, including Fela, the Christian way of life (Moore, 1982).

At the age of 16 at Abeokuta Grammar School, Fela's first evidence of political consciousness started when he formed a club called *The Planless Society*, whose aim was to disobey all school rules and regulations. Subsequently, Fela founded and edited a radical newspaper called *The Planless Times* which was swiftly proscribed by the Abeokuta Grammar School because its publications had incited riots in the school (Moore 1982).

However, the single most important factor which tremendously influenced the political views of Fela was his mother, Funmilayo Ransom Kuti. As a president of Nigeria's women's union, an anti-colonial activist, a recipient of Lenin peace prize in the early 1960s, a first Nigerian woman to drive a car and to successfully tour the iron curtain countries such as the USSR, China, Poland, Yugoslavia and East Berlin, Fela's mother exercised a tremendous influence on him (Moore, 1982, Veal, 2000).

Two incidents however deserve emphasis concerning the formation of Fela's political consciousness. As a youth, Fela recalls with excitement and deep admiration for his mother for leading a delegation of women in Abeokuta to successfully dethrone the chief, Ladapo Ademola II, for the latter's complicity in harassing small scale traders on matters of tax payment. It appears pretty clear that such admiration for his mother's courage and tenacity will prepare Fela to withstand harsh military attacks and reprisals, including the dumping of his mother's mock coffin at Dodan Barracks, the official seat of government, as a protest against an attack by the military in 1977 in which his mother later died from injuries (Moore, 1982).

More so, Fela equally recalls in *Fela, Fela: This Bitch of a life* that as a youth his mother took him to several anti-colonial rallies. Since such rallies absorbed her mother's time from domestic work including disciplinary actions including flogging, Fela admits that "... when she was running around doing politics she didn't have time to flog me. The more she got into politics, the less time she had to beat me. So I too began liking politics" (Moore, 1982, p.42).

Indeed, Fela's mother's leftist and Marxist leanings and bravery so impressed Kwame Nkrumah that the latter arranged to see her when he visited Lagos in 1958. Again, Fela met Nkrumah with his mother. Fela's admiration for the Ghana's premier on their first meeting speaks for itself. "Man, he was so cool. My mother thought a lot of him ... Nkrumah! Man, I will never forget his face" (Moore, 1982, p. 47). There is no doubt that Fela's embrace of Nkrumahism and Pan-African views dates back to his youthful days even before he was mature enough to read and digest Nkrumah's written works. In later years, Fela will not only espouse the political agenda of Kwame Nkrumah, who called for continental unification of Africa, but will worship Nkrumah as a Pan-African hero at his *Afrika Shrine*, a club in which he entertained visitors with live performances.

Apart from the above domestic factors which played a major role in shaping the political philosophy of Fela, an external factor which equally played a key role in the formation of Fela's political consciousness cannot be ignored. Fela admits that up to his American sojourn in 1969, he was largely ignorant of politics and African history. However, coming into contact with his American friend, Sandra Izsadore, Fela was introduced to the activities of the Black Panther

Movement and the *Autobiography of Malcom X*. This development convinced Fela that Africa had a history to tell the world and the earlier Africa started conscientising other people about its rich cultural and historical heritage, the better it will be for Africa. Fela frankly admits his ignorance of African history prior to his sojourn in America as follows: "Sandra gave me the education I wanted to know. She was the one who opened my eyes. She is the one who spoke to me about Africa! For the first time I heard things I'd never heard before about Africa! She talked to me about politics, history. She taught me what she knew and what she knew was enough for me to start on" (Moore, 1982, p.85).

It will be correct for one to conclude from the above quote that in spite of some domestic factors which exercised profound influence on his political views, Fela discovered Africa, at least intellectually, from America. Through his association with Sandra Izsadore, through his leanings with the Black Panther Movement and through his acquaintance with history and political literature on Africa, Fela's intellectual consciousness was indeed awakened in America. It was this intellectual awakening which will guide him to make an attempt to liberate Africa from cultural alienation and neo-colonialism. Thus, realising that Africa was in theory politically free but economically, culturally and religiously ruled from the Metropolitan countries of the former European colonial powers, Fela would make an attempt to establish an independent commune which he called Kalakuta Republic, the only Republic in Africa which was truly independent in symbolic terms.

### **3.2 The Philosophy behind the Formation of Kalakuta Republic**

It must be made clear that several writers have dismissed Fela's communal compound, Kalakuta Republic, as a deviant enclave which promoted the use of hard drugs like heroine and Indian hemp. Such an interpretation misses the point because granted that Kalakuta Republic gained notoriety for drugs including the open and excessive use of marijuana, such a labeling should rather be seen as a consequence of the real philosophy and intention behind the formation of Kalakuta Republic.

After his return from America in 1975, and especially having been heavily influenced by Sandra Izsadore and made to believe in the glorious history of Africa, Fela decided to de-Anglicise every English name around him. To this end, he changed his name from Fela Ransome Kuti to Fela Anikulapo-Kuti. Anikulapo means one who carries death in his pouch. Thus, his full name could be interpreted as follows: 'He who emanates greatness, carries death in his porch and cannot die' (Jaboro, 2012, Moore, 1982a, 2009b & Veal, 2000). Fela's mother followed her son and changed her name from Funmilayo Ransome Kuti to Funmilayo Anikulapo-Kuti, demonstrating some sort of solidarity for her son.

In the same year, that is 1975, having been arrested and beaten by the military for using marijuana, Fela decided to name his communal enclave Kalakuta Republic as a defiance against established state authority. According to Veal (2000) "Fela ... named his communal compound 'Kalakuta Republic' proclaiming it as autonomous zone free from the laws and jurisdiction of Nigeria and opened to people of African descent worldwide especially to the persecuted

Africans" (Veal, 2000, p.143 ). Similarly, Fela admits in an interview with Moore, that in view of the dispersion of Africans owing to the inglorious trade in human cargo, "All African countries should open their doors to Africans from everywhere especially those in the Americas" (Moore, 1982, p.109). Thus we learn from Moore (1982) that Kalakuta was meant to be a sanctuary for every African who was escaping persecution. Indeed, it was meant to reflect the communal lifestyle of Africans prior to the advent of colonisation when Africans regarded themselves as an inseparable integral whole. Fela expresses his reason for the formation of Kalakuta Republic as follows:

It was when I was in the police cell at the C.I.D (Central Intelligence Division) headquarters in Lagos; the cell I was in was named "The Kalakuta Republic" by the prisoners. I found out when I went to East Africa that "Kalakuta" is a Swahili word that means "rascal". So, if rascality is going to get us what we want, we will use it; because we are dealing with corrupt people, we have to be rascally with them (Collins, 1985, p. 120).

In spite of the seemingly frank admission of the real reasons behind the formation of Kalakuta Republic, Veal (2000) insists that the declaration of Kalakuta's autonomy was symbolic, designed to express dissent against the complexities of post-colonial Nigeria and Africa as a whole. Veal intimates that the independence of Kalakuta should be seen as unrealistic. In spite of Veal's query, we are of view that the philosophy behind the formation of Kalakuta is

very much missed in Veal's interpretation. The reason is that Fela was very much obsessed by the supposedly glorious and ideal nature of African precolonial past. He had experienced little of that in colonial Nigeria and as well as in racial America in the 1960s. Besides, Fela had learnt about the communal lifestyle of Africans in the literature which was available to him in America. He had met Kwame Nkrumah and had by 1974/75 acquainted himself with Nkrumah's continental unity argument. It was therefore natural that Fela would attempt to create the nucleus from which the united African dream could draw inspiration. In other words, Africa as a continent and a race was being reinvented and re-imagined in this communal enclave that Fela established. Kalakuta may appear ambitious, all the same, it had its own laws and time (Kalakuta Meridian Time (KMT)) that get obeyed and followed respectively.

From Kalakuta and from his *Afrika* Shrine as well as a column under which Fela bought a space and regularly featured articles under the name 'The Chief Priest Say', he will subject both military and civilian leaders of Africa to criticisms and other forms of vitriolic attacks. These criticisms of African leadership arose from Fela's disillusionment with the failure of African leaders to develop the continent in spite of the availability of resources both natural and human. This is often referred to in post-independent African literature as the paradox of abundance.

### **3.3 Fela's Disillusionment with the Post-colonial African State**

Born in 1938 and died in 1997, it is fair to say that Fela's life story cannot be reasonably examined without reference to the problems of postcolonial Africa.

In other words, Fela's "personal story is inextricably intertwined with the history of post-colonial Nigeria" in particular, and Africa in general (Veal 2000, p.19). The continent as a whole had so much hope for material, cultural, political and economic progress when many African states, with the exception of Apartheid South Africa, Portuguese Guinea Bissau, Southern Rhodesia, had gained their independence in the 1960s. In fact, this era has been described by some postcolonial scholars as a decade of hope. Since colonialism had ended, at least politically, the continent had been settled for development. Thus, Africans in general became disillusioned when they realised that this era, which had been christened the decade of hope, presented them with hopelessness and a grim future.

Ake (2000) summed up the state of Africa in post-colonial era much clearer.

Three decades of preoccupation with development in Africa have yielded meager returns. Africa economies have been stagnating or regressing. For most Africans real incomes are lower than they were two decades ago. Health prospects are poorer, malnourishment is widespread and infrastructure is breaking down as are some social institutions (Ake, 2000, p.1).

Indeed, these were some of the many factors that caught the attention of Fela in which he used his Afrobeat music to address.

On the exploration of oil in South-eastern Nigeria without due regard for the pollution of the environment for instance, Fela composed a track called "Government of Crooks" with the view of addressing "... government's complicity in the despoliation of south-eastern Ogoniland by foreign oil companies, a state of affairs that had recently culminated in the state execution of Ogoni activist... Ken Saro iwa" (Veal, 2000, p.4)

More so, tracks like "Chop and Clean Mouth like Nothing Happened, Na New Name for Stealing" comprehensively addresses the sequential and colossal rape of Nigeria's economy by successive governments be they military or civilian. In this track also, Fela equally bemoans the hardships that were visited on the African masses as a result of unwitting African leader's adoption of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPS). Besides, "Country of Pain" is paradoxically composed to bemoan hardships and suffering in the midst of abundance of oil in Nigeria. "Big Blind Country" for instance, addresses a wide range of issues issues that range from the need for indigenous African medicine to the use of African languages as means of true liberation. In the track he sings; *The man wey them say go steal for market, im go stand for court go dey look o, the only thing for im go understand for there, now them tell am to go for jail o.* In much the same way "Akunakuna, Senior brother of parambulator" launches a devastating critique of government's oppression of small scale traders and "other participants of the country's informal economy" ( Veal, 2000, p. 4)

In a nutshell, the above cited tracks that speak to the problems of postcolonial Africa will suffice. However, Fela's enigma was why African leaders

could callously continue to betray their continent in the manner in which they did. Thus after so many years of social vilification of the leaders of postcolonial Africa for corruption, plunder of African resources, continuing enslavement of the African masses and complicity with multi-national companies for the degradation of the African environment, Fela became convinced that the true liberators of Africa would not be the leaders of his time. In an interview with Moore (2009) when he had withdrawn from public life and was spending so much time in spiritual contemplation in his room at Kalakuta, Fela could not hide his disillusionment with the failure of the postcolonial state to transform. As he puts it "why even bother? I have said everything. It's all been said. It's all been done" (Moore, 2009, p. 283).

### **3.4 Fela's Critique of Neo-Colonialism**

Neo-colonialism is a popular terminology in ant-imperialist literature. Following Lenin's book, *Capitalism: The Highest Stage of Imperialism*, Nkrumah followed suit with his 1965 publication, *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. Whether Nkrumah's book was a deliberate echo of Lenin's work or not as Mazrui (1966) wants us to note, both books appear to carry a compressive examination of the operations of the capitalist mode of production championed by America and Europe. Nkrumah (1965) thinks that "The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus, its political policy is directed from outside" (Nkrumah, 1965, p. ix). In Nkrumah's view, the operation of neo-colonialism does not differ from the

colonial system of direct exploitation, except that direct colonialism cannot, like the proverbial camel, return to Africa hump and lump (Nkrumah, 1965).

Indeed, neo-colonialism in Africa almost immediately started when political independence came. Hence, such neo-colonial elements like Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPS), other conditionalities of the World Bank and the complicity between international organisations such as multi-national companies and comprador African bourgeoisie for the purpose of plundering African resources did not escape Fela's social criticism, which were inherent in his compositions, sang at the *Afrika Shrine*.

Fela questions Africa's claim of being independent from slavery and colonialism when behaviour of Africans cannot be said to be different from the colonial era. As he wonders, how could Africans be free when they continue to exhibit the identities of those who colonised and enslaved them? Thus, the Europeanisation and Christianisation as well as the Arabisation and Islamisation of Africans in the wake of political independence were enough proof that Africa was still being ruled by the invisible government (neo-colonialism). To quote him regarding a track titled "Upside Down" which he had recorded in the 1970s, it (the track) dealt with all the confusion and corruption of the Gowon-Obasanjo period. "All the shit man! The chaos! the foolishness of those Africans who look down on the names of their ancestors and take European names" ( Moore, 1982, p.131). As a cultural Pan-Africanist who led by example, Fela puts it this way: "Me, myself, I had just changed my own name..." (Moore, 1982, p. 131).

But more importantly, Fela questioned the adoption of colonialist language(s) by governments in a continent that was said to have emancipated itself from the colonising European powers. In one of his songs, he says: *Instead of Nigeria, Onyibo language we speak, Government style be say, Onyibo thing one better past.*

In fact Fela's query is sensible to the extent that analogically, just as you cannot expect illiterate and poor third world parents to respond favourably to 'birth control' appeals when more children constitute their only 'welfare insurance' against the instabilities of old-age, you cannot expect Africans to reflect and intellectualise in a colonialist language that does not exhaust the ontological problems, especially the vital forces and cultural values of the African. Thus for the continent to progress educationally, politically, economically and socially and to conscientise other cultures about the richness of its language, we need to reflect, articulate and examine the African problems in indigenous African languages 'for the unexamined life isn't worth living'. In fact, the Kenyan foremost literary artist, Ngugi Wa Thiongo is embarking on this journey.

In the field of culture, Fela indicates that Africans and for that matter the postcolonial state had lost its direction. From dress code to governance system, the postcolonial man was imitating the former colonial powers as if the African could not boast of his culture prior to colonisation. Thus, songs like 'Grammartologilisationism is the Boss', 'Mr. Follow Follow', and 'Johny Just Drop' as well as 'Big Blind Country' were composed to address this state of

cultural alienation and embarrassment that the African found himself. In Fela's view, beautiful African cities such as Oyo, and Benin among others were destroyed by the European colonising powers with the aim that if they (Europeans) wanted to force the African into slavery and colonise his country, then they had to prevent the African from seeing that he could be creative. Against this backdrop therefore, Fela felt that by copying the culture of the very person who colonised you, you give the impression that you were a savage who stood in need of civilisation from the other side.

### **3.5 Fela's Suggestion of the Way Forward**

In view of the cultural estrangement that the African had found himself in the wake of political independence, Fela put up certain propositions to help in the reconstruction of the African identity. These propositions could be summed up in three terms, namely, the glorification of African communal past, the adoration of the black race, and the continental unification of Africa.

### **3.6 The Glorification of African Communal Past**

To remedy this cultural estrangement that the African had found himself in postcolonial Africa arising from what Mazrui (2002) and Nkrumah (1964) had referred to as the Triple Heritage, Fela called for a return to traditional African communal past. In fact, his call for a return to our ancestral past becomes comprehensible when measured against his frustration with the effects of modernisation as well as the effects of scientific and technological system of production. As he writes: "The right way is the one of our ancestors: traditional technology, or *naturology*. That is the only viable way... Science means

pollution! ... There is limit to what Europeans call technological and industrial development. When that limit is achieved, society just crumbles ....” (Moore, 1982, p. 151). Fela’s call for a return to our ancestral lifestyle makes sense when it is measured against the undesirable effects associated with the advancement of science and technology. In other words, such a clarion call for a return to the *status quo ante* cannot easily be dismissed as a nostalgic feeling. In fact, industrial-technology forces contemporary man to revise his relationship with nature. Since the ‘home’ of modern man is where his world of work is, the industrial concentration of labour, capital, communication systems, administrative institutions, etcetera, in vast single localities compels the transformation of natural vegetation into cities. As the city grows in terms of spatial expansion, overpopulation, and pressure on housing, transportation and other public facilities, it produces a decaying inner city of slum and ghetto dwellings, unemployed and unemployable persons, vagrants and criminals, muggings, rape, armed robbery among others (Aidoo, 1990). The attempt by descent people to escape this cancer of industrialism leads, inevitably, to suburban life. This, in turn, brings in the bulldozer that wipes out areas that were once rich in cultivable land; natural resource and wildlife. Instead of yesterday’s clover, there is today’s concrete (Aidoo, 1990).

In other words, the Hiroshima and Nagasaki experience during World War II, the 1986 Chernobyl Nuclear Plant’ explosion in the Soviet Union and the recent Fukushima nuclear leakage in Japan are certainly experiences that threaten

man's safety on planet earth which in the long run validates Fela's call for a return to the African communal past.

### **3.7 Fela's Contribution to Pan-Africanism**

In the field of politics, Fela's contribution to Pan-Africanism stands out clearly. In fact, he realised that the cultural revolution he so much desired could not be attained without political independence. This is marked by his formation of a political party, Movement of the People (MOP) to contest Nigeria's presidential elections in 1978 and 1984. Fela realised that the boundaries that separated one African country from the other were so arbitrarily drawn at the Berlin Colloquium that those boundaries needed to be erased or redrawn through continental political union and planning. As he puts it "The Africans should not limit their purview to the small enclaves cut out for them at the Berlin Conference. While the Europeans take care of their interest, the Africans just go about copying foreign values ... which permanently endear them to the whole world as certified slaves" (Moore, 1982, p. 150).

In Fela's opinion, sound continental and economic planning could only be attained in Africa if the whole of the continent were united under one federal democratic country. Thus his formation of MOP, a party he would use to capture political power in Nigeria with which he would sacrifice Nigeria's sovereignty for an African continental union government is reminiscent of Nkrumah's Ghana's independence being meaningless unless it was linked up with the total liberation of Africa (Nkrumah, 1963).

In the field of ideology, Fela condemned the deliberate plundering of Africa's wealth by multi-national companies from the West. He recounts this situation in 'ITT', 'Amen Amen Amen', in which he accuses corrupt African leaders such as Olusegun Obasanjo, Sani Abacha, General Abiola, Mobutu Seseko, and Blaise Campaore among others of enhancing global international capitalism by delivering the natural resources of Africa to the West and at the same time selling the continent without conscience. To this end, Fela denounced the capitalist system of production as a system that is too exploitative of human labour to be reconciled with traditional African communalism, which manifests the qualities of humanism, classlessness and egalitarianism. Fela's attack of the capitalist system did not favourably dispose him to socialism. As he puts it, "There are many ideologies in Africa that don't belong there. The capitalist and the communist systems have always regarded Africa as a milking cow and a territory to settle their own conflicts" (Palombit, 1981, p. 2).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### A CRITIQUE OF FELA'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

#### 4.0 Overview

I continue to emphasise that the fundamental concern of political philosophy is the prescription of how the ideal state suitable for a given people ought to be attained. We further argue that in an attempt to prescribe how the ideal state could be attained, the political philosopher implicitly also describes the ideal state, in which case political philosophy may appear to encroach on the domain of political science. Apart from Fela's critical stance on corruption, mismanagement of Africa's resources by the continent leaders, widespread military dictatorship which characterised the continent in the second and third decades after independence, the plunder of Africa's resources through the conspiracy of western interests and African comprador bourgeoisie, what I regard as Fela's political philosophy is an uncritical love of all that is qualified black (African), his embrace of cultural Pan-Africanism as a pre-requisite to combatting the innumerable problems and challenges that faced postcolonial Africa as well as his glorification or idealisation of the African communal past. I thus devote this chapter to elucidating the contradictions inherent in Fela's political philosophy.

#### 4.1 Critique of Fela's Continentalism

There is no doubt that Fela's version of Pan-Africanism oscillates around continental unity of Africa as the surest way to socio-political and economic progress. Thus, songs like 'Chop and Clean Mouth', 'Movement Against Second Slavery', 'Underground System', and 'Authority Stealing' among others urge

Africans to unite in order to move forward. Fela was amazed that while other continents such as Europe and America were united and had moved forward, Africa was still geographically balkanised, prone to the manipulation of neocolonialism and imperialism. As he puts it, “we should not limit our area of belonging to that small enclave cut out for us by the Berlin Conference of 1884-5. Africa has to open her doors to every black man in the world. Until Africa sees it that way, she won’t have made it yet, man! White people ... have a sense of belonging. They have even gone as far as electing a European parliament to take care of their interest” (Moore, 1982, p. 150).

Noble as Fela’s vision of African unity may appear, the two methodologies that he relied upon for the realisation of African unity were not only incompatible, but contradictory and therefore yielded no results. Thus Fela can be faulted on methodological bankruptcy as far as his quest for African unity was concerned. First, the first methodology Fela relied upon for the unification of Africa was cultural revolution. Thus songs like ‘Mr Follow Follow’ (MFF), ‘Johnny Just Drop’ (JJD), ‘Big Blind Country’ (BBC), were composed to criticise Africans who looked down upon their own culture and were copying European values and ideals.

Realising that European and Islamic influences had altered the behaviour of Africans arising from their combined presence with African traditional culture, a phenomenon which had been examined by Nkrumah (1964) and Mazrui (1966, 2002), Fela abandoned the cultural approach (method) and switched to another equally problematic method, namely, the political method.

Fela realised that the African cultural revolution he so much desired could not be attained without political independence. Hence, he formed a political party, Movement of the People (MOP) to contest the Nigeria elections of 1978 and 1984. Let us remind ourselves that Kwame Nkrumah, the first premier of independent Ghana, had placed more emphasis on the political kingdom as the surest way for the attainment of all other independences economic and cultural. As he said, 'seek ye first the political kingdom and all others would be added unto you' (Mazrui, 1966).

To be sure, political independence is certainly a path to control state capital within which all aspects of the state's life could be organised. It must however be observed that merely seeking the political kingdom as an end in itself rather than as a means to an end is immaterial to economic and any other independence(s) (Mazrui, 1966). In other words, what most advocates of the political kingdom school of thought, including Fela, overlooked is the distinction in the art of critical thinking or logic (Mazrui, 1966). The flaw inherent in the logic of proponents of the political kingdom, including Fela, is their inability to make a distinction between necessary and sufficient conditions. Hence, the political kingdom as canvassed by Fela was a necessary condition for Africa to attain the other independences. However, political independence was not a sufficient condition for all other independences (Mazrui, 1966). This critique is even reinforced by an empirical fact that most countries in Africa are politically independent, yet, economic independence is still a mirage.

We thus observe that what seems to unite most advocates of the political kingdom argument is their strong conviction that the political kingdom is the key to all other independences cultural, social, religious and economic among others.

Even so, Fela was born in 1938, made to meet Kwame Nkrumah as a youth and grew to espouse Nkrumahism among other ideologies. One would have expected that he would have adopted a critical stance toward Nkrumahism, at least, intellectually. But he failed to consider certain weaknesses inherent in Nkrumah's political literature. For historical purpose, Nkrumah had earlier been criticized for advocating a return to the African communal past. Critics argued that such a return to the communal past portrays the African as being fit only for jungle life. Nkrumah was therefore compelled to abandon this thesis that he constructed in *Consciencism*. Thus, for adopting a dogmatic attitude towards Nkrumahism, Fela exposed himself to those criticisms which had been raised against Nkrumahism. One may therefore be compelled to conclude that either Fela did not understand Nkrumahism or espoused Nkrumahism religiously.

#### **4.2 Critique of Fela's Position on African Communalism**

In response to the crisis of cultural identity which the African had found himself in the postcolonial era, Fela admonished Africans to return to the traditional communal past of their ancestors. Though this call for a return to the *status quo ante* cannot be easily dismissed as a nostalgic feeling, nonetheless, one could still argue that

To advocate a return to the rock from which we were  
hewn is a charming thought. This is so because we are

faced with contemporary problems arising from colonisation, political subjugation, economic exploitation, educational and social backwardness, increases in population, familiarity with the methods and products of industrialisation as well as modern agricultural techniques. These—as well as a host of other complexities—can be resolved by no mere communalistic society, however sophisticated, and anyone who so advocates must be caught in insoluble dilemma of the most excruciating kind. In fact, all available evidence from socio-political history discloses that such a return to the *status quo ante* is quite unexampled in the evolution of societies (Nkrumah, 1967, p. 205).

The above quotation unambiguously demonstrates that Nkrumah had emancipated himself from the idyllic conception of traditional African society which was supposedly glorious, perfect and devoid of any social hierarchy or classes so much that it got altered only with the colonial imprint. Yet, Fela, who openly admitted of being Nkrumahist, still clung to the erroneous conception of traditional Africa as unsullied.

Moreover, it must be observed that having been amazed by the colossal scale, technological and scientific advancement of American culture during his sojourn in the 1960s and 1970s, one would have expected that Fela would have been moved by such experience of

America's achievements to either prescribe for Africa, a communitarian society which would at least, embrace some positive contributions of western culture. Thus such a consistent insistence that Africans should return to their ancestral lifestyle was not only impossible but cast a bad picture on the African as a being who is fit only for jungle life, backward and not innovative. In other words, one possible problem for Fela's position is that the African is incapable of scientific and technological thought.

In the field of ideology, a critic can say that Fela demonstrated gross ambivalence in his ideological orientation. Though Fela dismissed capitalism and socialism as being too incompatible to be reconciled with traditional African communalism, he never made any effort to propose an ideology of his own which will guide postcolonial Africa in its quest for nation building. He often appeared to vacillate between capitalism and socialism, not knowing whether to express his preference for one over the other. Though Fela could be spoken of in some circles as a cultural nationalist, nevertheless, Howe (1997) points out the contradiction inherent in Fela's political philosophy with respect to his (Fela's) ideological stance. As Howe notes, "Fela had no interest in perfect philosophical correctness" (Howe, 1997, p. 130). Similarly, Veal (2000) observes, "in most generous terms, he has been described as ideologically inconsistent, more frequently as a reactionary traditionalist, and at worst an unrepentant sexist" (Veal, 2000, p. 105).

It is significant to note that the observations made by Howe and Veal are not necessarily accidental. In fact, the above observations do coincide and mutually reinforce each other. Such observations aid us to explain why Fela was seldom successful in his political ambition to rule Nigeria. Such an absence of ideology in the political philosophy of Fela only helps to explain his motives of being reactionary and could not therefore be trusted with the responsibility of state's power by most urban elite. While it may be true that ideologies may not be completely successful in their application in a given scenario, ironically, the complete absence of an ideology produces what Fela himself describes as an aimless economic and political wandering, which in the long run, disorients the people. Fela satirises this phenomenon in one of his songs as 'perambulation' and labelled most African leaders as perambulators. as Fela self-critiquing himself in this song? Whatever the case, we see this development as self-criticism of an unconscious kind.

Another observation of contradiction in Fela's thought was his dismissal of Christianity and Islam in Africa. While he denounced Christianity for its complicity in the colonisation of Africa, he dismissed Islam and Arabs in particular, for their role in the acquisition of slaves in Africa. Even so, Fela was "equally suspicious of organised religion in its organised form, which he viewed as irreversibly corrupted by colonialism" (Veal, 2000, p. 244).

I agree with Fela that by accident of Arabic enslavement and European colonisation of Africa, post-independent Africa harbours two main strands of patriarchal monotheism, namely, Islam and Christianity (Okoro, 2010). I further agree that these two brands of monotheism are not only ontologically hostile to each other, but equally irreconcilable with traditional African *weltanschauung*.

Though these religions cannot be exonerated as they spearheaded the campaign for the enslavement, disbandment and subsequent colonisation of Africa, Fela lost sight of the fact that prior to the European and Arabic advent, “Africans were prepared to sell, often for not more than thirty pieces of silver, fellow tribesmen and even members of the same extended family and clan” (Nkrumah, 1967, p. 202). I further agree with Nkrumah (1967) that “... colonialism deserved to be blamed for many evils in Africa, but surely, it was not preceded by an African Golden Age or paradise” (Nkrumah, 1967, p. 203).

The point being made here is that long before the European and Arabic advent in Africa, however vicious such experience might appear, recorded history of inter and intra-tribal and state wars abound. And such divisions among states, tribes and empires in Africa were easily exploited by the colonialists to their own advantage. Rather than blame the forces of Islam and Christianity for the African condition, Fela should have noted that the internal strife in what is now geographically referred to as Africa,

accelerated rather than decelerated the enslavement and colonisation of the continent. As Veal (2000) aptly observes,

... the lyrics of ‘Gentleman’ and ‘ hy Black Man Dey Suffer’ present an idyllic image of pure, ‘original’ Africa that remained harmonious and unsullied until the arrival of the Europeans. Such a conception fails to account for the pre-existing social and political divisions the colonialists were so able to exploit, as well as the continuous process of change and outside influence that inform all cultures (Veal, 2000, p. 246).

It is therefore a wonder as to how Fela clung to the African past which was not exactly the picture he attempted to paint nor could be reconstructed in its unsullied form. One other way of forging ahead was not for Fela to dismiss the above religions for playing a historical role in Africa’s colonisation and enslavement, but to attempt to domesticate them as experiences that had come to stay. Better still, one could attempt to forge a combined harmony for them to co-exist with traditional African culture harmoniously as Nkrumah did in *Consciencism*. Nkrumah is thus worthy to quote:

With true independence regained, however, a new harmony needs to be forged, a harmony that will allow the combined presence of traditional Africa, Islamic Africa and Euro-Christian Africa, so that this presence is in tune

with the original humanist principles underlying African society. Our society is not the old society, but a new society enlarged by Islamic and Euro-Christian influences. A new emergent society is therefore required (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 70).

In the above quotation, Nkrumah demonstrates the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of purging Africa of the Islamic and Euro-Christian influences. It remains valid therefore to suggest that a converging point be found in order to allow traditional Africa, Euro-Christian and Islamic Africa to converge and co-exist harmoniously. Thus, by insisting on a return to traditional African communal past, Fela appears to have exhibited his gross ignorance of Nkrumah's political literature, given that the latter had made far-reaching revision of some of his theses.

In addition, Olorunyomi (2005) points out that three of Nkrumah's intellectual works, namely, *Consciencism*, *Africa Must Unite* and *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, played a profound role in the development of Fela's construction of an African identity. He could not therefore fathom why Nkrumah had revised his own ideas on matters of communalism, yet, wonders why Fela failed to make any intellectual advancement about the true picture of communal Africa, when those he professed to be furthering their arguments, had updated their political ideas.

More so, the general perception of Fela as a social deviant had certain ramifications for his political agenda and own credibility. At worst, Fela's unconventional behaviour negatively impacted his ambition to assume political leadership in postcolonial Nigeria much against his desire. Among other contraventions of existing norms, here was a man who collectively married twenty seven women in the immediate aftermath of the siege of Kalakuta Republic in 1978; here was a man who openly smoked marijuana in a state which had outlawed the use of such drug, and here was a man who openly confessed of being a hedonist –a philosophical theory which posits that the ultimate purpose of human life is to seek pleasure. These qualities of Fela had the tendency of portraying him in the eyes of the general public as an irresponsible reactionist who was obsessed with winning political power. He could not therefore be trusted with any public position of which exemplar was expected from such leader. As Veal points out, “the anti-Fela position most frequently voiced holds that he was a complete nuisance who had no respect for the rule of law or anybody else, including himself. He contributed a lot to the current state of absolute moral decadence among the youths (sic) in Nigeria's urban centres” (Veal, 2000, p. 250).

It is also significant to note that such unconventional behaviour easily aided his enemies, who were opposed to his leadership bid, to campaign against his candidature at the opportune time. Though the time

was slow in coming, all the same it came. It came in 1978 and 1984, when his political party was banned from participating in those elections.

In essence, Fela was mainly seen within the lens of the urban and semi-urban elite of postcolonial Nigeria as lacking credibility and could not therefore be trusted with state's leadership. Such contraventions of existing norms by Fela did much to damage his image as a political activist and a social critic than he imagined. While Veal (2000) sums up the consequences of Fela's unconventional behaviour by alluding to a Yoruba traditional aphorism which maintains that "one is not fit to rule a nation if one's own home is not in order", Denzer (2003) holds that "on occasion, journalists reported that he came directly from his bedroom, semen dripping from his underpants, for interviews. This brazen, public celebration of his sexuality and preferences offended many, especially the educated Christian elite..." (Veal, 2000, p. 250 & Denzer, 2003, p. 112).

Veal (2000) painstakingly shows that while Fela's excessive use of marijuana could be advantageous in terms of creating room for innovation and at the same time economically empower the underprivileged or marginalised, its excessive use by Fela carried certain consequences for his political ambition. In the first place, Veal thinks that the abuse of marijuana by Fela was inconsistent with the coherent reflection needed to construct a systematic political philosophy.

Secondly, the excessive use of marijuana appeared to have undermined the credibility of Fela as a social commentator and a political critic. And thirdly, the open use of marijuana by Fela was not only illegal but pitched the Nigerian military against him, which used the least opportunity to physically harass him at the slightest provocation. I conclude that the political philosophy of Fela, however its merit, was not taken seriously because of his contravention of existing laws at the time. One could therefore speculate that many sympathisers who could have joined him in fighting the system were perhaps discouraged "... by the intensifying performative contradictions, belligerence and absurdities of his lyrical compositions, of his onstage comportment, antics and grotesqueries...." (Durotoye, 2003, p. 191).

### 4.3 Summary and Conclusions

The dissertation contends that since the Golden Age of Greece, and much especially since the era of Plato, the primary preoccupation of political philosophy has been how the ideal state ought to be organised. Thus an attempt to prescribe the ideal state suitable for the reconstruction of postcolonial Africa did not escape the intellectual curiosity of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, who consciously and for the most part, expressed his political philosophy in his music, popularly known as Afrobeat. Thus Fela saw the prevalent political economy of postcolonial Africa as a phenomenon which could not lead Africa out of its colonial past. Indeed, corruption, oppression, mismanagement of Africa's resources by the continent's leaders, neo-colonialism in Africa, the despoliation of Africa's environment in oil producing areas in Africa and the African cultural crisis, were all phenomena Fela attempted to address in his musical compositions and attempted to propose a way out of this morass.

He proposed that the solution to Africa's problems is for Africans to embark on continental unification under democratic governance, a return to the communal ways of their ancestors as well as purging themselves and of the continent, of Euro-Christian and Islamic influences. I therefore dedicated chapter one of the dissertation to examining and elucidating the subject matter of political philosophy. I then proceeded to tease out the political philosophy of Fela in some of his musical compositions and written works.

Chapter two of the dissertation discusses the related literature on the topic under consideration. I found out that not much intellectual efforts have been made to systematise Fela's political views or thought into a coherent political philosophy. I therefore moved on to examine the political views of Fela with the purpose of ascertaining what uniquely constitutes Fela's political philosophy which is worthy of intellectual attention. I argued that his political philosophy could be summed up as follows: his quest for continental unification of Africa under democracy, his insistence that Africans return to communal methods of production and the abolition of certain religions he considered foreign to Africa.

Based on the above factors, I proceeded to comprehensively carry out an expose of Fela's political philosophy in chapter three. I thus systematised the major themes in Fela's political philosophy with the aim of sieving the weaknesses and contradictions in such philosophy. Thus the weaknesses of Fela's political philosophy constituted the forms of our critique in our last chapter, namely, chapter four.

I realised among other weaknesses that apart from the methodological bankruptcy Fela committed in his quest for continental unification, his view that political independence is key to all other independences is problematic since it is replete with logical problems. More so, the solution he proposed to the African identity crisis or triple heritage problem is equally unconvincing since the dismissal of such cultures is too simplistic to remedy the problem. Again, Fela's

construction of the African communal past misses the point since his idealisation of such past veiled him from seeing that such past was not exactly the picture he was trying to paint. Even so, his insistence that Africa return to the communal past of its ancestors appears to strengthen the perception that the African is not dynamic and is fit only for jungle life. Such a return to the communal past has also been demonstrated to be impossible. In a nutshell, Fela's contravention of societal norms through his extreme and brazen display of his hyper sexuality and the excessive use of cannabis distracted him from putting forward a coherent and consistent ideology required of political philosophy.

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