

Working in the Forests: Land, Labor and Nationalism in late Colonial Tanzania

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Abstract: In colonial Tanzania, the 1950s witnessed a fourteen-fold expansion of the forest reserve estate following World War II, encompassing fourteen per cent of the landscape by independence in 1961. During this period Tanzania's forests were internationalized, as its timber species were integrated into world export markets. Cold War priorities developed Tanzania as a base for southern and central African and Middle Eastern geopolitics. Forest reserve expansion was coupled with evictions of thousands of peasants in order to manage the forests with development goals in mind. Peasants in turn reacted by destroying forest boundaries, encroaching in forests illegally, and setting fire to tree plantations and forest reserves. The intense working of the forests drew African pitsawyers, licensed forest cultivators, and sawmill workers into support of the nationalist struggle for independence led by Julius Nyerere and the Tanganyika African National Union, which also expressed support for forest-related grievances. This examination of forest nationalism helps to explain how nationalist sentiment became generalized in colonial Tanzania, leading to independence far in advance of the British timetable.

Lessons From Labor: The Impact of Labor Unions on Women's Organizations in

Abeokuta

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In 1948, the Abeokuta Women's Union (AWU) launched a tax revolt which successfully overturned Sole Native Authority rule in Abeokuta (Western Nigeria). The leader of the AWU, Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, was a well known supporter of organized labor. She wrote in support of the Enugu coal miners during their strike in 1949 and visited miners in the hospital in the wake of the government shooting. Mrs. Ransome-Kuti was involved indirectly in the formation of one of the earliest unions in the country, the Nigerian Union of Teachers (N.U.T.) for her husband, the Rev. Ransome-Kuti, was one of the founders of N.U.T. This paper explores Mrs. Ransome-Kuti's relationship with organized labor and the ways in which her relationship with union leaders influenced the formation and the actions of the Abeokuta Women's Union.