

Hometown Association, Local Nationalism and Community Development in Ogbomoso, Southwestern Nigeria, 1922–1951

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Abstract

In Yorubaland, southwestern Nigeria, the emergence of hometown associations dates back to the pre-colonial period. The Yoruba people have a rich communal associational life with various social organizations, generally known as egbe. This egbe cuts across the Yoruba social, economic, and political affairs. In the colonial period, these associations became dominant actors in the colonial administration process in the 1930s. These associations emerged under various nomenclatures, such as town unions, progressive unions, descendant unions, and improvement unions. They are saddled with various responsibilities: upholding town identity, serving as local civil society, town representative, and actors in growth and development. The case of Ogbomoso is not different. Hometown association in Ogbomoso performed the abovementioned roles, especially in the colonial and post-colonial periods. Since 1922, when this organization appeared in Ogbomoso as a response to colonial economic policies, they have focused on providing substantial support for local nationalism and socioeconomic development. Within this premise, this article examines the activities of these associations between 1922 and 1951. The article focuses on these association activities, involvement in politics and contributions to development, especially during the colonial and post-colonial periods. The article adopts a historical reconstruction approach and relies on primary and secondary data sources.

Keywords: hometown association, local nationalism, community development, Ogbomoso

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Introduction

Hometown associations have been an age-long actor in the history of local nationalism and community development in Nigeria. Particularly among the Yoruba of South Western Nigeria, associational life, which metamorphosed into hometown associations, is a long-standing tradition with sociopolitical and economic identity. Hometown associations are institutions established to protect the community's identity, culture or tradition and pursue development. The institution's relevance cuts across different epochs of history and has profoundly impacted rural and urban socioeconomic and political development. Hence, the current interest in these institutions is part of a broader search to identify institutions that have continued to contribute to local development and protect societal interests.

Since the 1930s, hometown associations have gone by different nomenclatures – progressive unions, tribal unions, tribal associations, development unions, improvement associations, and community unions, among others (Coleman, 1952). The associations have also been examined from various perspectives by scholars. Joel Barkan et al. (2008) examined these organizations from the political economy's perspective and civil society's development. Idris et al. (2021) and Olawale (2019) also examined hometown associations from a community development perspective, while Coleman (1952) examined the emergence of these institutions within the framework of local nationalism and political party formation. Also, scholars such as Abimbola (2008) examine hometown associations from a community development perspective. The present article does not dismiss the importance of these studies. However, these previous works of literature are similar to the present study but differ in case study. Since the case study approach to historical research offers the opportunity to make an inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within a different context, the interrogation of hometown associations in Ogbomoso during the colonial period and within the context of local nationalism and community development offers a concise perspective on the activities of these institutions in another research setting.

Associations in Colonial Yorubaland

The Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria have a rich associational life. According to Fadipe, 'the tendency to form association and corporation is very strong among the Yoruba' (Fadipe, 1970: 240). These associations are formed to enhance the development of society across the field of economics, religion, culture and traditions, politics, as well as for welfare and recreation. The Ogboni society is a political association that gained wide acceptance among various ethnic groups in Yorubaland. There are also age-group associations, women's political associations, occupational associations, mutual-help associations, and convivial associations, among others (Fadipe, 1970: 24-263).

The development and proliferation of hometown association as an indispensable social, economic and political actor came alongside colonial rule. The proliferation of hometown associations between 1918 and 1928 can be traced to the rising spate of insecurity which requires a collective responsibility approach and the need for diaspora-home relationships or rural-urban linkages (Abimbola 2008). Also, between 1928 and 1948, the proliferation of hometown associations accrues to the rise of ethnic identity politics. Hometown associations emerged to form local nationalist agitation groups against what is perceived as local and colonial government injustice and protests against the colonial government's lopsided development (Abimbola 2008). The proliferation of hometown associations around the 1940s was also influenced by the impact of the Second World War (1939-1945) and economic depression. Hence, the community employs these institutions to attend to the plight of their members.

Apart from the periodization, the emergence of these institutions has also been traced to the implication of British colonial political policies. Resident Ward Price, the successor of Captain Ross, embarked on the re-organization of the Ibadan province. This led to the creation of Divisional Councils as Federal Councils in the 1930s, which eventually provided an opportunity for local and educated elements (Atanda, 1973; Falola, 2017: 566-568). The involvement of these Councils in development

programmes for their areas of jurisdiction facilitated the emergence of towns or sub-ethnic unions. The separation of Oyo Province in 1934 into five independent Native Authorities of Oyo, Ife, Ilesha, Ila, and Ibadan, as well as the creation of subordinate Native authorities for communities such as Ogbomoso, Iwo, Ede, Osogbo and Ejigbo also brought these local institutions into colonial administration and politics. During this period, hometown progressive unions emerged through the efforts of the educated elite to pursue progressive policies and influence local politics. The emergence and participation of educated elite is summed up thus:

Like their counterparts in other parts of Yoruba land at this period, these educated elements not only formed Progressive Unions but also believed that they had acquired valuable experience that could benefit their areas' local government. As a demonstration of their patriotism, they desired to participate in local government as advisers to chiefs. They did not want to constitute themselves as an alternative authority to the chiefs. They only wanted a position where they could influence the chiefs to pursue progressive measures. The best way, of course, was to become members of the governing body of their locality ...they began forming progressive unions whose aims were to suggest and undertake measures to make for the desired development. This phenomenon started in the early 1930s in urban centres, as shown in the cases of the Ibadan and Oyo Progressive Unions. But as the 1930s progressed, similar unions began to spring up in other big towns and even more rural areas of the province (Atanda, 1973; Falola, 2020: 569).

Hometown Association in Ogbomoso under Colonial Rule, 1920-1930

Ogbomoso is one of the recognized Yoruba towns in South-Western Nigeria today. The town is located 8°10'1" north of the equator and 4°10'1" east of the Greenwich meridian. It was a derived Savannah region, 104 km North-East of Ibadan, 58 km North-West of Osogbo, 57 km South-West of Ilorin, Kwara State, and 53 km North-East of Oyo. The town is located in

the proximity of three other ancient kingdoms. To the North of Ogbomoso lay Igbon town, and to its West was Ikoyi, while Iresa was on the Eastern axis (Agiri, 1979). Ogbomoso, like other Yoruba towns and communities, has a rich associational life history. The history of association in the town can be traced to its foundational history when the Alongo Defence League was established in the formative years (Olawale 2022). According to the traditions of origin, the league was founded through the effort of the five earliest migrants: Aale, Ohunsile, Oristolu, Akandie and Soun. Before the *Egbe* Alongo milieu, settlements were small and far between; communities and production units were autonomous and were sustained by family (or extended family) solidarity, moralities and ethos (Olawale, 2022).

Alongo Defence League was a military-convivial association established by the Soun and other earlier settlers in Ogbomoso (Olawale, 2022). As a military association, the five earlier settlers established the league to protect themselves and their community. The defense league also functioned as a hunter guild. The traditions of origin of the five earlier settler feature migration from their communities of origin and a history of bravery and professional hunters. Hence, the Alongo Defence League also featured discussions about hunting techniques of wild animals and planning for the common defense. The league served as an advantage for the community because they collectively charged themselves to defend against any external invasion.

In the pre-colonial history of Ogbomoso, the existing market guild system also transformed into an association (*Egbe*) (Olawale 2022). These pre-colonial trade guilds associations are formed based on articles of trade. Their ultimate priority is to regulate market prices and protect the interest of their members. The market association in Ogbomoso consisted of both sexes, with female and male officers known as *Baba Egbe* and *Iya Egbe*, who are responsible for the association's male and female sections. Apart from the market association, there are also mutual-help associations such as *Aro* – an agricultural association for lending individual members collective help; the *Esusu* society (*Slate Club*) – a monetary club established to save money by members for a fixed period.

The association described above had an economic identity and focused on individual well-being in society.

The beginning of hometown associations serving as a local nationalist group in Ogbomoso began with the activities of the British government as well as their colonial economic and political policies that aroused local agitations in various towns and communities. The imposition of British rule at the end of the nineteenth century marked an important turning point in Yoruba history. Ogbomoso was brought under colonial rule through the 1893 British Protection Treaty (Falola, 2017: 436). Yorubaland, under colonial rule, was governed through the indirect rule system. By 1897, Major Henry E. McCallum began experimenting with indirect rule in Yorubaland by depending on the Resident Officers appointed to the area to translate the principle into practice in various districts. Each Yoruba town was governed by a head chief and Council of states, with the resident serving as the President. The first of the Council was Ibadan Native Council, followed by Oyo Native Council. The Ogbomoso Council was formally constituted into a Native Court in 1907 and was restricted in powers by the Ibadan Judicial Councils (Falola, 2017: 436). The indirect rule thus accorded traditional local institutions an important role in colonial administrative architecture.

In several communities in Yorubaland, traditional rulers and colonial authorities faced local agitations due to their role in ensuring that colonial policy interests were protected. Under the indirect rule system, kings and chiefs, as native authorities, were directly in charge of taxation, so anti-tax protests were addressed to them. These local chiefs were responsible for collecting unregulated tolls in cowries and produced arbitrarily imposed and collected by their chief messengers at the tollgate (Tamuno, 1972: 240). It was the policy of the native authorities to retain 50% of taxes collected for services like road construction, maintenance, health centre and school duties delegated to them by the central government (Asiwaju, 1976: 121). The people initially responded to colonial tax policy through public demonstrations, rallies, and the writing of petitions. Earlier protests fuelled by these colonial economic policies and taxation regimes

include the 'Ijemo incident' of 1914 to the Adubi war of 1918, from the Iseyin uprising in 1916 to the Ogbomoso tax riots of 1924.

The emergence of hometown associations with significant influence in Ogbomoso began with Egbe Olorunda – a local nationalist town association. The association's emergence was welfarist, established to protect communal interest from colonial economic taxation policies (Oyerinde, 1933: 175). During Oba Alabi Oyewumi (1916-1940), the colonial government levied taxes on corrugated iron houses. Before introducing the tax, the Resident Officer, Mr. S. M. Grier, assured the people of Ogbomoso that the reason for introducing taxes was to stop bribe giving and taking, forced labour remunerated or unremunerated and give every citizen the pleasure of working without conscription (Oyerinde, 1933: 175). Although the District Officer stated the benefits of taxation, the chiefs and people were confused about other benefits accrued and the usage of the taxes gathered. This poll tax, introduced by S. M. Garier in 1917, eventually degenerated into a crisis championed by the Egbe Olorunda.

The poll tax generated serious socioeconomic disturbances and various interpretations of the tax. Some residents considered it a tax on man's social status, while others considered it a tax on corrugated iron sheets. In 1921, officers in charge of tax collection began to insist that men of means and traders would have to pay tax on profits from their trading activities. The leading antagonist also reached out to the tax office with the allegation that the poll taxes were impecunious, that Ogbomoso was an agricultural town, and that there was no permanent or reliable market for their crops. For instance, the middle class, who had earlier paid eight shillings (£0: 8s: 0d) in 1918, were required to pay thirty-seven pounds and ten shillings (£37: 10s: 0d) in 1922 (Abiodun, 2008: 23). But the middle class (*elite*) remained adamant and refused to be coerced into compliance. Throughout 1922, and up till July 18, 1923, the traders were still being compelled to pay the additional tax of the previous year's assessment, a demand that strained the relationship between the *Oba* and his people, particularly the *elite* (middle class) who were summoned to appear in his court (Abiodun, 2008: 23).

The poll tax riot of 1924 led to the establishment of Egbe Olorunda, comprised of traders and some educated men (Abiodun, 2008: 23). The formation of Egbe Olorunda was a reaction to burdensome additional tax demand and a situation they considered out of control of the Oba and Chiefs. The President of the Olorunda Society was Mr. Odesanya and Mr. Amos I. Akinwale functioned as the secretary (Oyerinde, 1933: 177). The formation of *Olorunda* society epitomized the inauguration of a strong body with the power to vigorously and intellectually protest the imposition of additional taxes on people. After several meetings, the society forwarded petitions to the Senior Resident, Captain Ross, the Alaafin of Oyo and the Oba of Ibadan.

However, despite the activities of the Egbe Olorunda and the colonial government's promise of an independent assessor, on July 18, 1923, poll tax summons showed that the colonial government had not taken any action to assess the petition. The result was intense animosity between the *Oba* Oyewumi and the *Olorunda* society. *Egbe Olorunda's* face-off (1922-1924) with the British tax authorities and the final confrontation with the Senior British Resident (*Ajele-Agba*) on June 24, 1924, was a typical example of the issues within the broader context of colonial politico-economic relations. However, *Egbe* failed to achieve its objectives. However, it was a force to reckon with in the history of the hometown association in Ogbomosho. Despite its failure over taxation issues, it thus became a machinery of public opinion against the colonial government policies.

Development and Politics: Ogbomosho Progressive Union, 1930-1950

The emergence of the Ogbomosho Progressive Union can be understood within colonial administration and policies in the 1930s. The Oyo province witnessed a new political administration structure between 1931 and 1935. The administrative reforms were initiated by Governor Cameron (1931-1935) into the system of Native Authority. The reformation led to important changes in the town's administration, with the inclusion of the educated elite into local politics and the local politics as members of Native Authority Councils. Another major event was the exit of Captain Ross and

the emergence of Mr. H. L. Ward Price, whose governance process has been described as completely anti-thesis of Ross's style. One major contribution to Ward's price was his adoption of Cameron's policy. Cameron's policy focused on the re-statement of the principles of the Native Authority system by appointing educated elements in the Native Authority Councils in Ibadan and Oyo divisions. Apart from Cameron's policy, local elements (educated elite) were encouraged to form Progressive Unions through which public opinion was mobilized in the Ibadan Division to influence the British to change their administration process (Agiri, 1983: 124). Also, the Progressive Unions will help the chiefs in the administration of their districts by providing the vehicle for popular demands for socioeconomic and political improvements.

Ogbomoso Progressive Union (OPU) was founded in 1933 by some educated elites in Ogbomoso. The establishment of the Union was traced to the activities of Prince Laoye, a civil servant inspired by the success of sister unions in Yorubaland. Prince Laoye and N. D. Oyerinde met and pioneered the organization with its first inaugural meeting on August 8, 1933, inside Okelerin Baptist Church, with Native Baptist Boys Society (Senior and Junior) in attendance. The Progressive Union had its first president as N. D. Oyerinde. The activities of the Union were not limited to Ogbomoso. It had branches in Ghana and northern Nigeria. Nathaniel Agboola Adibi, Agbejimi, Jame Adekola and Samuel Ajiboye Idowu spearheaded the Union sub-group in Ghana (Adelowo, 1994). The Ogbomoso Progressive Union was an amalgamation of societies of all persuasions and cut across religious and social status with no boundaries.

The Egbe Soun – a component of OPU, was conservative in outlook. It had been founded to popularise the Baale's few enlightened achievements. Many of its members were Muslims and remained unwaveringly loyal to Baale Oyewunmi I. Also, Egbe Olorunda, another component of the OPU, retained its old militancy but was mellowed by the realization that it could not achieve much, espousing open confrontation with the Baale and the British. The most militant wing of the OPU was its young members, who formed the Junior Progressive Union (JPU). They formerly

belonged to the Junior Native Baptist Boys' Society, and many of them had been Oyerinde's students when he taught at the Baptist Academy and the Baptist Seminary and Theological College in the town from 1916 to 1935. These young men took the British official statements about the political reforms seriously and adored Oyerinde's educational achievements and ideas about the reforms but were impatient of his moderate stance

Between 1933 and 1951, OPU dominated the political and economic development of Ogbomoso vis-à-vis colonial rule and its policies. In politics, Oyerinde, the first president of the Union, was appointed as a pioneer and an educated elite (member) of the Native Councils. In fact, before the formal inauguration of that organization, in 1931-32 members of the OPU had cooperated with the Ogbomoso Native Authority and other Native Authorities and educated elements in the rest of Ibadan divisions to influence colonial policies. For instance, the Union protested the autonomy of the Ibadan division from Oyo Province in 1934. At the home front, from 1933, the Baale and his Council were recognized as the Native Authority, the implication of which was that the Baale was expected to be guided by the advice of his Council, of which Oyerinde was a member. Hence, the involvement of Oyerinde, who doubled as the President of the Union, offered an avenue to influence the period's politics. Also, the appointment of Oyerinde and the revocation of the Baale's position as the Sole Native Authority in 1934 allowed for more participatory function between the Baale and his chiefs (Agiri, 1979).

OPU was also involved in political conflicts and crises between 1935 and 1951. The Union had open confrontations with Baale Oyewumi over development and administration. Despite the fact that the Baale welcomed the Union was a reform strategy, the Baale and Union perspective on power and policy-making was a source of conflict. The Baale welcomed the Union reform as long as it did not affect his ultimate control over policy-making, while the Union held the view that such reform could only occur if the powers of Oba were abolished over the court and integration of refugee chiefs in the town's administration. The crisis deepened with

the British government's accepting OPU's suggestion in 1934 to create a Town Council.

Ogbomoso Progressive Union wielded enormous political support during this period. The British government welcomed the OPU's suggestion to establish a Town Council and District Council in 1934. Nathaniel Oyerinde, on the recommendation of Baale Bello Oyewumi, was appointed council member in 1934. By 1940, the involvement of the educated elements had gained more acceptance. Hence, Mr. Amos I. Akinwale, another member of OPU, was also appointed as a member of the Council. By 1942, OPU secured the approval to elect six of its members annually into the Council and, in 1949, succeeded in transforming this pseudo-elective representation into a popular form. The six elective seats were increased to sixteen with representation drawn from the entire district; the town of Ogbomoso, divided into twelve electoral wards, had twelve seats, and four district areas had a seat each (Osuntokun and Oduwobi, 2014: 30).

Before the H. L. Butcher Commission of Inquiry report of March 17, 1951, recommending the autonomy of the Oshun Division, the Ogbomoso people had become uncomfortable under Ibadan Divisional Native Authority and other communities. Their grievances were fuelled by the mode of Olubadan and his chief administration of the Division. For instance, Olubadan and ten other chiefs created the Inner Council. Also, the membership of the general Council favoured Ibadan. Ibadan and its district had twenty out of forty-two seats, while the remaining eleven had two each. Ogbomoso's importance in creation cannot be underestimated. For instance, a famous cultural song used to express Ibadan imperialism during the period sang thus:

Eyi na to tiwa

Awa lani Ibadan

Titi to fo fe Ogbomoso

Eyi na to tiwa (Oladipo, 2010: 70)

This aspect of superiority was displayed by the Ibadan chiefs in newspapers (N.A.I. Iba Div 1/1, File no. 2930/4; N.A.I. Iba Div. 1/1 File no. 2930/4 NAI) and culturally. Ogbomoso Progressive Union leaders - Nathaniel Oyerinde and A. I. Akinwale played an important role. In 1945, N. D. Oyerinde, head of the ad hoc finance committee, recommended that the central fund pay only the salaries of three Ibadan chiefs. Despite the majority support for such a motion, it was overruled by the Olubadan (N.A.I. Iba Div. 1/1 file no 2901/4). On March 17, 1951, the British government began the autonomy process. In July 1951, the Ibadan division was excised from Oyo province to constitute Ibadan Province with two divisions, namely the Ibadan Division and Oshun Division. The town under the Oshun division includes Ogbomoso, Ede, Ejigbo, and Osogbo. Ifelodun, Odo-Otin, Iwo, Egbedore, Aiyedade. All these towns were granted Independent Native Authority Status. The 1951 Macpherson constitution raised, Ogbomoso's status from a Subordinate Native Authority to a Native Authority Status. By 1954, Ogbomoso, under the new Local Government Law, was raised to a District Council in operation till 1973 (Osuntokun and Oduwobi, 2014: 38-48).

Ogbomoso witnessed her second tax riots in 1955. The 1955 tax riot in Ogbomoso occurred during the reign of Oba Olatunji Alao, Elepo Aran II (1952 -1966) (NAI. Iba. Prof. 1/1). The riot was spearheaded by peasant farmers, hunters, and artisans. The cause of the riot was based on the British colonial government's decision to raise the tax from twenty-four shillings (24s) to thirty shillings (the 30s) per annum was not welcomed by the peasants. Therefore, they decided not to pay tax increases because the tax demand was too harsh and unpleasant to bear. Another remote cause of the riot could be the deep animosities between the Baale and the community. *Baale*, Oba Olatunji Alao Elepo Aran II extravagant lifestyle and autocratic rulership style fueled the riots. It was alleged that Baale had used the Native Court system, which he controlled, to enrich himself corruptly. The animosity between the *Baale* and the people, and the high-

handedness of the colonial administration in resolving matters of serious concern, led to a violent riot on February 1, 1955 (*Daily Times*, February 2, 1955: 1).

The 1955 riot was ignited when ten people, who had protested and refused to pay the tax, were arraigned before the court and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment ranging from nine to fifteen months without an option of a fine. These court sentences infuriated the people, and when two unidentified men were found dead as a result of the anti-tax riot that was thrown up at Ogbomoso on February 1, 1955. The people's anger was directed not only against the local Oba but also against Resident D. A. Murphy and the Resident from Ibadan, who coincidentally, was on a tour of the Ogbomoso area on February 1, 1955, was also physically assaulted by the people and given a bloody nose. The peasants also attacked the Soun's palace; if the king had been sighted, he would have been murdered. The British colonial authorities knew that they needed to act fast. At this point, six lorry loads of reinforcements were sent from the police training school at Ikeja to contain the following uprising (*Daily Times*, February 2, 1955: 1).

The crisis established an opposition town association called *Egbe Ilupeju* (The Ilupeju Society) in May 1939. The association consisted of trade and market guilds but excluded OPU and educated elite forces. The Union also faced an imminent crisis as regards chieftaincy disputes. For instance, the Amoo Oyetunde and Oke Lanipekun Baale dispute is a vivid example. Adisa Adeleye notes, "It was as if total darkness descended on the ancient city of Ogbomoso" (Adisa, 2013: 35). Ogbomoso was enmeshed in a chieftaincy dispute between the OPU and Ilu (Kingmakers). OPU has captured the seat of power and supported Oba Lanipekun Laoye II (1944-1952), an educated fellow considered to be another progressive and forward-looking enlightened Oba against the choice of the Kingmakers choice - Oba Amao Oyetunde (1940-1944). The kingmaker chose Oba Amao Oyetunde to challenge the rising tide of educated fellows in the town's politics; despite the installation of Oba Amao Oyetunde, the London Privy Council Appeal Committee Judgement of 1944 deposed

Oba Amao Oyetunde and installed Oba Oke Lanipekun. OPU, at the height of its existence, also wielded so much influence. The Union began the process and demanded the creation of the Oshun Division out of the Ibadan Division. The Union could wield local nationalism and patriotism by forming a mass protest against the dominance of Ibadan chiefs

OPU also became a tool for achieving socioeconomic development. The Union contributed significantly to establishing the Ogbomoso People's Institute (OPI). The name OPI was reminiscent of Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes by Booker T. Washington. The establishment of the institution dates to the 1933 Churches Conference at Okelerin Baptist Church, where the decision to build a community school was made and was referred to as Ogbomoso People's Institute was reached (Adisa, 2013: 23). The institute site of about 200, 000 square yards was acquired from the Paku Family. Adisa Adeleye notes that the ultimate rationale behind the school was to develop the Institute to a university level (Adisa, 2013: 23). The Institute was formally opened on August 17, 1938.

The philosophy of the Institute was '3Hs', meaning the Head (Cognition), the Heart (Moral and Affective) and the Hand (Psychomotor/Dignity of Labor) (Adebayo, 2015:37). Undoubtedly, these philosophies are the outcry of educational institutions of the 21st century. Also, at the formal opening of the ceremony, the School Fund and its Board were launched. Professor N. D. Oyerinde, the Otun of Ogbomoso, was delegated to represent the Soun and the Chairman of the occasion (Adisa, 2013: 24). At the formal opening of the Institute, Oba Alabi Oyewumi donated E2 (N4), while Prof. N.D. Oyerinde donated E110(N3) (Adisa, 2013: 24). Late Prof. Eyo Ita was the school's first principal, while Prof. Oyerinde was the proprietor and manager of the School. Oba Alabi Oyewumi, Chief N.D. Oyerinde, Chief Rev. Adediran, Chief Amos Akinwale, Chief Rev. S.A Ige, Mr. L.A Babarinde, Rev T.V. Aderinola, Mr. Diji Ogundipe, Chief Bara, Bale Ilapon, Alhaji Shittu and Adeoye Oguniyi constituted members of the School Board (Adelowo, 1994: 53-56; Adisa, 2013: 24). The teachers of the Institute included Chief E.L. Gbenro, Chief Ade Jacobs, Mr. Adegoke Alao, Mrs. Akinyemi Magbagbeola, Mr. Raimi Oyewumi, Mrs. Oyeyiola, Mrs.

Lasebikan (nee Ige), Mrs. Debo Akinyemi (nee Oke), Mrs. Okon Edet, Prof. Eyo Ita, Chief N.A Adibi, the Late Mr. Adeyemo, Mr. Adeleke Oyefi. Mr. Oladoye, Mr. Layanju and Mrs. Grace Olalonper Idowu (nee Dare), while Mr. T. Ajani was the waving master (Adisa, 2013: 35).

Dr. Aggrey described the education at Ogbomoso peoples institute as an “Education of the head, hand and mind.” The student of the Institute was drawn from the United Baptist Day School, Okelerin and Osupa Baptist Day School. The school adopted an American Model of Education in which students were made to study subjects including Evolution of Culture, Agricultural Industry, French, Arithmetic, Poultry Keeping, Hygiene Nature Study, Reading, English Language and Music. It is important to note that the name, operational, and instructional model of the Ogbomosho People’s Institute was patterned after Booker T. Washington founded the Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes in the United States of America (Michael, 2013: 124). OPU was also instrumental in establishing Ogbomoso Grammar School in 1952 and Ogbomoso Girls’ High School in 1959.

Also, in the sphere of social amenities, Eku Water Works was indeed a major landmark in the history of Ogbomoso. The OPU provided Eku water supply to Ogbomoso in 1938 and built the Post Office in the Takie area. The Water Works was constructed at Eku, adjacent to the proposed Institute (Adisa, 2013: 24). It opened formally on August 20, 1938, and was commissioned by the Resident Officer at Osogbo. The Union, by 1937, also focused on urban development. The Union OPU had acquired a sizeable area of land on the western outskirts of the town along Ikoyi road. It then laid out the area in plots, selling it to applicants who wanted to build new modern houses there. From the proceeds of the sale, OPU paid the Areago for the acquisition of the land. The layout provided a market, a school and a dispensary (Adisa, 2013: 147). However, the politicisation of the process affected the process. In addition to its lasting contribution, one of the Union members, Oladele Ajao, produced the patriotic Ogbomoso Ajilete song, which has now become an anthem.

The emergence of Ogbomoso Parapo (OP) in 1951 signalled a new

dawn in the history of hometown association in Ogbomoso history. Ogbomoso Parapo is a cultural, political cum economic organization. The establishment of Parapo was influenced particularly by Ogbomoso indigenes' Lagos elements. OPU's influence was felt until the 1949 polls in which it defeated the Egbe Ilupeju/Baale Olanipekun when sixteen councillors were to be elected. The members of the Parapo movement were members of the progressive Union who disliked the attempted reconciliation move by Baale Oke Lanipekun Laoye II with the OPU. Another reason for the establishment was its disagreement on how the Ogbomoso Native Authority Council for its delayed in acting upon the advice of the late Chief S.L. Akintola that it should send representatives to attend a meeting of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa in Ile-Ife (Adisa, 2013: 97). This is understandable given the fact that the new organization was oriented towards nationalist politics rather than local politics. Hence, it became a local branch of the Action Group – the dominant nationalist political party.

Ogbomoso Parapo started to wield political influence in the town, beginning with the Western House of Assembly election in 1951. Through the election, Ogbomoso Parapo got two members – Chief S.L Akintola and Mr. J.O. Adigun- among the seven Osun Division members in the Western House of Assembly. The Parapo organized very effectively at the grassroots defeating the remaining members of OPU. From 1950, Ogbomoso Parapo had worked consistently to dissolve the Ogbomoso Native Authority Council and achieved its goal in 1954 when the Western Nigeria Local Government Law of 1952 was applied. The law democratized the Ogbomoso Native Authority Council, and the Action Group won all the contested seats. Ogbomoso Parapo also significantly influences local politics despite its national perspective. After the death of Baale Oke Lanipekun Laoye II in 1952, the Parapo used its newly acquired political power to cause a change in the traditional succession law. The Ilu Chiefs were compelled to pass a resolution that the tradition is revoked, forbidding the succession of a man whose father had not been Baale. To nullify members of the ruling lineage, the title of the Baale was changed to Soun, ostensibly to

elevate the incumbent to the rank of an Oba. The number of the Ilu Chiefs was increased to six by including the Balogun.” Oba Olatunji Elepoo II (1952 – 1966) was installed under the new dispensation as the first Soun of Ogbomoso.

Conclusion

The article has examined the socioeconomic and political contribution of hometown associations in Ogbomoso during colonial rule. Ogbomoso, during the colonial period, was one of the important colonial towns and witnessed several transformations. Hometown associations in Ogbomoso, namely Egbe Alongo, Egbe Olorunda, Ogbomoso Progressive Union (OPU) and Ogbomoso Parapo, were key institutions in the history of Ogbomoso during colonial rule. Hometown association in Ogbomoso performed the abovementioned roles, especially in the colonial. Since 1922, when this organization appeared in Ogbomoso as a response to colonial economic taxation policies, they have focused on providing substantial support for local nationalism and socioeconomic development.

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