



Legacies Of Chief Obafemi Awolowo And His Contributions To Educational Development In Western Nigeria

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Abstract:

This paper takes an incisive inquiry at the historical trajectory of Awolowo's socio-economic and philosophical intervention in the educational development in Western Nigeria. Although the paper delved generally into the issue of legacies which crisscrossed the political, economic and social landscapes of the Yoruba people of Nigeria, yet effort has been made to dove-tail the discussions to educational development within these years, as Nigeria continued to require and make progress in that realm. Utilizing materials from the archives in Nigeria, interviews with a cross section of the people and other publications, the paper seeks to examine the *raison d'être* for the several nationalistic demands from the colonial government on the part of the sage and ultimately, his assertive position later as the Premier of Western Nigeria where his ideas in educational enterprise were given concerted rejuvenation. The work further draws attention to the various forces at work in the development of education in the lifetime of Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the colonial and post-colonial periods of life and attempts to ascertain some of those elements which attempted to frustrate and as well gingered his efforts to ensure that education was guaranteed for all who wished to be educated. At the end, the Works' findings clearly point to lasting legacies which altogether transformed the lives of peoples of Western Nigeria, a fact which gave them not just an academic edge over other ethnic divisions in Nigeria, but leadership positions in other spheres of life. This ultimately manifested in other areas of Western Nigeria development.

Key words: Educational Development, Socio-Economic Contributions, Legacies, Western Nigeria

1. Introduction

There is no doubting the fact that a lot has been written on the personality of Obafemi Awolowo from various perspectives. In all of these, the best concentration of his life history has been on his political contribution to nationalism and Nigerian politics after the attainment of Nigeria's independence in 1960. Awolowo's travails and contributions to education in Western Nigeria remain impactful, not just in Western Nigeria but in the entire length of the country. Despite the fact that he has been written of, as a politician, prophet, patriot and philosopher, his legacies in the field of education and nation-building remains quite outstanding in its own right (Osuntokun, 2002). This current work seeks to collate these achievements from the historical point of view, given the fact that the dire circumstances of the events which he pursued provided a nexus with the yearning needs of the Nigerian society of the time to be educated and receive literacy; a colonial agenda which was not hitherto satisfactorily pursued as the sage did in his lifetime.

2. Theoretical Framework of Analysis

In this work, Obafemi Awolowo is conceived as a 'hero' of the masses of the South Western region and by extension, the entire Nigerian State. Education is perceived also as the political tool with which he emerged as a hero, by offering and opening access to several children who could never have benefited from formal education except through policies. He is also recognized

both as an educator and as an educationist. Thus the work conceives his legacies as part and parcel of the Economic development process by which emerging economies become advanced economies. In other words development is conceived in this study as a process by which countries with low living standards become nations with high living standards. Economic development also refers to the process by which the overall health, well-being, and academic level of the general population improves. Behind his efforts as that of an educator, he did his educational contributions chiefly out of the classroom, through his publications, political programmes and several educational schemes. As an educationist, Chief Obafemi Awolowo was a careful student of the teaching and learning process and had a clear idea of the curriculum and set aside sections of his work to discuss education (Omolewa, 2002). In therefore measuring his contributions to educational development, it is believed that a summation of his contributions had been assessed before his nomination and conferment as the Chancellor of the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) and Ahmadu Bello University Zaria in his lifetime.

A hero in conception is an important person respected or remembered for sterling qualities such as bravery, courage and good deeds which are referred to in this work as legacies.-(the long lasting impact of particular event, action etc. that took place in the past or a person's life) The society in which he manifested his works is that of the Yoruba speaking people of Western Nigeria. Societies never lack heroes, as a matter of fact, every society and every culture has its own heroes, champions in various callings (Olomola, 2001). Many are eponymous ancestors such as Oduduwa, associated with the origin of Ethnic culture or spectacular arts and crafts, while others are liberators. Apart from Oduduwa, ancestor of the Yoruba people, no one else's picture looms larger in the history and politics of the Yoruba as that of Obafemi Awolowo. Whereas the persona of Oduduwa is buried in myths and mythology, Awolowo is a historical figure of recent times (Osuntokun, 2002).

There are two major schools of thoughts in historical or social theory pertaining to the role/relevance of the hero in society. There is the individualistic point of view of historical interpretation with Thomas Carlyle, (1795-1881), a British historian as the leading exponent. Carlyle and other notable exponents such as Isaiah Berlin, a contemporary British philosopher, W. Wedgwood, and others believe that heroes are the begin all and end all of history. They opine that the views, choices and actions of personages constitute the subject matter of history. They assert that history is the biography of great men (Osuntokun, 2002). Perhaps, it is worth noting that biographies are as old as writing. Some 6,000 years ago, Plutarch (46-120AD) an ancient Roman historian wrote 46 parallel lives consisting of a Greek and a Roman hero taken together side by side. These 92 heroes (arrived at through the multiplication of the 46 parallel lives by 2) include legendary founders as Theseus (Greek) and Romulus (Rome), conquerors Alexander (Greek of Macedon and Julius Caesar (Rome). Thus, ancient and modern individualists regard and treat heroes as indispensable saviour and representatives of their epochs, god sent and all that.

On the other hand, are the collections of others who hold holistic views, depicting the hero as a reflection of all his society stands for. A leading exponent of this school is Thierry (1795-1856), a French historian. Others of this theoretical mold include philosopher Friedrich Hegel and historian E. H. Carr. Collectivists are more concerned about the need to understand history as social actions involving aggregate of individuals, including heroes. They maintain that the hero is a product of his environment, the prevailing cultures, that the family, lineage, peers and other agents of formal and informal education mold him/her and prepare him/her for the role he/she plays. The hero does not create his own society and political forces at play. In the conception of the collectivist's theorists, as Olomola further asserts, the hero rides on the waves of popular support created by circumstances. He provides the leadership others follow in their hundreds and thousands playing their own part consciously or unconsciously and constituting a social force(Olomola, 2001).

As a result of the foregoing, this work attempts to maintain a credible balance between these two viewpoints. While no one can deny the role of heroes in shaping the course of history of societies just as Obafemi Awolowo did, one should realize the need to study and analyse the conditions and forces behind the hero that made him act the way he did, think the way he thought and determine his attitude. And this conditionality is much influenced by the society in which he emerged. Obafemi Awolowo's life ideologies and his legacies for education were to a great extent moulded by his childhood upbringing and personal experiences of the Western region of his period. This eventually made him a strong, positive advocate of free and

3. Compulsory education for the Nigerian citizenry Early Life and Education

Obafemi Oyeniyi Jeremiah Awolowo was born on the 6th of March 1909 in the small town of Ikenne (an Ijebu Remo town) about 70km North East of Lagos, but now a local government headquarters of same name, in Ogun State. His father, David Shopolu Awolowo was a farmer who lived to grow yam tubers and who was a lumber merchant. He was one of the first set of people to be converted to Christianity in the little town in 1896 (Okonkwo, 2002). Obafemi Awolowo was a 'welcome child', a circumstance conducive to natural good nature and tendency to optimism as a second child of his parents after the first child died five months earlier before (Okonkwo, 2002). Although the parents, Mary Efunyela and David Sopolu Awolowo were people of modest means, Obafemi Awolowo was thus surrounded by love and care from family and relatives. Obafemi's paternal grandmother, Asefule, lived with the family throughout his childhood (Awolowo, 1960).

He asserts in one of his works:

In the midst of a multitude of external influences, our home was to me a veritable haven. I felt completely secure there, and impregably insulated against the mysteries of life which perplexed the community. I was perfectly confident that ensconced with the four walls of father's house, the invisible arrow and agencies of death and evil which were said to be constantly in the air could never touch me. Three persons provided this impregnable bulwark of my childhood days, father, mother and my father's own mother (Asefule) (Awolowo, 1968).

It would be seen from the above that Obafemi and his other siblings, Victoria Olufunmilayo born 1915 and Bolajoko, born 1919 were well shielded by their grandmother who prevented her son from punishing them too harshly. In 1914, at the age of five years, Obafemi began school at St. Saviours Anglican School, Ikenne and was there for three years before he moved to Wesleyan School, also in Ikenne. In school, he enjoyed success and hoped to fulfil his father's ambition that he should become a "man of consequence". More so, he recalled that his father and grandmother urged him to be very tough, fearless and defiant as a boy (Awolowo, 1960). At the age of eleven, he had developed strength of character and portrayed self-discipline, confidence gained from a supportive family and success in school, to withstand any future adversity.

In 1919, his father got married to another wife, who eventually fell out with his grandmother on a serious quarrel which made the old woman decide to relocate back to her hometown in Abeokuta. This event radically altered the household of the Awolowos, coupled with the fact that not too long after that, precisely on April 8, 1920, David Sopolu Awolowo died of small pox (Okonkwo, 2002). His father's death led to his withdrawal from school as there was no money to pay his school fees. Despite the fact that his father left sufficient property to enable his son complete the remaining two years of primary education, yet the family failed to assume this responsibility (Okonkwo, 2002). With the death of his father in 1920, he suffered a setback in a twist of fate that would change his life entirely. On 20 April 1921, Obafemi left Ikenne to try his fortune in Abeokuta. His thirst to complete his primary education and to further his education beyond elementary level is clearly reflected in these statements made by him:

I know other boys at Ikenne had progressed at school and got good jobs and I was determined not to go back until my achievements equaled theirs. By the time I was twelve, I had come to realize that it was of prime to be educated and I embarked upon a set of policy of doing hard physical work in order to earn enough to pay my school fees. The importance of education was among the first impression of life I can remember (Daily Times, 1958).

It has been argued that Awolowo's sojourn to Abeokuta from Ikenne was by trekking to actually seek his uncle's consent for training him in school. To what extent this is true may no longer be confirmable as the sage is no more. However, he got to Abeokuta on the long run to meet his uncle for assistance. With no positive signal from the man in Abeokuta, he was compelled by fate to become a servant of some men in Abeokuta to fund his primary education to completion. Thus between 1922 and 1923, he served four masters and attended four schools to raise enough money to complete his higher Elementary School in June 1926 (Adekoya, 2021). He supplemented his service with selling firewood and sheaves of dried elephant grass required by livestock rearers of those early days.

Without much direct support from any one, it was almost impossible for him to attend a Secondary Grammar School, a dream nurtured while his father was alive. Awolowo's good grades

at the end of his higher elementary education earned him a job as a pupil teacher in his former school, Iwo Wesley School, Abeokuta. The Headmaster of Wesleyan School (Mr. Keke) recognized Obafemi's ability and offered him a teaching position in the school. This new development eventually propelled him to gain admission into Wesley College, Ibadan in January 1927. He was only able to spend a year at Wesley College out of the stipulated four years' programme as he resorted to correspondence education. At the end of 1928, he was taking home study courses in English, Commercial knowledge, Book Keeping, Business Methods and Shorthand. This led him to become an expert Shorthand typist.

As a result of his expertise in this professional calling, he was able to secure an employment with a German firm, J. W. Jaekel in Lagos on a monthly salary of £6:10s which was about three times his pay as a teacher. Yet, that German firm job did not last for more than six months, leading him to seeking further prospects for his future for close to nineteen months. He tried his hands on one thing or the other, from evening private teaching of professional examination students in Business Studies. This type of teaching was more commercial oriented and quite different from classroom teaching at Wesley College which he felt was not as rewarding financially. He also rejected the Civil Service because he felt it was dominated by white men and African 'Yes men'. According to him, "with my attitude of mind, I felt sure that I was not the type to make progress as a civil servant" (Awolowo, 1960).

As a part time tutor, he spent his time reading influential novels and philosophical books such as Robert G. Ingersoll, Thomas Huxley's *Evolution of the Species* and Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* and even Charles Darwin's thoughts "Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection. He soon began to question Christianity tending towards an agnostic and stopped attending church. This could be further confirmed by the fact that by April 1932, he began work as College Clerk at Wesley, Ibadan and never attended Chapel Services there for over two and half years. The principal there was tolerant of his iconoclasm.

It was as a College Clerk at the Wesley College, Ibadan that he began to save towards his London Matriculation Examination to qualify himself to study Law in England. This was not to be until he got married to his wife, Hannah Idowu Dideolu (nee Adelana) on December 26, 1937. She was to transform into the much needed support for his life at the period and in realizing his dreams. Before his marriage, it could be said that he was restless having tried his hands on so many vocations; from venturing into journalism at Daily Times, Lagos to money lending and public letter writing and also into produce buying and selling and transportation business. All of these experiences strengthened him the more while his jewel of inestimable value stood by him and ignored the derision of a surprisingly hostile environment. At some point, he had to sell his personal house for £40 pounds on May 8, 1939. His Chevrolet car also got sold for £25 pounds and other personal effects, clothing were also auctioned for his personal development.

By 1942, Awolowo was able to settle his debts in order to take another bold step of his life on his academic development as he sailed off to England on August 14, 1944. Several years before this trip, he had dreamed of studying Law, a popular calling of the period. That objective was what he was pursuing as he moved from one job to another for a period of twelve years. He worked hard to obtain the Bachelor of Commerce degree of the University of London as an external candidate and he passed his Bar final examinations with a second class honors in November 19, 1946 guaranteed by the Honorable Society of the Inner Temple. On his return to Nigeria, having gotten the 'golden fleece', Awolowo had a lucrative practice at the bar and his average annual net income for the period of 1947 to 1951 was £4,300 (Adekoya, 2021). This was a giant leap compared to the paltry £78 per annum he was paid as a Shorthand typist in 1930.

This meant he had been transformed from his old status after his sojourn in England. In the Colonial society that Awolowo returned to, there was a mistrust of the entire European way of life among some educated elites of Nigeria such as Dr J.C Vaughan, Ayo Williams, Ernest Ikoli and Samuel Akinsanya. There was an advocacy for the total rejection of Western values by these early nationalist elites and Pan-Africanists. It was also assumed by Africans that the European colonizers of Nigeria felt their own culture and way of life were superior to and needed to be imbibed by Nigerians at all cost. This was the essence of colonialism which also had an economic exploitative tendency of the indigenous population.

For Awolowo and other nationalists of the period, their acquisition of education became a handy asset which was used to fight back at colonialism. The same knowledge and method used to subjugate Africans equally served as the instrumentality for restoration and restitution of African values and a call for rejection of Western one.

While in London, Awolowo and other Yoruba students formed a Yoruba cultural group, Egbe Omo Oduduwa (Oduduwa Descendants Union) in 1945. Awolowo emerged its first secretary-General. The Egbe was a family union of all Yoruba speaking peoples, both at home and in the diaspora. The Egbe also sought to uphold, develop and modernize Yoruba language and culture. But more importantly, the aim of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa was to improve the existing educational facilities in Yorubaland, especially by means of Scholarship Awards for the pursuit of secondary and university education by Yoruba youths (The Constitution of the Egbe, paragraph A(i)).

In pursuance of this objective, the Egbe on May 18, 1948 launched a £6,000 Endowment Fund. This target was later increased to £100,000. The recipients of the 1948 Egbe Omo Oduduwa's Scholarship were Afolabi George (Medicine), G. E. Aisuegbegun (Engineering), J. O. Otegbeye (Agriculture), J. O. Orojo, CFA Omotosho (Science), S. A. Osinule, E. R. Adeyemi, E. A. Oriyomi, J. A. Abe, C. O. Adedejo (Miss) Arts (Egbe Omo Oduduwa Monthly Bulletin, 1948). With this scheme in operation, beneficiaries of this award were to equally contribute their quota to the group after graduation from their respective fields of endeavours. This act could be regarded as the beginning of the legacies of Chief Obafemi Awolowo in education. As a student in London, Awolowo wrote his first book - *Path to Nigerian Freedom* which was published in 1947. This book was a defence of federalism and gave a clear indication of the type of Nigeria that he wanted to see emerge after Nigeria's independence. On his return to Nigeria, he also established the Nigerian Tribune Newspaper in 1949. By 1952, the newspaper had become the mouthpiece and defender of the interests of the masses in Nigeria.

By April 28, 1951, five years after Awolowo was called to the Bar, he formed the Action Group party. There were other young Nigerians who were involved in the initial groundwork of the party. These were: Abiodun Akerele, S. O. Shonibare, Ade Akinsanya and James Oladejo Adigun who became the organising secretary of the Party. Unlike the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, the Action Group was a distinct and separate enterprise which Awolowo pursued with a radical zeal and extra ordinary commitment. While the Egbe covered every Yoruba person, the AG was strictly political in outlook and did not depend on any primordial loyalties to secure the support of the Yoruba; rather it worked hard to reach out to other nationalists (Adekoya, 2021). The AG canvassed an ideology of social welfare to win the support of the people. Other original founders of the AG were Dr. Oni Akerele, Mr. Akin Reis, S. O. Biobaku, A. B. Oyediran, Abiodun Akerele, Victor Munis, C. O. Taiwo, Akintola Williams and Ayodele Rosiji.

Awolowo captured the essence of the formation of the party in these words
The basic principles which therefore have brought us together within the fold of the AG may be stated in the following words; the immediate termination of British rule in every phase of our political life, the education of all children of school-going age and the general enlightenment of all illiterate children of school going age, the provision of health and general welfare for all our people, the total abolition of want in our society by means of any economic policy which is both expedient and effective (Obafemi, 1981). The motto of the AG was "freedom for all, life, more abundant." It was also called the 'Afenifere of Egbe Olope' which signified the preponderance of the palm tree in the Western region at the time.

4. Analysis of Awolowo's Legacies in Education and other Spheres of Life

While it is true that this work is not strictly meant to appraise the political life of Obafemi Awolowo, it would however be difficult to achieve a unity of purpose if his political career is not put in focus. The reason is that it was through his active political life that he was asked to form the educational policies which eventually became the legacies which is the subject matter of this work. As soon as he bagged his LLB degree, Awolowo was through with his educational career and that set him in the mood for a political career with the establishment of the Action Group, the political party which was instrumental to his political career. There were two other dominant political parties at the moment when Obafemi Awolowo started his political career. These were the National Council of Nigeria and the Camerouns (NCNC) later changed to the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens formed on August 26, 1944 with Herbert Macaulay as the President and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as the General Secretary. This political party was to transform into a regional party of the East, even though it started as a truly national party. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) was formed in 1949.

In 1948, Dr. Dikko, the first Northerner to qualify as a medical doctor had gathered a group of friends and colleagues in Zaria to form a cultural organization which eventually transformed to the Northern People's Congress. Another aspiring party was the Northern

Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) which became an opposition to the NPC. The party had the strong support of Mallam Aminu Kano, Maitama Sule, Ahmadu Bida, Abba Makwairu, Bello Ijumu, Mogaji Dambata and Abba Kashiya. Thus by the time, the regional elections were held in December 1951, the major political parties in the field were the NCNC, the AG, the NPC and the NEPU, even though there were some minor parties in the field in various assortment of affiliations with the major parties (Adegbulu & Adeyemi, 2011). The decisive factor in Nigeria's development to independence was therefore the early emergence in 1948-1951 of regional rivalries and of parties expressing these (Adegbulu & Adeyemi, 2011). As a result, the period of adjustment of interests between the three major parties, between the North and the two Southern regions taken together; the first and second of these adjustments resulting in the adoption of a fully federalist constitution in 1954 (Adegbulu & Adeyemi, 2011). These internal divisions enabled the colonial office to retain the initiative much effectively and also ensured that the federal government which emerged after the 1959 election and led Nigeria to independence in October 1960 represented an uneasy coalition of very disparate interests.

As for the Action Group (AG), as far back as 1951, the party demanded for immediate self-government to be followed with full independence as soon as possible. Awolowo was elected the first and incidentally, the only president of the party. The same year, 1951, he was elected into the Western House of Assembly. The 1951 elections conducted into the Western House of Assembly were initially won by the NCNC with the highest number of seats, but it was not enough to give the party a majority. Meanwhile, in accordance with the norms of the parliamentary system of government, the AG was able to woo into its fold Mabolaje Grand Alliance of Ibadan to secure a majority of seats over the NCNC. This election marked carpet crossing and ethnic politics in Nigeria. Awolowo thereafter formed the government in the Western region, apart from being the leader of Government business and Minister of Local government.

As all nationalists of the period, the dislike for colonialism and the humiliation suffered by Africans in the hands of their white masters mattered a lot to Awolowo. Thus, on a motion for self-government in the House of Representatives, Lagos in March 1953, he stated:

'It is a matter of historical fact that the most ruthless tribal wars which were fought in this country were fought under the brutal instigation of the British people and their colleagues, the French. What do I mean by saying that? They came to buy slaves and they supplied gun-powder, ammunitions and other things to our people and said to them- go into the interior and bring slaves. They thereby stimulated inter-tribal wars which were designed toward taking people to the shores, selling them to the white traders, who took them to the West Indies, the Americas and other places as slaves (shame). Now today, they are claiming they brought peace to this country' (Awolowo, 1987).

He continued:

I declare that Britain is in illegal occupation of this country. ...Hear, hear when they came here, they used different devices to conquer us or to bring us under subjugation- force of arms, deceit, guile, undue influence and all sorts of crooked methods that any imperial power has used to bring any nation under subjugation We want to be able to vote for our own Governor-General and our Governors in the regions. We want to be able to vote for our President and if he is not doing things in accordance with our wishes, to have the power to remove ... (Awolowo, 1987).

With all these agitations by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, it was clear that he was to assume leadership status in Western Nigeria- for clearly none was as outspoken as he was in the region at this momentous period in the history of the Yoruba people of the South West of Nigeria. At the constitutional conference of 1953, while the Northern People's Congress (NPC) demanded for a confederation for Nigeria, Awolowo allied with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe to ask for a federal structure which agreed with the main flank of his thesis in the Book- Path to Nigerian Freedom published earlier in 1947. Eventually, the federalists won the day. Thus on October 4, 1954, Awolowo at the age of 45 (forty-five) emerged as the first Premier of the Western region and Minister of Finance. Addressing the Western House of Assembly after the ceremony, the premier said that what he needed most was purity of thought, purity of words and purity of deeds. "What I need at this hour and hereafter is neither wealth nor social standing. What I need henceforth above all things else is purity of thought, purity of words, and purity of deeds. It is only by faithfully showing hand for the cultivation of these ideals that one can be as near as

possible to the throne of Grace and the centre of power and repose. For it is the nearness to God that can bestow on me His divine guidance and wisdom which I very much require to enable me to discharge my onerous duties" (Daily Times (1954).

To carry out his policies, Awolowo assembled a team of young men such as Rotimi Williams, Anthony Enahoro, Stephen Awokoya, Oduola Oshuntokun, Adisa Akinloye and Jonathan Odebiyi who helped in ensuring that his political administration was not only effective but brought excellent results to the people.

5. The Universal Free Primary Education

Obafemi Awolowo started the first Universal Free Primary education programmed not only just in Nigeria but in Africa as a whole. Despite the fact that it was thought from some quarters that it was impossible to achieve such a laudable program, yet Awolowo was determined to make a success out of the program. The major reason that fueled this ambition actually had to do with the state of development of the Western Region which clearly required immediate transformation while some argued, it was a political gimmick, others wondered where the finances would come from given the nature of the poverty ridden Nigerian society of the period. Coupled with this was the fact that there was a dearth of trained teachers, lack of school buildings and limited finance (Adekoya, 2021).

As Ademola Adekola has noted, "there were only a third of children of school-going age in schools and in the whole region; there were 25 secondary schools in 1952. But the plan of the government was that no child should walk more than three kilometers to his or her school (Adekoya, 2021). Another reason for the doubts in the minds of critics of how the Universal Free Primary Education would be achieved was based on the estimate for the take-off of the Education and Health programmes which was put at £10 million, while the annual recurrent expenditure was nearly £3 million. But in the financial year 1952/53, the total revenue for both capital and recurrent expenditure for the region was a mere £5 million (Adekoya, 2021). In order to achieve his plans for the scheme, Awolowo had to prune down his expenditure; he directed that mud walls be used temporarily for the classrooms thus reducing cost of construction by nearly 70 percent. Staff housing for workers was also embargoed, while every taxable adult was to pay a levy of ten shillings. This tax proposal eventually caused disaffection for the party as the opposition party (NCNC) used this to campaign against them. Consequently, the Action Group lost the federal elections of 1954 to the NCNC. Despite this cheap point scored against the AG, Awolowo did not give up as he clearly had a focus. His calculations for the achievement of the UPE scheme was that as soon as the commodity and marketing boards were regionalized and the principle of derivation introduced for revenue allocation, the region would receive an accumulated £34 million which would definitely be a breakthrough to fund the project.

In due course, Awolowo awarded over 200 post-secondary scholarships annually which rose to 1,200 yearly by 1959 (Adekoya, 2021). As a result of this vision, many educated people of the western region of the time were lifted from penury and obscurity through the educational policies of Obafemi Awolowo. As at the time, he vacated office as the Premier in 1959, more than one million pupils were in primary schools as against 429,542 in 1953. The number of secondary schools also rose to 139 as against 25 in 1952 while there were 9,000 pupils secondary schools in 1954, the population rose to 84,374 in January 1959, by far larger than the combined population of all the secondary schools in other parts of Nigeria. In addition, 363 secondary modern schools, trade centres and teacher training colleges, with the later having 11,000 trainees by 1953 (Adekoya, 2021). In 1962, the University of Ife, now named after Obafemi Awolowo was established as a result of the report submitted to the federal government in September 1960, by a commission it appointed in April 1959 under the chairmanship of Sir Eric Ashby, Master of Clare College, and Cambridge while Obafemi Awolowo was the Premier of Western Regional government.

Indeed, it could be asserted that his initiatives and vision for education of the Western region of the period was clearly motivated by his experience as an aspiring pupil and student. He did not want others to go through what he had experienced in his childhood. After the death of his father, he faced a lot of adversity in his quest for education. He therefore emphasized that education should be one of the cardinal objectives of the newly independent Nigeria after the 1960s. Awolowo also believed that education should be free to all levels but most importantly should be made compulsory at the primary level, so that all upcoming youngsters and pupils irrespective of their backgrounds would receive education, and the opportunity to better their lives through careers and exposure on the long run. To justify his beliefs further in

a speech made to the press on September 3, 1959, Awolowo restated: "To educate the child is to lay the solid foundation for future social and economic progress: to provide health services is to combat diseases which are wasting on human resources and therefore, reduce our productive potentialities. The Government has for these reasons, brought about the greatest social revolution in the history of Black Africa within the last seven years" (Awolowo, 1981).

Awolowo solidly believed that education would contribute towards an egalitarian society with an enlightened citizenry who would discountenance the entrenchment of corruption, dictatorship and injustice in the polity (Adekoya, 2021).

Table 1

Enrolment	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
Primary School	456,000	811,432	982,755	982,755	1,037,755	1,080,303	1,124,788
Teacher Training:							
Grade II	1,508	2,093	3,152	3,833	4,128	3,311	-
Grade III	3,483	4,659	5,988	6,609	6,681	6,681	-

Source: Taiwo C. O. The Nigerian Education System: Past, present and future (Ikeja Lagos: Thomas Nelson, 1980)

Table 1 (above) shows the increase in the population figures of students from 1954 to 1958 in both Teachers Training Grade II and III under the premiership of Awolowo. It can also be seen that in 1959, there was a decrease in teachers grade II (3,311) which may be a reflection of the situation in 1960 when Nigeria attained its independence as he handed over the premiership to Ladoke Akintola whose vision may have differed from his.

Table 2: Western Regional Funds

	1953/1954 £	1954/1955 £	1955/1956 £	1956/1957 £	1957/1958 £
Personal Emoluments	138,650	218,820	282,820	465,992	504,310
Other charges	78,300	118,243	195,926	334,010	537,670
Special Expenditure	32,350	258,730	68,879	389,590	523,220
Grants in Aid	1,974,090	4,763,740	558,870	5,530	6,318,910
Total	2,223,390	5,358,720	6,306,495	6,720,258	7,884,110

Source: Taiwo C. O. The Nigerian Education System: Past, present and future (Ikeja Lagos: Thomas Nelson, 1980)

Table 2 (above) indicates the periodic expenses on education from regional funds as it rose progressively from £223,390 in 1953/54 to £7,884, 110 in 1957/58 which ranged between 30.7% and 39.9% of the total periodic expenses of the region during the tenure of Awolowo which signified that he invested a lot finances into education.

After the launching and the beginning of the implementation exercise, Obafemi Awolowo addressed the masses as following:

The Free Universal Primary Education introduced by the Western Regional Government of Nigeria offers a unique opportunity which can only be seized and made the best use of 18 parents and guardians will cooperate with the Government and all Education Authorities in order to make the scheme a success. In this connection, the Government expects that all parents and guardians will loyally and readily discharge their civic obligations, and that they will see to it that their children develop a habit of obedience, honesty and industry, without which all their learning would be in vain. May God prosper the scheme so that it may truly benefit all those for whom it is intended.

6. The Aims and Objectives of the Universal Primary Education Scheme

The UPE Scheme was designed to address numerous challenges. Towards that end, the following have been acknowledged as the precise objectives of the scheme;

- Provide free, compulsory Universal Primary Education for every child of school-going age in the western region;

- Ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative and life skills (as well as the ethical, moral and civic values) needed for laying the foundation for lifelong learning;
- Reduce significantly dropout rate from the formal school system through improved relevance and efficiency;
- An understanding of the community and of what is of value for its development and of the contribution which the individual can make to the community;
- To enable the pupils to communicate effectively in Yoruba and English;
- To enable the pupils to attain a basic knowledge of mathematics, science, applied science health and sanitation;
- To fire the pupil with the desire for achievement and excellence and for continuous self-improvement through education;
- To correct the deficiencies arising from the pre-school mental and social development of the Yoruba child;
- To develop the pupil's visual sensibilities to nature and an appreciation of his cultural heritage through music, art and literature;
- To familiarize the pupil with basic theoretical knowledge and first hand practical experience of the basic processes of production with special reference to the selected branch of Agriculture and industry;
- To enable the pupil to learn the use of leisure;
- To instill the spirit of national consciousness in the pupil.

Therefore, the curriculum of the scheme reflected the goals stated above in the objectives, even though in practice it was difficult to obtain such results. The major challenge of the scheme was that the available human and material resources could not be equaled with the fast rising enrolment of pupils. Consequently, the Government of western region had to set up the Banjo commission in December 1960 under the chairmanship of Samuel Ayodele Banjo to find out the problems facing the UPE scheme in the region. The Commission discovered among other findings that there were large number of untrained teachers and lack of continuity in staffing that the syllabus was poor while some teachers paid more attention to their private studies to the detriment of the school children they were supposed to be teaching. Also, it was noted that there was inadequate supervision of students and schools by the Inspectorates or the voluntary Agency supervisors. The commission, to this effect, noted that the standard of English was still very poor and therefore recommended for additional trained and better qualified teachers and strengthening the local Education Authorities to perform their duties efficiently. Chief Obafemi Awolowo at receiving the report of the Commission accepted its recommendations and geared enough effort to improve and implement the recommendations.

7. Impact of the Scheme

Obafemi Awolowo through the UPE influenced other regions of Nigeria to adopt the program, even though it did not work out the way it did in the Western region. By February 1957, the Eastern region's UPE was launched and it failed after one year of its implementation because many schools were staffed by untrained teachers and gross insufficient funds. The Northern region did not embark on the UPE as it was already operating the Islamic form of education. As a result, the Western region became more modernized and educationally advanced than all other regions of the Federation. This was because Chief Obafemi Awolowo was very determined to improve the level of education in the Western region. He believed that an individual's genius could only be released through education and that all resources a state may have; none is greater than human resources. He also argued that a large population without education would slow down development, but a well-educated citizen is the best capital a state could have.

In his first budget in 1952, he made it clear to the members of the Western House of Assembly that the government would give top priority to education, among other things. He spelt this out as a basic principle by which his political party was to be guided. True to his words, between 1954 and 1966, education attracted the largest share of the Western regions' budget, having varied between 28.9% and 41.2% during the period. By 1958 and 1959 financial years, 41.2% of the total recurrent budget was devoted to education alone. This represented one of the highest proportional expenditures on education and that was sufficient demonstration of the great importance that the regional government placed on education.

As a result of the UPE by Awolowo, a large group of elite emerged in Western Nigeria to dominate many professional callings in the country in commerce, industry, banking, economy and politics some years after independence. Budgetary allocations to education since the Awolowo days have reduced drastically. Hardly does education get anything higher than 18% any longer. The highest budgetary allocation to education in 2008 was 13%. The implementation of Awolowo's scheme was guided by three principles which were principles bordering on the sound desirability of free education, its financial practicability and whether it should be the priority of the government. Answers to questions involving these principles revolve around the belief that education is required for social consciousness; hence attacking the position of illiteracy, ignorance and poverty as a necessary condition for national development.

8. Other Socio-Economic Legacies of Obafemi Awolowo

Corollary to education were other vital achievements of Chief Obafemi in the period under discussion which do not precisely fall under education, despite the fact that they were related. Obafemi Awolowo's policies were indeed motivating and had to be emulated by other leaders of the other two regions of the federation- the North and the East. One of such legacies that followed the Universal Primary Education scheme was the establishment of the first television station in Africa- the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) in October 31 1959. At the official opening of the parliament building in Ibadan, Awolowo said the establishment of the television was initiated as it would play a major role in increasing both the pace and standard of education which was regarded as the key to progress in all other fields. In his words: "Television will serve as a teacher and an entertainment and as a stimulus to us all to transform Nigeria into a modern and prosperous nation" (Ikime, 1979).

Another deliberate policy of the sage was the provision of Free Health Service especially for children under the age of eighteen. Apart from the fact that his government implemented the policy of establishing at least one hospital in every administrative division in the western region, yet other important towns which were not administrative headquarters equally benefited from the Free Health Scheme as hospitals were equally established in the domains. Also three mobile dispensaries took hospital and other medical facilities to remote parts from bases in Ibadan, Abeokuta and Benin provinces, two touring launches did the same from Epe and Forcados while three Ambulances stationed at Badagry, Okitipupa and Warri took patients to hospitals. Indeed, it was clear and glaring that the children in schools and post-primary institutions were the first to benefit from this scheme while enjoying their free primary education and other scholarship schemes. But farther than other citizenries of the western region were all beneficiaries of this health program which transformed the medical lives of the people and gave them more life in abundance unlike their previous lives in which traditional medicine was the only recourse they had to their health and lives.

Another vital sector that was revived by Obafemi Awolowo was Agriculture. Although the Yoruba of western Nigeria were thorough bred farmers before the colonial government, yet Awolowo brought in new improvements to aid the lives of not just the farmers but also young school leavers to become professional Agriculturists. To this extent, his administration placed a high premium on Agriculture deemed as the mainstream of the economy. Many farm settlements and institutes were also established with the twin aim of providing employment for young school leavers and teaching them basic farming skills so that they could become professional farmers. Also, high yielding and disease-resistant seedlings were provided for farmers. One of such schools was the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) which was aimed at improving the cultivation of Cocoa in the region.

The Western Nigerian Development Corporation in 1958 had six plantations of its own covering acreage of 20,517. Other crops as rubber, palm oil, citrus, cashew and coffee. Under the Rubber Improvement Scheme, 90,000 seedlings of high yielding clones were distributed in 1958, 300,000 in 1959, and two and half million in 1960, while over six million seedlings of the high yielding Amazon variety of cocoa were made available for planting by farmers in 1959. The government also pursued its policy of promoting rural industries with the establishment of three textile Training Centers for the training of school leavers in broad loom weaving, designing and dyeing and six cooperative weaving societies, with combined annual production of about 20,000 yards of cloths of various designs (Adekoya, 2021). Awolowo also improved rural development road construction by tarring roads with bituminous surface roads and.

By 1959, the legislature approved a capital expenditure of £2.5 million for a special Road Development program to tar over 2,200 miles of roads in the region.

It must also be observed that the Awolowo administration established the Cooperative Bank in 1953 with a capital of £1 million and the cooperative building with a ten storey block of offices, an auditorium and a shop were opened in 1957. All these helped to promote the growth of the cooperative movement in the region. The government agency for making loan finance available to Nigerian entrepreneurs who had sound industrial and commercial projects in hand but had no capital was the finance corporation. The scope of its activities extended to equity participation in local business. Between 1955 and 1960, over £400,000 industrial loans were given to borrowers. To crown these allied development, the government sought to improve the basic amenities of the people of the Western region. These included the water co-operation that distributed water to all citizenry of the region and electricity through the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria (ECN). A loan of £1.3 million free interest was given to the corporation in order to speed up the provision of electric power in the region both to domestic and industrial usage.

Amidst all these achievements of the Premier of Western region in his tenure, some of his opponents sought to pull him down and smear his reputation. A treasonable felony trial was instituted against Chief Obafemi Awolowo. The allegation was that he and a couple of his tactical committee of who planned to take over the government of the federation by force of arms. Awolowo in his defence admitted that the AG formed a tactical committee but argued that since he did not believe in violence, it was formed to promote parliamentary democracy. On September 11, 1963, after an eighth month trial, Awolowo was convicted and jailed for ten years with hard labor by Sodeinde Sowemimo, the trial judge. The historic 800-page judgement was read by the judge in eight and a half hours, seventeen of Awolowo's aide also received various jail sentences. As fate would have it, his imprisonment turned him into a martyr. This was because people from the west easily recalled the benefits of his programmes and the prosperity during his tenure as premier when the price of Cocoa experienced a slump in the world market.

In 1965, Akintola was returned to power in the Western region in an election characterized by violence and irregularities. People openly rebelled against the regime and the manipulation resulted into a political crisis in the western region which gradually enveloped the country and finally led to the first coup d'état in the country in January 15, 1966. The coup was led by Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu and a group of other five young officers. As a result of the emergence of General Yakubu Gowon as the second Head of State, Chief Obafemi Awolowo received a pardon with his associates and at the same time appointed him as the Federal Commissioner of Finance and Vice Chairman of the Federal Executive Council. The position Awolowo has been likened to that of a prime minister of the federation in a military government. In a speech delivered as Federal commissioner for Finance to the Conference of finance Commissioners of the federation in Kano on February 23, 1970, he identified seven such objectives viz Full Employment, Free Education At All Levels, Free Health services for all, Modernization of Agriculture, Rapid industrialization of each state, Rapid Development of the systems of Transportation and putting the federal government in sufficient funds to enable it not only to perform its allocated functions in the National Interest but also to come readily to the aid of any state in need.

In readiness for the next political dispensation in 1978, Awolowo announced the formation of the Unity Party of Nigeria. The party had four cardinal programmes with which it canvassed for its votes from the Nigerian citizenry. These were:

Free education at all levels, Free Health Services for all, Integrated Rural Development and Full employment opportunities for all. Reviewing these cardinal programmes in light of this work, it would be discovered that free education led the way for Awolowo's ideals for a better country. In the next two elections that he participated in 1979 and in 1983, it was obvious that he strived to ensure that this policy was able to bring about its positive results to the Nigerian citizenry, even though he did not emerge as the President of the country. In the 1979 election, Awolowo lost to Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) who was declared the president of the second republic. In the election, none of the five candidates fulfilled the important electoral requirement to be declared winner – winning 25 percent of the votes cast in two third of the 19 states then.

The legal battle went right up to the Supreme Court, which in a split decision declared in favour of the NPN and the Electoral Commission. He lost out at the elections eventually. However, he was consoled by the fact that the five states that won through the Unity Party of Nigeria, the political party he created went ahead to implement the four cardinal programmes of the party. These states were Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo and Bendel where the emergent governors; Alhaji Lateef Jakande, (Lagos), Ajibola Ige (Oyo), Mr. Bisi Onabanjo (Ogun), Adekunle Ajasin (Ondo), and Prof. Folorunso Alli (Bendel) who went ahead to implement the four cardinal programmes just as it was conceived by Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

On December 31, 1983, Alhaji Shehu Shagari's government was ousted by a coup d'état which brought Gen. Mohammed Buhari to power. Not too long after that, Buhari too lost his government to gen. Ibrahim Babangida. General Ibrahim Babangida continued to shift the return to civilian government from 1986 to 1990, to 1992 and finally in 1993, he was forced by circumstances of his deception to Nigerians to step aside on August 27, 1993. However, before the return to next civilian government of 1999, Chief Obafemi Awolowo had breathed his last which was on Saturday May 9, 1987. His wife, Dideolu led his stewards into his bedroom on the fateful day when the door had to be broken into for entrance. Awolowo's body was found near the bed clutching a tooth brush in the right hand, with a smile on his face. That was the end of the hero's life. After the doctor's confirmation, arrangements were made to convey his body for embalmment at the University College.

It was obvious that in these states, many citizens who had long abandoned the dream of being educated quickly went back to school to reap the benefits of the Free Education at all levels. The party program caused a revolution in these states as bearded boys/men and 'senior girls' abandoned their trade to embrace the free education program. Thus, it could be said at the end again that Awolowo's legacies was carried over from the colonial days of the UPE down to the Civilian governments thereafter in ensuring that several Nigerians got the opportunity of being educated in life and into various professional callings in life. In 1983, the next elections, Awolowo also lost to the National Party of Nigeria candidate who utilized all within its incumbency powers to return Alhaji Shehu Shagari to power. This time, Awolowo did not bother to contest the results of the elections at the court.

9. Summary and Conclusion

If education has been defined as the process of facilitating, learning or the acquisition of knowledge and skills, values, beliefs and habits, then it can be surmised that all the efforts put in by Obafemi Awolowo clearly translated in to ensuring that many Nigerians benefited from his vision for education in Nigeria as a whole. Apart from making education free in the Western region during his tenure in government 1952-1959 as the Premier of the then western region, he equally influenced the military government where he served from 1967 to 1971 to take positive steps in enhancing educational policies of the masses. It is also an incontrovertible fact of history that Chief Obafemi Awolowo left no gap between utterances and performances. During the second republic, when he formed the Unity Party of Nigeria in 1978 and contested against Alhaji Shehu Shagari in 1979 who eventually emerged as the president, he never minced his words in his cardinal policies of which free education formed the most important priority. In 1983, his party UPN also maintained the major cardinal programmes of free education at all levels, free medical services, integrated rural development and full employment. The free education programme was particularly a major asset in the electoral fortunes of the party.

Thus it can be clearly stated that one of the major legacies of Chief Awolowo again was to be found in his acumen in Nigeria's first and second republics. He was the key personality in each of the parties either in their formation, their strength in voters' membership and legislative seats, their performance or effectiveness in achieving their goals and programmes, or in their governance (Okonkwo, 20020). He therefore made tremendous contribution to Nigeria's political development. Political education was equally important for the masses of Nigerians. organization, their programmes, ideologies, their strength in voters' membership and legislative seats, their performance or effectiveness in achieving their goals and programmes, or in their governance (Okonkwo, 20020). He therefore made tremendous contribution to Nigeria's political development. Political education was equally important for the masses of Nigerians.

Although the UPE had some challenges which bordered shortage of classrooms and teachers, yet set against the numerous handicaps, one cannot best conclude that first implementation by the Ministry of education achieved some measures of success especially in the number of enrolment in schools at all levels. But as Omolewa has pointed out, it was by no means the intention of Chief Awolowo to limit his educational expansion to the primary schools. Aspects of the expansion scheme had to be shelved temporarily at least in the face of heavy financial burden and toll unaided by government on the primary education scheme. As the Banjo Commission later observed:

'The regional government spends 70 percent of its total education budget on primary education. We are told that nowhere else in the world do governments spend such a large proportion of their budget on this aspect of education' (Adekoya, 2021).

Despite all the financial and infrastructural problems, Chief Obafemi Awolowo was able to establish several schools in communities not adequately served such as Olode College, Ijebu Ode, Muslim College, Molusi College, Ijebu-Igbo, Urhobo College, Warri, Luggard School, Sapele, Oduduwa College, Ile-Ife, Ilesha Grammar School, Ilesha, Imade College, Owo, Jubilee School, Ikare, Isoko Secondary School Ole and St Patricks College, Asaba. These schools were to supplement the efforts of the governments, missionaries and communities which had made the establishment of schools possible, as inadequate as the provision was.

By his effort, Awolowo had assisted a lot of people especially from the grassroots to translate their dreams to reality and the desires of the populace achieved during his tenure as the premier of western region. He had helped to expose the weak to education, albeit limited and to use the machinery of the state to liberalize access to education (Omolewa, 2002). He had of course not sufficiently considered the consequences of his action for the quality of products and the finances of the state (Omolewa, 2002). However, during the second republic 1979-1983, his lofty ideals in education were carried out to logical conclusion in all the south-western states through the various governors of the Unity Party of Nigeria that emerged at the time (Gbadosi, 2019). He carefully set out to develop this human capital by building schools in all towns and villages of western Nigeria.

Although some of these Awolowo schools were built cheaply through community efforts, yet it was able to serve its purpose as it reduced the stress of pupils who had to walk distances to get to their destinations of schools which were of course very few then (Oduye, 2019). To prove that all these policies translated to reality, it clearly remains an attestation that the South western region produced some of the most educated elite in every profession of the country. These efforts did not go unnoticed by other regions who effortlessly tried to embark the South Western region but failed (Gbadosi, 2019). During the second republic 1979-1983, this was the last era of Chief Obafemi Awolowo in politics, his vision for education clearly brought in expansion of education in various levels- from primary to secondary and to the tertiary level. As Ajayi has noted, it could best be described as a period of educational revolution in Nigeria (Ajayi, 1980). This is because the period witnessed an astronomical increase in the number of polytechnics, colleges of education and universities. For example, Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo and Bendel states under the confine of the Unity Party of Nigeria and in fulfilment of election promises increased their secondary institutions by over 200 percent. Further to this, each of the states also established or proposed to establish a University, apart from Oyo State which already had two federal universities at Ibadan and Ile-Ife. Obviously, this rapid increase in higher institutions in the UPN states was as a result of the anticipation of the large turnout from their secondary school system (Ajayi, 1980).

In sum, it must be admitted that the educational steps taken in the western region in pre- independence, colonial who benefitted from it directly and their children whose parents now were elite continued to ensure that educational growth which affected other socio-economic and political spheres of life brought improvement of life upon the society. Thus in relation to our theoretical framework of analysis, Obafemi Awolowo legacies remain clearly in all these spheres of life till date and would continue to influence developments not only in Western Nigeria but the whole of Nigeria. It must also be clearly asserted that the legacies of Chief Obafemi Awolowo were bold ones which cannot easily be... the policy of free education continues to haunt subsequent governments in Nigeria, who as the sage earlier discovered that education holds the key to the modernization of every society. Periods by Obafemi Awolowo remains indelible in the lives of the people.

Therefore, to declare that Obafemi Awolowo was a hero of the Nigerian society can only but be an understatement for his psychological ideals, acts and high deeds through the implementation of his policies in the South Western region and beyond bore us clearly witness that he truly certified all those qualities which placed him as a 'hero' of the Nigerian society. Apart from his political ideas such as fiscal federalism- a euphemism for the current strident slogan of resource control Awolowo's enduring legacies also include ethnic autonomy, fairness and equity in resource allocation, judicious management of national resources, planned development, liberal modern agriculture and scientific education. Awolowo's legacy will endure forever, nothing can be added to it; nor can anything be taken from it (Osuntokun, 2002).

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