



Biography

Aoua Keita

Aoua Keita (1912-1980) was a Malian midwife and anti-colonial activist. Born in Bamako, she won admission to the city's first girls' school in 1923. She went on to study midwifery at the Dakar School of Medicine, graduating in 1931. A member of the African Democratic Rally (RDA), she contributed to establishing women's wings within the party, and was placed in charge of electoral campaign literature in the various posts to which she was sent as a midwife in the civil service.

In 1958, she was named as the RDA's Commissioner for Women, and the following year was elected to Parliament, thereby becoming the first woman from French-speaking West Africa to be elected to the national legislative assembly of her country. In 1956, in parallel to her political activities, Aoua Keita set up a women's trade union, and later participated in the creation of a Panafrican women's organization.





Aoua Keita

Fighting for an improvement in the living conditions of African women, she was instrumental in the drafting and eventual enactment of the Marriage and Guardianship Code (1962), which afforded new rights to women in Mali. Her autobiography, published in 1975 and rewarded with the Grand prix littéraire d'Afrique noire a year later, is the remarkable account of the professional and political commitment of an African midwife in the colonial era.

