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Isaac Fadoyebo at the Battle of Nyron

African Voices of the First and Second World Wars, ca. 1914–1945

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GLOBAL CONTEXT

Both World War I (1914–1918) and World War II (1939–1945) had far-reaching social, political, and economic impacts around the world. These wars not only led to the deaths of millions of people and the destruction of infrastructure and social institutions around, but also reconfigured world politics as new polities such as the United States and the Soviet Union became world superpowers while others such as Germany suffered serious political setbacks. Africa's involvement in both conflicts was inevitable because the major European belligerents—Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, and Portugal—all had colonies in Africa. The African continent was therefore an integral component of the global economic and political system both in 1914 and 1939. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the experiences of Africans as soldiers and civilians in these two wars and to see the wars through their eyes. A particular focus will be on the British colony of Nigeria and the experiences of Nigerians abroad.

The effects of the two world wars were felt in virtually all regions of Africa,

from Cairo (Egypt) and Johannesburg (South Africa), to Bathurst (now Banjul, the Gambia) and Mogadishu (Somalia). Both wars had dramatic costs, human and otherwise. Not only did African colonies supply material resources used by the major powers for prosecuting the wars, they also provided soldiers whose heroic performances have been documented by authors ranging from European war generals to professional historians and even soldiers themselves.¹ The continent lost about 150,000 of the more than 1 million soldiers and carriers mobilized for World War I (WWI).² And African casualties in World War II (WWII) were even greater, not only because it lasted longer but also because it broke out after colonialism had taken firm root in Africa. Indeed, various regions in Africa were theaters of conflict during both wars. During WWI battles took place in Togoland, the Cameroon, German East Africa and German Southwest Africa, and Egypt served as a staging ground for the British effort against the Ottoman Empire. Both North Africa and Ethiopia saw fighting during WWII. During WWII, African battlefields were as important as Europe's or Asia's because the outcome of war on the African continent was capable of determining the victory. Moreover, the enormous costs of prosecuting the war led the colonial powers to intensify their exploitation of Africans as producers of raw materials directly needed for the wars. This meant drafting Africans as laborers and building more mines and agricultural plantations across the continent. Finally, during both conflicts, to help finance the war effort, new taxation regimes emerged throughout the continent as inflation—a direct consequence of the shortage of both essential goods (such as food) and services—took firm root. In short, Africans could afford fewer goods and had to pay higher taxes to the imperial powers as a result of the war.

AFRICAN EXPERIENCES

In this section we will examine African experiences during the two world wars, focusing on Nigerians enlisted in the colonial army, Nigerian nationalists, and market women. This will allow us to better comprehend the impact of the wars on both soldiers and nonsoldiers and the contributions of the war generations to nationalism, decolonization, and gendered politics.

All Africans—regardless of class, region, ethnicity, and race—were involved to one degree or another in the win-the-war efforts of the belligerents. Their experiences of the wars were shaped predominantly by the politics of individual colonial powers and the extent of their involvement in the wars.

This section is divided into three parts. In the first, we examine how Nigerians viewed and responded to recruitment into the colonial army. The next section explores how the wars transformed Nigerian nationalism, and the position of leading nationalists on these major events in world history. In the third section, we consider the impact of the wars on African market women, who protested wartime policies that affected their livelihood and social status. Although we will focus mainly on the experiences of Africans from the British colony of Nigeria, the issues discussed here are applicable to the entire continent. It is useful to note that Nigeria was not only the most populous country in Africa but also Britain's most prosperous colony, second only to India.

Recruitment of Nigerians

While only about 50,000 Nigerians were recruited by the British during WWI, about 140,000 were enlisted for WWII. Britain had maintained a colonial army in Nigeria for decades before the outbreak of WWI in 1914. Indeed, the history of the colonial army—known as the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) and, later, the Royal West African Frontier Force (RWAFF)—is as old as the history of British incursion into Nigerian geographic area. As was the case elsewhere in Africa, colonial military units in Nigeria were predominantly African in their composition. These colonial troops were utilized in battles during the so-called Scramble for Africa in the 1880s. They were also used for maintaining law and order, and as the last security and defense option when regular police proved inadequate in clamping down on revolts and insurgencies that threatened imperialism. Most of the pioneering troops of the WAFF in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were runaway slaves who joined the army in order to secure redemption.³ Others joined because they felt that the army bestowed respect and honor, glorified masculinity, and ensured better remuneration.⁴

The outbreak of the two world wars changed the nature and pattern of enlistment in the colonial army, as well as the soldiers' roles and functions. While some Nigerians continued to voluntarily enlist in the army for the respect it conferred, others were driven to fight for the British because the army's wages and remuneration were relatively higher than those of many other casual jobs during the war. However, the British realized very early on that voluntary recruitment was incapable of producing the manpower needed to defend the British Empire. Hence during both WWI and WWII, the British demanded that chiefs and community leaders in Africa fill recruitment quotas in accordance with the size of the communities they led as well as the power they wielded among their people. Many chiefs cooperated willingly with the recruitment quotas. Alaafin (King) Ladigbolu of Oyo (in southwestern Nigeria) told the British at the outset of WWI that he would enlist 30,000 men and that the British should "not treat this as an idle boast. I say it from my heart and mean it."⁵ During WWII, the chiefs of Sokoto province closely monitored the recruitment of soldiers, allowing even family members to fight in the war. These recruitment quotas were a disguised form of forced labor since most people would have preferred to stay in their villages and towns rather than fight a war that originated outside their immediate communities. In reality, then, some of the "recruits" were seized by force while others were simply told that the British officer wanted to see them and not briefed about the purpose of the invitation until they arrived at the training camps. Nwose, a recruit from eastern Nigeria, gave a firsthand account of how he was "volunteered" by the chiefs at the outset of WWI:

We came back one night from our yam farm, the chief called us and handed us over to government messenger. I did not know where we were going to, but the chief and the messenger said that the white man had sent for us and so we must go. After three days we reached the white man's compound. Plenty of others had arrived from other villages far away. The white man wrote our names in a book, tied a brass number ticket round our neck and gave each man a blanket and food. Then he told us that we were going to the great war [as World War I was called]. . . . We left and marched far into the

bush. The government police led the way, and allowed no man to stay behind.⁶

But it is misleading to assume that the chiefs willingly volunteered their kinsmen and community members to fight in the wars. Rather, most of them acted under pressure and from fear of the political consequences of disobeying imperial directives. In Nigeria, as elsewhere in Africa, colonial administrators had the power to remove local chiefs at will for not following imperial orders such as the demand for recruits. Many chiefs felt that they had to comply with the recruitment policy in order to remain politically relevant. Yet not all of the chiefs complied with the recruitment order. Chiefs in places like Zungeru and along the Cross River refused to send their men to war and some northern emirs sent disabled men, referred to by British military officers as "a herd of cripples."⁷

How did everyday Nigerians react to conscription? Some fled their immediate community and sought haven in places where forceful conscription by chiefs was not enforced. Others ran into the remote forest far beyond the reach of both African and colonial authorities. Still others "bribed" the traditional rulers in order to be exempted from war duties. During WWI, especially, some Igbo chiefs were reported to have benefited from the gifts received from those unwilling to go to the war front. Desertion from the army was rampant as well, especially among carriers like Nwose who did not know they were going to the war front and fled during training or even from the battleground itself. And some Muslims deserted the army because they believed that fighting in East Africa would entail killing fellow Muslims from the Middle East. Private Obudu Kano's explanation of his desertion from the British army in 1917 captures this reasoning:

I volunteered to go to East Africa but I did not understand what it meant. When I arrived at Obolo, Sergeant Tanko Jura, who was in charge of my section, said to me "I hear we go to war and we got to fight the Turk in Stamboul [Istanbul]; and he advised me not to go." Another soldier, Private Garuba Hadeija[,] reported that he heard "Some soldiers say that they were going to fight at Stamboul,["] so when them making away, I joined them.⁸

Another reason desertion occurred so frequently was that African recruits faced terrible conditions and had little chance to better their conditions or even have their complaints heard. Indeed, colonial armies were one of the strongholds of racism in Africa. Lack of Western education and the entrenchment of colonial racial prejudice, coupled with the military culture's doctrine of total obedience, prevented African soldiers from seeking redress even when made to march barefoot (except on the battlefield). In addition, the highest post an African could aspire to was battalion sergeant-major. Africans were never appointed as commissioned officers and were paid far less than their enlisted white counterparts. They were also required to stand at attention to British soldiers, regardless of rank, and to salute white civilians.

Yet battlefield experience was precisely what transformed African soldiers' perceptions of white masters' racial supremacy and demystified the prevailing notion of their invincibility. African soldiers saw their highly respected white soldiers and officers falling, getting killed, and breaking down in the face of violence. According to G. O. Olusanya, a Nigerian World War II historian, "The Nigerian soldiers found out that they were subject to the same emotions, the same fears and hopes as white soldiers, a fact which convinced them that all human beings, irrespective of their colour, were basically the same when subjected to the same conditions."⁹ "The myth of racial superiority"—according to Mokuwago Okoye, who fought in WWII—"received less sanction" after the war.¹⁰

Nationalism and the Newspaper Press

The two world wars also had a significant impact on nationalists and journalists in Nigeria. The relationship between nationalism and the newspaper press is as old as the history of colonial incursion in the region.¹¹ Both emerged from the same elite, literate class. This class, in turn, had emerged during the mid-nineteenth century as a result of the introduction of Christianity to southern Nigeria by European missionaries. Trained largely to serve as clerks supporting the colonial state, the members of this small but highly influential elite soon began to use their knowledge of Western literacy to campaign against the economic, political, and social exploitation of Nige-

rians.¹² In fact, they launched the first wave of cultural nationalism in Nigeria during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The primary aim of this generation of “cultural nationalists” was not independence from Britain but, rather, a colonial society free of racial prejudice and based on respect for African culture. Their methods of mobilization included public protest and petitioning administrators both in Nigeria and Britain, but it was the newspaper press that would prove the most powerful instrument of nationalist agitation. The early nationalist newspapers, which emerged in the 1880s, included the *Times of Nigeria*, the *Nigeria Pioneer*, the *Lagos Weekly Record*, the *Nigerian Chronicle*, and the *Lagos Standard*. Reaching a wide readership and serving as watchdogs of the colonial masters, these newspapers frequently criticized colonial policies and actions deemed unacceptable. They were able to do this because of their independence from both the colonial administration and European financial interests. Indeed, the newspaper press, throughout a century of British presence in Nigeria, was the only modern economic venture completely monopolized by Nigerians. It therefore formed the central institution for the development of Nigerian nationalism—the call for an independent state for the Nigerian people.

The outbreak of WWI tested the ideological framework of the Nigerian nationalist struggle in that it required taking sides with either the exploitative colonial master—Britain—or Britain’s European enemies, the Germans. Although Britain was politically unpopular in Nigeria, as in most of its colonies, the nationalists believed that the collapse of the British Empire and the possibility of a resulting German annexation would spell doom for Nigerians. This conviction was partly based on Nigerians’ observation of the repressive German regime in nearby German Togoland and German Cameroons. The old saying that “a known devil is better than an unknown angel” best describes the nationalists’ perception of that regional tragedy.

It is important to note that anti-German sentiments cannot wholly explain why nationalists supported the British during WWI. According to Akinjide Osuntokun, a Nigerian historian of World War I, some nationalist newspapers actually supported the British and reduced their criticism of the colonial administration during the war in order to avoid censorship. The

administration had threatened to censor antigovernment publications during the war for fear that they would reduce public support for the British.¹³ Meanwhile, the new elite split up as progovernment individuals and groups (otherwise called “collaborators”) gained popularity with the British officers—a trend that sowed discontent among the mainstream nationalist groups.

No sooner had the war started than the nationalists began to use their newspapers to support it and mobilize people for the war effort. The following editorial in *The Nigerian Pioneer*, dated December 11, 1914, demonstrates the moral and African-cultural tone that characterized these newspapers’ appeal to Nigerians to support Britain:

The splendid spirit of patriotism aroused in the breast of all who count as citizens of the Empire by the present awful war, we trust and hope will continue for all time. It has kindled in the minds of everyone unity of purpose and sense of duty. . . . It is this which animates all to give their best, be it of blood or money for the sake of the Empire. The African is taught from early childhood the duty we owe one to the other. In times of joy and gladness, he rejoices with those with whom he is brought into intimate contact. In times of sorrow and sadness he shares in the grief of his neighbours. In times of distress and want he is taught to contribute towards the relief of those affected.¹⁴

The nationalist call for Nigerians to join the colonial army—which had been unpopular for its repressiveness as an arm of imperialism—was a major reversal. Ironically, the nationalists did not depict the recruitment quota as a form of forced labor despite the fact that they had campaigned vigorously against all forms of involuntary conscription in the prewar era. In fact, the nationalists injected new phrases such as “imperial patriotism” into the quest to raise money and other forms of support for the British. In particular, they organized concerts to raise money for war efforts and published the names of and financial contributions made by chiefs as well as district and provincial officers. Although the coastal city of Lagos was the main hub of the newspaper industry, the circulation of nationalist newspapers reached the

interior of Nigeria and became the best and most readily accessible information on war news.

British victory in World War I led to the interwar years, which in turn ushered in new social and political developments that consolidated the hold of colonialism in Nigeria and across the African continent. Compared to prewar years, this period saw a higher number of administrators, an increase in European economic investment, and a deeper colonial infrastructure. Meanwhile, the cultural nationalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was gradually supplanted by political nationalism, which demanded self-rule or independence. The number of educated elites and the level of nationalist agitation increased during the interwar years as the newspaper industry, which continued to be firmly dominated by Nigerians, blossomed in response to an unprecedented increase in the number of educated elites and the urbanization of the Nigerian population.¹⁵ This expansion of literacy and newspaper readership increased Nigerians' awareness of their place in world politics, the ills of foreign domination, and the importance of self-determination. At the same time, a number of constitutional changes during the interwar years (e.g., the Clifford Constitution of 1922) gave Nigerians more voice in the administration of the colony and provided an effective platform for seeking redress.¹⁶ The *Lagos Daily News*, the *Daily Service*, and the *West African Pilot*, three newspapers founded during the interwar years, radicalized political nationalism by criticizing virtually all colonial policies of the time.

Whereas World War I merely tested the loyalty of Nigerians to the British Empire, World War II tested the security of the British Empire itself, inspiring the drive toward independence. When WWII broke out most Nigerians, including leading nationalists, once again sided with the British. The news of Adolf Hitler's atrocities against the Jews and his fledgling pronouncement of a German world empire prompted Nigerians to support the Allies and their professed mission of defending the humanity against an impending Nazi imperialism. On September 6, 1939, three days after Britain and France declared war against Germany, Honourable Alakija, a member of the Nigerian Youth Movement and Nigerian Legislative Council, convened a meeting chaired by Oba (King) Falolu of Lagos and attended by

about ten thousand Nigerians.¹⁷ The attendees publicly pledged their support for the British and resolved to mobilize human and material resources for the “mother” country of England. They equated the Allies’ victory with freedom for all humanity. This sentiment is reflected in the following statement issued by Herbert Macaulay, a leading nationalist: “Victory for Democracy and the freedom of Mankind depends on our contributions, our determination, and our Loyalty.”¹⁸

Anti-Nazi sentiments permeated nearly the entire fabric of Nigerian society, from schools and government establishments to sacred places like the church. While schoolchildren were being taught anti-Axis songs with lyrics like “Hitler that is throwing the world into confusion, push him with a shovel into the grave,”¹⁹ priests were publicly preaching their anti-Nazi opinions to their congregations.²⁰ As in WWI, newspapers became the most effective tool for mobilizing support for Britain. Indeed, they can be viewed as the principal ideological weapon supporting the prosecution of the war not only in Nigeria but in the entirety of British West Africa. During the interwar period the newspapers had critiqued the truthfulness of news emanating from Britain, but once the war began, they uncritically published virtually all news released by the War Office in London. Generally, the newspapers’ pro-Allied wartime efforts can be divided into three interrelated categories: supporting conscription, disseminating battlefield news, and encouraging civilians to contribute to the Win-the-War Fund. Let us take a critical look at each of these wartime newspaper activities.

In 1939 the British set up a quota scheme (as they had done in WWI), but this scheme met with only inconsistent success. As WWII progressed, the British adopted a new recruitment strategy of marketing the army to individuals as a professional career that equipped soldiers with entrepreneurial skills they could use for personal development after demobilization. This campaign aimed at changing Nigerians’ beliefs that soldiers were solely trained to carry weapons and kill. Specifically, the British hoped to attract educated Nigerians by emphasizing the technical and professional jobs available in the army (see Image 4.1). In addition, recruits were assured that they would be voluntarily released at the end of the war. A 1943 recruitment advertisement with the headline “Young Men! Army Pays You to Learn a

Trade" went on to say "Young men with ambition, who have finished school studies, are paid by the Army to learn a trade."²¹ The nationalists quickly seized upon the importance of this new policy in human and technological development of the colonial state they intended to inherit from the British. There was rarely a week in which the major Lagos newspaper did not urge Nigerians to join the army. The following *Daily Service* editorial dated November 23, 1942, illuminates this new pattern of thinking:

We call the attention of Nigerian youths to the notice in today's issue explaining schemes which offer excellent opportunities for technical training in the Army in the hope that the fullest advantage will be taken of them. The rates of pay in the army have increased, bringing them to a level which we believe compare favorably with the rates of paid for similar trade in civil occupation. But quite apart from any question of personal advantage, this war against Hitler is essentially one of machines and one in which the technician has to play an important part. Unlike other wars in the past, the struggle against Hitler and his associates is of tanks, lorries, aeroplanes, guns of all kinds, armoured cars and a thousand and one other things which require the technician's skill not only to manufacture but to repair. In Nigeria, the training afforded by the Army will serve a double purpose. Already there are attempts at industrialisation of the country. This process we believe will be capable of much development after the war in the reconstruction period that lies ahead. Then the skilled workers in different trades will be a matter of great national need.

In addition to aiding in the recruitment of soldiers, the nationalist newspapers served as the most accessible information channel for battlefield news. They were certainly biased in their coverage of the war, as they reported only the Allies' battlefield successes and frequently mocked Hitler. Educated readers who cared about the success of the Allies and, by extension, the future of British imperial rule in Nigeria were entertained by front-page headlines such as "Over 200 Enemies Ships Have Been Sunk in the Mediterranean Since Allied Landing in Africa," "Germans Abandon Men and Materials in Their Flight from Egypt," "Senior German General Is

S. Q. M. S. Asuquo has a most excellent Army record, enlisting as a Clerk on the 13.12.40 he has risen in the short space of 3 years to the rank of Staff Quartermaster Sergeant. He is welfare officer for his Unit and spends a considerable part of his spare time forwarding books and newspapers to his African friends on Active Service. —A Nigerian who is doing his part in more ways than one.



He will have a trade when Victory is won

Men are wanted for the following vacancies.

	Qualification
Clerks	Middle II and over
Nursing Orderlies (i.e., Military Nurse)	Middle II
Literate recruits for Signals and Artillery Drivers	Middle II if possible, but lower standard can be accepted
	Must be able to speak simple English
Carpenters
Blacksmiths
Bricklayers
Painters
Mechanics
Fitters

also apprentices for all trades.

Applicants will be interviewed at the Commissioner of the Colony's Office, every Monday at 8 a.m.

Please apply in person and not by letter. Bring your Certificate with you.

SPECIAL:

Experienced Stewards to be personal servants wanted

JOIN *The* ARMY

Image 4.1: Army recruitment advertisement

Killed During Action," "Bad Day for Hitler," "40,000 Axis Prisoners Have Been Taken in Egypt," "Crew of One British Tank Capture Italian Colonel and 600 Other Senior Officers," and "The Nazis Still On the Run." News of African soldiers' gallantry on the battlefield was regularly celebrated,²² and the reserves were regularly treated to diversions such as parades and dances that, in turn, served as a means of raising funds for the war.²³ Another editorial—under the heading "Hitler Gets the Jitters"—summarized the impact of an Allied victory by stating: "The Germans and their friends appear to have been caught completely unawares this time and it does not seem as if they have been given much time in which to reorganize to meet the latest surprise."²⁴ Photos of captured German soldiers, Allied generals, war ships, and fighter jets were scattered across the front pages of the newspapers. One photo of US and Japanese fighter jets had this caption: "U.S. Carrier Avoids Bombers: An American aircraft carrier veers sharply in the South Pacific during an attack by Japanese planes. The bombs missed and the planes were driven off."²⁵

It is important to note that the stories of battlefield success were meant to serve the joint purpose of encouraging the public to continue to contribute to British war efforts and helping to boost sales and profits for the newspapers' owners. When Sokoto province donated £8,783 (thereby increasing its total war contribution to £27,000),²⁶ the governor of Nigeria not only publicly acknowledged the donation but remarked that the money would be used for purchasing a bomber and painted a verbal picture of what the bomber would do: "[A]nd soon a Mosquito bomber bearing the name SOKOTO will be busy stinging the enemy with its tons of bombs." He also stated that the bomber "could bring the war home to the enemy."²⁷ A week later, another newspaper story confirmed the efficacy of the "Mosquito Bomber" in bringing the war to a logical conclusion: "It can outmanoeuvre most of Germany's best fighters. It has a range which brings practically the whole of Germany within its reach."²⁸ Sokoto province soon acquired national fame as the "protector of the empire," and other provinces and districts intensified war contributions in order to gain publicity and popularity among the colonial officers.²⁹ Children were included in the drive to secure maximum financial support for the British. The author of a *West African*

Pilot editorial, after praising Nigerian children for broadcasting letters of condolence to their British counterparts, remarked: "Broadcasting letters to boys and girls of Britain and admiring their courage will not do much. We want more than mere words of mouth."³⁰ The editorial expected schoolchildren to contribute their "pocket" money to Win-the-War Fund.

Yet while the newspapers generally supported the British war efforts, they also criticized certain aspects of military culture deemed unacceptable. As noted earlier, the colonial army was one of the strongholds of racism in Nigeria, and there were few official channels by which soldiers could complain of their treatment and better their conditions. Thus the newspaper became the mouthpiece of soldiers who feared retribution if they challenged authority. Three areas of discrimination in particular attracted the attention of nationalist newspapers: (1) the racist barrier to commissioning African soldiers as officers, (2) pay and remuneration, and (3) corporal punishment. Several Nigerian newspapers criticized the British for not appointing Africans as commissioned officers, claiming that they deliberately put in place stringent requirements that African soldiers could not meet. After listing the seven requirements for appointment for commissioned officers,³¹ the *Daily Service* editorial of June 19, 1943, remarked that ambitious soldiers "know that on paper all these things sound excellent, but they know also that in practice, few Africans will ever have a chance to rise to the post of commissioned officers."³² The editors of the newspaper believed that Africans deserve to be appointed to significant positions of military authority because of their enormous contributions to the two world wars. They accused the British of creating a double standard and questioned the promise that the end of the war would usher in a democratic regime: "We have been told so often that this is a war for democracy while so many things happen to create doubt about such profession that we think it is a good thing for those in authority not only to state on paper but show by their conduct and practice that they are animated by democratic principles in the general ordering of present day society."³³ Nigerians did not receive commissions until three years after World War II, when Lieutenant L.V Ugboma became the country's first military officer.³⁴

The newspapers also criticized the prejudicial British practice of paying

African soldiers less than their British counterparts as contradictory to the spirit of wartime solidarity. The *West African Pilot* was bold on this point: "Those who enlist expect good salary just as their white brothers earn. To the people death knows no colour and, as such, rates of pay should be adjusted in that spirit."³⁵ On corporal punishment, the *Daily Service* noted that public flogging of men was not a feature of civil life in Nigeria and should not be an appropriate manner of punishing soldiers who risked their lives for the freedom the humanity. Moreover, the newspaper editors believed that, if necessary, corporal punishment should also be extended to the white soldiers: "Both White and Black in the army are arranged in battle against a common enemy [Hitler]. Both cherish a common hope and a common desire. Both risk their lives for a better and brighter world, why for goodness sake should one be discriminated against?"³⁶

In sum, while not formally calling for decolonization during the war, the free Nigerian press cautiously began to publish complaints about the treatment of African soldiers (complaints that would become more generally aired as the war ended), contributing to the eventual nationalist sentiment that would force the British to leave the country and lead to an independent Nigeria.

Market Women

Market women occupied an indispensable position in the political economy of colonial rule as producers, distributors, and marketers of essential commodities—especially food products. Women's monopoly of the domestic market economy is rooted in centuries of traditions, which empowered them as significant agents of authority and spirituality.³⁷ In the precolonial agrarian economy of much of Nigeria, while men cleared the farm and planted at the beginning of each rainy season, the roles of women and girls included harvesting the crops. They retained some for household use and sold the surplus in markets that met both daily and periodically. Through this role, women became the principal long- and short-distance traders in the country. Market women also played a key role in the transmission of culture and language across the region, thereby fostering intergroup relations.

The advent of colonialism—which functioned as a male-centered institution—robbed women of the significant political and economic power they had wielded in precolonial times. On the other hand, it boosted domestic markets with imported goods from Europe and the Americas, thus adding new items of trade sold by women. Nevertheless, market women were among the key opponents of colonialism and played a role in nationalist organizations. In fact, scholars have shown that the Nigerian National Democratic Party, the first mass-based political party in Nigeria, owed its success to market women.³⁸

The cardinal position occupied by market women in the domestic economy meant that they would be adversely affected during periods of crisis such as the world wars.³⁹ During WWII, food shortages emerged as a direct consequence of the mass recruitment of male farmers into the army, rural-urban migration, and the German naval blockade and submarine warfare. Such shortages were also, however, caused in part by colonial policies. The decision of the government to export cassava starch, arguably the most important staple food crop, created a vicious circle of poverty and hunger, even in the food-producing communities of Nigeria.⁴⁰ Food shortages and inflation led to a price control system, a government interventionist policy of fixing prices of both imported and locally produced foodstuffs.⁴¹ The Pullen Price Control System (named after Captain Pullen, the Controller of Price) fixed prices below the market value, defying the law of supply that had traditionally determined the prices of commodities. Large trading firms such as John Holt and United Africa Company, which operated on behalf of the government and could trade in large volumes, replaced women as major distributors and markets of consumer goods. The government resold these products to the public in sales centers (also known as Pullen Markets) around the country.⁴² The scheme failed, impoverishing Nigerians and creating a “black” or “underground” market for essential consumer goods.⁴³ Women composed protest songs to register their grievances against the new order. This excerpt provides an example: “I bought okro; I bought onion; I bought one penny worth of salt; but was inadequate for my soup; I would send a curse to the white men in Akure.”⁴⁴

The Pullen marketing system not only put the economic survival of

women on the line, it also criminalized their commercial activities. Women caught buying or selling goods above fixed prices or quantities were prosecuted for an offense called "profiteering" (see Table 1.1). Sentences and the names of convicts were regularly published in the newspapers to serve as deterrent to other traders.⁴⁵ The newspapers responded to these government prosecutions by publicizing the prosecution of women and protesting the "un-African-ness" of sending women to jail.⁴⁶ They also criticized the police for punishing the traders and shielding large trading companies like John Holt for committing "profiteering" offenses themselves.⁴⁷ As a December 1, 1942, editorial in the *Daily Service* put it: "To sentence a women to one, two, or three months imprisonment for selling a tin of milk a penny over the price when the very firm from which she bought might be allowed . . . to raise its price the following day above the price at which the women sold seems to us rather hard lines, whether or not the law is no respecter of persons."⁴⁸

The women themselves were not lax in registering their grievances against the new order. They held protest meetings with administrations to demonstrate their displeasure of wartime policies. In fact, the activities of market women's associations such as the Nigerian Traders Association and Lagos Market Women's Association gained frontline newspaper coverage.⁴⁹ Another protest song of the period accused the British of invading a space traditionally preserved for women:

Strange things are happening in Lagos;
 Europeans now sell pepper;
 Europeans now sell palm-oil;
 Europeans now sell yam;
 Though they cannot find their way to Idogo [a food-crop-producing
 community];
 And yet Falolu [the King of Lagos] is still in his palace and alive;
 Europeans were not wont to sell melon seeds.⁵⁰

Alimotu Pelewura was the leader of Lagos market women for more than a half-century, until her death in 1952.⁵¹ In a January 1945 meeting with

TABLE 4.1: Sample of "Profiteering" Offenses and Sentences

Name	Offense	Sentence
Rabiatu Adekunle	selling beef above controlled price	fined twenty shillings
Moriamo Adunni	selling one bottle of groundnut oil for seven pennies instead of controlled price of six and a half pennies	fined ten shillings
Rabiatu Balogun	selling five bottles of groundnut oil for two shillings, eleven pennies instead of controlled price of two shillings, eight and a half pennies	fined thirty shillings
Abusatu Ashabi	selling native-produced rice above controlled price	fined seven shillings, six pennies
Murano Okubolade	selling beef above controlled price	fined three pounds or one month in prison
Lalatu Lawani	selling one packet of pirate cigarettes for eight and half pennies instead of controlled price of seven and a half pennies	fined six pounds or one month in prison
Moriyamo Moses	selling one packet of pirate cigarettes for eight pennies instead of controlled price of seven and a half pennies	fined five pounds, ten shillings or twenty-one days in prison
Adesola Ayo	selling one packet of pirate cigarettes for eight pennies instead of controlled price of seven and a half pennies	fined five pounds, ten shillings or twenty-one days in prison
Yaheya Adegun	selling 32 pounds of marrows for sixteen shillings instead of controlled price of ten shillings, eight pennies and 680 pounds of potatoes for eleven pounds	fined ten pounds
Nusiratu Alake	selling one Oloruka pan of farina coarse [a food product made from cassava] for four pennies instead of controlled price of three and a half pennies	fined seventeen shillings, six pennies

Source: Collated from *Daily Service*, January 2, 1943.

Captain Pullen and the Oba (King) Falolu of Lagos, Pelewura threatened to direct women to close down all trading activities if the government did not honor their demands, which included a halt to imprisonment of women. The following day, the government offered to pay her a monthly allowance of £7.10 and to recognize her as the official leader of market women if she stopped mobilizing women against wartime emergency policies. She declined this offer and not only continued to mobilize women in the rural areas of Ijebu Ode and Sagamu but also worked with them to ensure that foodstuffs were not taken to Lagos unless the women's demands were met.⁵² When the government frustrated her efforts to sell gari (a cassava product) to women by shipping it directly from the province, she held a press conference in which she issued a demand to the authorities to "[l]et them allow her men to buy gari directly from Okitipupa and she would arrange distribution in Lagos. . . . The food control authorities could have all the Ijebu producing districts for their own scheme but for God's sake they should allow gari from Okitipupa to come to Lagos."⁵³

In addition to the failed price control system, another issue that brought women into direct confrontation with the government was the Income Tax Ordinance, which called for an income tax on women who made £50 or more annually.⁵⁴ Prior to the outbreak of WWII, market women had successfully resisted paying income taxes on cultural and economic grounds.⁵⁵ Culturally, the women in most African societies did not pay direct income taxes; hence both the market women and the male nationalists viewed the Income Tax Ordinance as a Western implantation. An attempt to tax the women of Ogoja and Owerri provinces had led to the Women's War in 1929, a major event in Africa's history of colonialism, nationalism, and gender. Economically, WWII was an especially inappropriate period in which to tax women. Thus on December 16, 1940, a group of market women led by Madam Rabiatu Alaso Oke marched to the office of the Commissioner of the Colony of Lagos to register their grievances and proceeded to issue a formal petition that was thumb-printed by more than two hundred women.⁵⁶ On December 17 and 18, several protest meetings attended by about seven thousand people forced the government to officially raise the minimum income on which taxes had to be paid—namely, from £50 to £200.

This represented a victory for the women, since very few earned such an income in 1945. The excerpt below is reprinted from the petition submitted to the government following a well-attended meeting of Lagos market women on September 13, 1943:

At a women's meeting held on Monday the 13th [i]n the schoolroom of St. Paul's Church Breadfruit Street, under the auspices of the Lagos Women's League;[,] it was unanimously decided that the following statement should be placed before His Excellency the Acting Governor, so that the women's side of this matter of profiteering in food stuffs should be heard.

1) That this meeting view with great apprehension the effects of the legal action against profiteering in foodstuffs and craves His Excellency the Governors kind intervention in the matter.

2) That this meeting holds that generally speaking there is no profiteering in foodstuff, for the dealer get their supplies from various places at various prices to which must be added transport charges and they sell with a small margin of profit to themselves.

3) That there had always been fluctuation of foodstuffs according to the season of the year, so prices cannot remain the same for any length of time.

4) That in many areas where farm lands have been acquired for the purposes of the Military, thousands and thousands of Palm trees have been destroyed, acres and acres of cassava and other crops fields have [been] ruined and consequently there must be scarcity of these commodities.

5) That thousands of farm laborers have had to leave their work to take up arms for the protections of the Empire, this has caused shortages of labour in connection with farm produces.

6) That these reasons and other have been the cause of the increase in the prices of foodstuffs and yet the Controller of Prices fixes prices as on pre-war days.

7) That these meeting strongly protest against the system adopted by the Controller of Prices and consider it as a very unfair one. He fixes prices of local commodities at pre-war rates and all imported goods he allows to be sold at prices in some cases four and five times more than before the war. The effect of such action is impoverishing the people. Let them [market women]

be allowed to buy and sell their commodities freely without restriction as was done during the Great War and the distress and confusion prevalent now will quickly disappear.⁵⁷

A NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVE ON WORLD WAR II

Any discussion of the two world wars without a critical acknowledgment of Nigerian participation and contributions would be grossly inadequate. Besides fighting on the side of their colonial masters, Nigerians donated money and labor toward prosecuting the wars, which originated outside the continent. And, more generally, Africa hosted some of the theaters of wars and bore the hardship accentuated by wartime policies. The stories about African experiences of the wars can best be told from the perspectives of the women and men who actually participated in them and were affected by wartime policies. What follows is one such story.⁵⁸

THE BATTLE OF NYRON

In the course of our journey down [the] Kaladan River in Burma in pursuit of the fleeing Japanese troops towards Rangoon some time in March 1944, we anchored at Nyron village one evening to pass the night after paddling our bamboo rafts for several hours. When we woke up the following morning and started running around to get ourselves prepared for the onward movement it never crossed our minds that the journey would come to an abrupt and disastrous end that very morning. As we washed our faces and brushed our teeth we did not realise that we were the target of an armed attack and that the Japanese troops had already cocked their guns waiting for the Commander's "open fire" order. We could not have known that we were seeing ourselves as a group for the last time and that in the next few minutes some of us would be lying dead or wounded while the lucky ones would flee in disorder. It did not occur to us and we could not have imagined that the dissolution of the partnership would be over in a few moments. I was not lucky enough to escape unhurt; it was the day I walked right for the last time as I have since been maimed for the rest of my life. The batch was being led by the unit's commanding officer Major Murphy of the Royal Army Medical

Corps and next to him was Captain Brown also of the Royal Army Medical Corps. There was a host of both British and African non-commissioned officers in the group.

At about 7.30 a.m. gunshots rang [out] from the opposite bank unexpectedly and I and other members of my Unit, 29th Casualty Clearing Station, ran for cover. The Japanese troops were on the offensive. A confused situation arose because we were badly positioned. The slanting nature of the river bank rendered ineffective our efforts to dodge the enemy bullets. In other words we could not do much to evade the gunshots in view of the fact that we were on the slope of a river. The heavy fire continued intermittently for more than one hour. A colleague of mine, Essien, and I took cover in the same place. Each time the Japanese stopped firing, I made a number of abortive attempts to get away from the area. I did not know in time that I had been wounded and I just kept on trying to move away. I was wondering as to what might have been responsible for my inability to lift myself off the ground and make a dash for shelter. As a young and healthy man I felt I possessed such a remarkable agility that I could run to safety in the event of an attack. Alas I was wrong in the estimation of my prowess. In addition to my not being able to crawl away I started to feel tired due perhaps to loss of blood. My right leg developed aches and pains. So was the left hand side of my abdomen immediately below my ribs. I made an attempt to peep at my right leg and the left hand side of my body and I saw a lot of blood. I then knew for sure that I had been hit by bullets on both parts of the body. I had a fractured femur very close to the knee and one bullet also pierced my stomach just below the ribs. Luckily, for me that bullet did not go deep enough to injure my intestine or any of the food canal organs. Of course, my battle dress had already been soaked with blood. It was also then that it occurred to me that I was in serious trouble and on the threshold of an agony that lasted for over nine months.

When I was trying to examine my body the movement might have attracted the attention of the Japanese soldiers who were still at alert position across the river and as a result several shots rang out again [striking] nearly all the grass around me. They all missed me miraculously. I really heard the sounds of bullets flying or whistling past my head almost uprooting the shrubs around the spot I laid my head. The situation was indescribable. The

bullets would seem to be bouncing off my body particularly my head. I would have thought that I had developed supernatural powers were it not that two bullets had already been lodged in my body. It had only pleased God that the bullets should miss their target. In the meantime I noticed that Essien, who was lying quite close to me, was in pains but I did not see any blood stain in his battle dress. I heard him saying, "Take me O God! Take me O God!" all the time. After a short while, I observed that he was struggling for breath, gasping as doctors would say. He could no longer repeat "Take me O God." A few minutes later he stopped gasping and I then presumed that he was no more. I incurred the risk of being fired at once again by stretching my left hand in an attempt to reach his body but I was not successful. Feeling that the firing had ceased for good, I made another effort by crawling a little, just a little, towards his direction and touched his body. It was already cold and lifeless. I shivered.

At sunset Captain Brown, a Scot, emerged from nowhere and came straight to me and said: "Ebo my boy you are down o!" He had always been calling me "Ebo" because he felt my name "Fadoyebo" was too long for him to memorise. He therefore restricted himself to the last syllable or three letters. I complained of thirst, pains and tiredness. He went away and after a minute or two he reappeared with a flask containing tea and served me. What a brave soldier. It was apparent that all those who were lucky to escape death or being seriously wounded had run away except Captain Brown. I regarded the tea he gave me as the "Last Supper" because I thought I was going to die in the next few moments. I was already down with severe gunshot wounds, no medical attention and no hope of getting out of the predicament in which I found myself. Death was the next thing. After all a colleague of mine, Essien was lying dead by my side. It was Captain Brown who informed me that the commanding officer Major Murphy was badly wounded in the head and that he tried to apply some dressings. He asked me to sit up but I could not. He told me he would like to arrange for an improvised splint to support my fractured femur.

At that juncture the invading Japanese soldiers charged in with bayonets fixed to the nozzle of their rifles and took Captain Brown away from me. I heard him telling them: "I am Captain Brown, Medical Officer." I did not

and still do not know what happened to him thereafter. I came to admire and respect the courage and gallantry he displayed. He was free to desert us like others but instead he kept going round to minister to the wants of those who were in dire need of assistance. He was not wounded, not even a [scratch] on his body and yet as a soldier and true to his profession, he stayed to succour comrades struck down by enemy bullets. Shortly afterwards, another set of Japanese troops came and asked me to get up. Of course they spoke in their language which I did not understand and later used their hands to convey to me what they were saying in Japanese language. I replied in English that it was not possible for me to get up. I could not even sit up. One of them, I still remember, pointed his rifle at me apparently thinking that the threat would make me attempt the impossible. In my view there was no need for him to harass me because I could not have waited for them to see me if I were fit enough to be on my legs. They spent roughly one hour ransacking the bamboo rafts with which we arrived at the scene and examining the pockets of those who were lying dead, perhaps for possible documents that might lead to information about the strength and strategy of the Allied forces. Before the arrival of the Japanese troops, some people in uniform, probably local militia men, came to the scene, looked around and went away without saying a word to me.

As I watched the Japanese soldiers searching our luggage I saw the huge frame of CSM [Company Sergeant Major] Duke lying still on the river bank with the tea mug clung to his hand. It was painful. When I saw the enemy troops coming to me a second time I thought they wanted to carry me away, mend my wounds and make me a prisoner of war. I was in terrible pains and anything that was likely to remove the agony or even lessen it would suit me, be it a prisoner of war camp or any other place. Nothing of that sort was forthcoming and for several days afterwards I had to bear the pain. Seeing the Japanese soldiers sailing away in their motor boats I felt that they were a set of callous people. On the other hand, it might be they had not the facilities for attending to ailments or that they went away to enable them [to] discuss my condition with their superior officers that would decide on what to do with me. I did not know in time that others like Sergeant David Kagbo, Sergeant Lamina and Moigboi Jagha were in a position similar to mine. Sergeant

Lamina and Moigboi Jagha later died of wounds while David Kagbo and I survived the ordeal through the inscrutable design of providence—a stroke of unbelievable luck. As soon as the Japanese went out of sight, the local inhabitants swarmed to the scene and looted our luggage. I saw them carrying away a number of things, some of them were even quarrelling with themselves perhaps as to who took what. The war had impoverished them a lot and I would not blame them for picking a few things that belonged to the dead or people who were severely incapacitated. Apart from clothing material and military equipment I could not think of any valuable property that could be looted as we had been warned not to carry along with us jewelry or other things of value.

Needless to say that I had little or no sleep throughout the night. The pains and thoughts of the uncertainty of what the morrow had in stock for me would not allow me to sleep. True to their promise my two friends brought food and water the following day at about 11 a.m. I ate a handful of rice and drank almost all the water. The rice was wrapped in leaves and the water was brought in a bamboo container—[a] hollow part of bamboo cane. As soon as my guests left I noticed that thick smoke was coming from the other side of the bush. I later discovered that it was [a] wild fire and thought the end had come because I could not move on my own away from the place if it happened to be engulfed by fire. The midday gentle breeze fanned the flame towards my direction and I was frightened. Although the area was made up of mostly little shrubs the kind people chose to drop me on a spot [having] some tall grass to prevent me from being easily detected. I started saying to myself that I would have preferred death through enemy bullets to being roasted alive. I closed my eyes and prayed to God requesting for His mercies and shortly after there was a mild cloud followed by an equally mild drizzle that reduced the intensity of the inferno and finally extinguished it. Incredible, unbelievable and yet it formed by those who took part in the final battle that the Japanese were fond of shouting “Africa Cha!” as they fled in disorderly retreat. I would not know the English translation of the Japanese word *cha*. Sweet revenge!

The British captain hired two “coolies” who arranged for an improvised stretcher with which I was carried. David Kagbo was, in my estimation, well

enough to do the journey although he was still limping. At that point, one Tommy Sherman, another Sierra Leonean member of our unit, joined us from nowhere. I was seeing him for the first time since the day of the attack. He had no wound; he looked fresh and agile. The British captain who had only a Stengun and few rounds of ammunition informed us that he wanted to see whether he could smuggle us across the enemy occupied territory into safety. He was a combatant in full battle order and complete camouflage. In addition to his green battledress, he had his face and hands painted green. What we black soldiers needed was just the green dress as nature had already coloured our body. The white boys had the exposed parts of their body painted green to avoid being easily seen from a distance.

As we kept moving along the edge of a rice field my pains increased and I started screaming not too loudly any way. Jerky movement along an undulating rice field with a fractured femur that was not in any way supported could be extremely painful. After a few metres walk some friendly Indians came to inform us that a large number of Japanese troops were stationed along the direction we were heading for and as a result we decided to take another route. The British captain whose name I did not know was discouraged by that information and subsequently felt that it would not be safe for the group to take me along in that condition. In other words I was being branded a security risk because of my poor physical condition. Looking calm and completely undisturbed, he checked his map and the magazine of his Stengun and came to the conclusion that even the ammunition he had would not be sufficient to defend all of us in the event of an attack. He was the only person armed. Others in the batch including my ailing self had not even a pen knife. He therefore, instructed that I should be taken back to the spot at which I was picked up and that David Kagbo should stay with me. Although David Kagbo's wound was not as bad as mine, the officer was in some doubt as to his ability to cross the enemy line safely along with others because there could be moments when one had to run fast or pass through difficult terrain. Probably the British captain also thought that I might die if I were left alone in that condition. Subsequent events proved that he took a sound decision. I certainly could not have survived if I were left alone. At that moment he had a number of problems to contend with: they included our ailing conditions and shortage of am-

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munition. One of the able-bodied soldiers in the group was not in complete camouflage, he wore a green jacket over a blue pair of shorts and held a white enamel bowl. There was nothing that could be done regarding the pair of pants as that was his only possession as far as clothing was concerned. The officer, however, ordered him to throw away the white dish and he did. A white material could easily be sighted from a fairly long distance.

David Kagbo and I were later informed that Tommy Sherman did not arrive and that nobody knew what happened to him. The probability was that he walked into a Japanese camp or ambush. Perhaps he is still living, who knows for sure? He certainly took a very expensive and wrong decision. David Kagbo and I were not surprised that he deviated from the views of an expert. He was a colleague we knew [only] too well; pleasant, efficient and agile but argumentative to the extreme. It was a pity that we only met briefly in company of the British captain and as such we had no time to exchange experiences. I would have loved to know how he managed to dodge the Japanese bullets. He was looking very well without a scratch on him. The only information he managed to pass on to us was that he tried to get the corpse of one of us, Moigboi Jagha[,] covered with dust a day before we came together under the "leadership" of the British captain. As David Kagbo and I were being led to our hideout I was looking at Tommy Sherman as he went the other direction holding a small parcel the contents of which I would not know. There was no doubt that he had lost all he had either to the ravages of the Japanese soldiers or the Indian looters. I never knew I was seeing him for the last time. Right from the outset the British captain appeared to be a brave and competent military officer. He certainly knew his job. In those days, all the infantry officers were invariably good geographers and they had to be in the interest of their profession.

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss how Nigerians were recruited for World Wars I and II. How did they react to British recruitment policies?
2. How did the newspaper press support the British during the two world wars?

3. Examine the newspapers' condemnation of racism and prejudices in the colonial army. What kinds of experiences did they complain about?
4. Describe the experiences of market women during WWII. How did they mobilize against the draconian policies of the colonialists?
5. What does Isaac Fadoybo's wartime memoir reveal about African soldier's battlefield experience?

FURTHER READINGS

- Chuku, Gloria, "Crack Kernels, Crack Hitler": Export Production Drive and Igbo Women During the Second World War," in Judith Byfield, LaRay Denzer, and Morrison Anthea, eds., *Gendering the African Diaspora: Women, Culture, and Historical Change in the Caribbean and Nigerian Hinterland* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).
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NOTES

1. See, for example, David Killingray, "If I Fight for Them, Maybe Then I Can Go Back to the Village": African Soldiers in the Mediterranean and European Campaigns, 1939–45," in Paul Addison and Angus Calder, eds., *Time to Kill: The Soldier's Experience of War in the West* (London: Picador, 1996); Peter B. Clarke, *West Africans at War, 1914–1918; 1938–1945: Colonial Propaganda and Its Cultural Aftermath* (London: Ethnographica, 1986); James K. Matthews, "World War I and the Rise of African Nationalism: Nigerian Veterans as Catalysts of Change," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 20, no. 3 (1982): 493–502; and Meshack Owino, "For Your Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today": A History of Kenya African Soldiers in the Second World War" (PhD dissertation, Rice University, 2004).

2. Michael Crowder, "The First World War and Its Consequences," in J.F.A. Ajayi,

ed., *General History of Africa, Vol. 7: Africa Under Colonial Domination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 282.

3. Sam Ukpabi, *The Origins of the Nigerian Army: A History of the West African Frontier Force, 1897–1914* (Zaria: Gaskiya Corp., 1987).

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 30–32.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

6. James K. Matthews, "Reluctant Allies: Nigerian Responses to Military Recruitment 1914–1918," in Melvin Page, ed., *Africa and the First World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), p. 97.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

9. G. O. Olusanya, "The Role of Ex-Servicemen in Nigerian Politics," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 6, no. 2 (1968): 225.

10. Mokwugo Okoye, *Storms on the Niger: A Story of Nigeria's Struggle* (Nigeria: Fourth Dimension, 1981).

11. See J. S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958).

12. J.F.A. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841–1891: The Making of a New Elite* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1965).

13. Akinjide Osuntokun, *Nigeria in the First World War* (London: Longman, 1979), p. 71.

14. "Nigeria's Contribution to the War Fund," *The Nigerian Pioneer*, December 11, 1914.

15. For details on the history of education in Nigeria, see Adewumi Fajana, *Education in Nigeria, 1842–1939: A Historical Analysis* (London: Longman, 1978), and Babatunde Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974).

16. Tekena Tamuno, *Nigeria and Elective Representation, 1923–1947* (London: Longman, 1966).

17. G. O. Olusanya, *The Second World War and Politics in Nigeria, 1939–1953* (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 1973), p. 43.

18. Michael Crowder, "The 1939–45 War and the West," in J.F.A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder, eds., *History of West Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), p. 609.

19. Olusanya, *The Second World War*, p. 51.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

21. "Young Men, Army Pays You to Learn a Trade," *Daily Service*, December 16, 1942.

22. "Wounded Nigerian Soldier Afna Abadi Gives Account of March Through Arakan Jungle," *West African Pilot*, June 21, 1944.

23. See the following articles in the *Daily Service*: "African Soldier Wins Military Medal & Is Decorated at Special Parade," January 25, 1943; "To-night Victory Dance," April 16, 1943; "School Children Hold Dance Parade to Raise Money for Win-the-War Fund," November 10, 1942; "Entertainment for Our Boys in Khaki," November 10, 1942; and "Eight Army's Brilliant Victory," November 6, 1942.

24. "Hitler Gets the Jitters," *Daily Service*, November 12, 1942.

25. "U.S. Carrier Avoids Bombers," *Daily Service*, May 3, 1943.

26. "Sokoto and the War Efforts," *Daily Service*, March 1, 1943.

27. "Sokoto's £8,783 Will Help Buy Mosquito Bomber," *Daily Service*, April 30 1943.

28. "The Mosquito Bomber," *Daily Service*, May 8, 1943.

29. Samples of newspaper publicity of contribution include "The Oba of Benin's Fund Now £1,000," *Daily Service*, January 29, 1943; "Alake Tours Food Producing Centres and Urges for More Production," *Daily Service*, November 25, 1942; "Ijebu People Make Big Drive to Aid War Efforts," *Daily Service*, December 12, 1942; and "War Effort in the Provinces," *Daily Service*, November 16, 1942.

30. "British Children's Appeal," *West African Pilot*, April 28, 1941.

31. The conditions for commissioning Africans included the following: "(1) he [the soldier] must be a serving soldier (i.e., serving in the ranks), (2) that he must have a good educational standard, (3) that he must be recommended by his Commanding Officer, (4) that he must not be over 25 years of age, (5) that he must be recommended by three reputable persons who knew him before he joined the army, (6) that he be approved by a Board of three senior officers and (7) that he passes through an Officers Cadet Training Unit." See "Africans and Commissions in the Army," *Daily Service*, June 19, 1943.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*

34. Three others were commissioned during the following year: Lieutenant J. T. Aguiyi-Ironsi (who would later become Nigeria's first military Head of State and one of the victims of the July 1966 coup), Lieutenant Wellington Basse, and Lieutenant Johnson Ademulegun. The number of commissioned Nigerian officers had increased to twelve by 1954. See C. N. Ubah, *Colonial Army and Society in Northern Nigeria* (Kaduna: Baraka Press, 1998), pp. 234–235.

35. "Recruiting for Nigeria Regiment," *West African Pilot*, August 1, 1941.

36. "Discrimination in the Army," *Daily Service*, January 13, 1945.

37. A good source of information on this topic is Bessie House-Midamba and Felix K. Ekechi, eds., *African Market Women and Economic Power: The Role of Women in African Economic Development* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005).

38. Nina Emma Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized: Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press and Institute

of International Studies, 1982), pp. 199–202.

39. For more on women's economic activities during WWII, see Gloria Chuku, "Crack Kernels, Crack Hitler': Export Production Drive and Igbo Women During the Second World War," in Judith Byfield, LaRay Denzer, and Morrison Anthea, eds., *Gendering the African Diaspora: Women, Culture, and Historical Change in the Caribbean and Nigerian Hinterland* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

40. See Toyin Falola, "Cassava Starch for Export in Nigeria During the Second World War," *African Economic History* 18 (1989): 73–89; Toyin Falola, "Salt Is Gold': The Management of Salt Scarcity in Nigeria During World War II," *Canadian Journal of African History* 26, no. 3 (1992): 412–436.

41. Wale Oyemakinde, "The Pullen Marketing Scheme: A Trial in Food Price Control in Nigeria, 1941–1947," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 6, no. 4 (June 1973): 413–423.

42. Ayodeji Olukoju, "Buy British, Sell Foreign': External Trade Control Policies in Nigeria During World War II and Its Aftermath, 1939–1950," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, nos. 2/3 (2002): 363–384.

43. See the following articles in the *Daily Service*: "Black Market" in Local Foodstuffs," January 6, 1943; "Capt. Pullen Admits the Controlled Price of Fowls Leaves No Margin for Profit," August 25, 1944; "The Law Is An Ass," August 29, 1944; "Plebiscite on Pullen Market," August 15, 1945; "Pull Out the Pullen Markets," August 13, 1945; and "The Pullen Market," July 9, 1945.

44. Akure is the administrative headquarters of Ondo Province of Western Nigeria. See Olusanya, *The Second World War*, p. 63.

45. See the following stories in the *Daily Service*: "Three Women Who Profiteered Are Fined 10/, 20/, and 30/ [10, 20, and 30 Shillings] Respectively," December 21, 1942; "Lady Caught at Pullen Rice Stall," January 22, 1944; "Woman Who Profiteered in Gari Is Sentenced to 2 Months," November 21, 1942; "Woman Who Profiteered in Pirate Cigarettes Is Fined £5.10," December 29, 1942.

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47. "Letter to the Police," *Daily Service*, December 24, 1942.

48. "Penalties Inflicted for Profiteering," *Daily Service*, December 1, 1942.

49. See "1,000 Market Women and Petty Traders Attend Maiden Meeting of Nigerian Traders Association," *Daily Service*, January 15, 1943, and "Benin Market Women Present Petition to Authorities Against Embargo on Lorries Carrying Foodstuffs," *Daily Service*, November 18, 1942.

50. Olusanya, *The Second World War*, p. 64.

51. Cheryl Johnson, "Female Leadership During the Colonial Period: Madam Alimotu Pelewura and the Lagos Market Women," *Tarikh* 7, no. 1 (1980): 1–10.

52. Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized*, p. 228.

53. Ibid., p. 229.

54. "Lagos Women Make Protest Against Payment of Income Tax," *Nigerian Daily Times*, December 18, 1940.

55. National Archives Ibadan, Comcol 1, "Taxation of Women in Lagos," December 18, 1940.

56. Cheryl Johnson, "Grassroots Organizing: Women in Anti-Colonial Activity in Southwestern Nigeria," *African Studies Review* 25 (June–September 1982): 140–141.

57. National Archives Ibadan, Comcol 248/121, "Proceedings of a Meeting of Women Held in the Schoolroom of St. Paul's Church on Breadfruit Street on Monday September 13, 1943."

58. The following excerpt is taken from Isaac Fadoyebo's *A Stroke of Unbelievable Luck: A Moving Account of the Experience of a Teen-age Soldier in the Battlefield During the Burma Campaign, 1944* (Madison: African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin, 1999), pp. 6–13.