AFRICA AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Remembrance, Memories and Representations after 100 Years

Edited by

De-Valera NYM Botchway

Kwame Osei Kwarteng

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INTRODUCTION

DE-VALERA N.Y.M. BOTCHWAY

The 1914-1918 War, the Great War, World War One, or the First World War as it is variously known stays in contemporary memory and engages popular imagination as an incredible historical experience of human belligerence. Although the crisis that orchestrated and caused the war to break out in July 1914 was the product of the bellicose desires, nationalist activities, imperial struggles and political devices of European countries, the war became one of the most disturbing international conflagrations known in world history. Thus, there is incontrovertible proof that the war had seismic political, economic, social and demographic impacts on Africa. In fact, as Bill Nasson has aptly observed, "it was here (Africa) rather than in Europe that the war was actually fought for its longest period".[1] It can be argued that the war ended in Africa because it was there, exactly in Abercorn (now Mbala) in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), that General Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck, the last of the German commanders of the war to capitulate, yielded on 25th November, 1918. This was two weeks after the signing of the Armistice in Europe.[2]

The tentacles of the antagonism and violence of Britain, France, Belgium and Germany entangled and ensnared their colonies in Africa; moreover, not even Liberia and Ethiopia, which were not colonies, and the relatively smaller African colonies of Italy, Portugal and Spain remained outside the miasma and indirect embracement and effect of the war. Ultimately sucking in the human resources of every continent like a vortex, it was fought on a far wider dimension than Europe. European colonial powers exploited the manual labour and natural resources of their colonial possessions abroad in Africa and Asia to prosecute the war agenda in both Europe and overseas. Because the African continent was largely a colonised one, where Germany had colonial possessions, with

[1] Bill Nasson, "More Than Just von Lettow-Vorbeck: Sub-Saharan Africa in the First World War", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 40. Jahrg., H. 2, Der Erste Weltkrieg in globaler Perspektive, 2014, 160. (160-183).

[2] Duane Koenig, "A Note on World War I: General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck in German East Africa", *Military Affairs*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 1970, 14.

Britain and France controlling the largest colonial territories, all the European colonial powers that were directly in the violent feud drew on the African territories extensively during the war for both human and material resources. Thus, in the long run, the war cannot be regarded as a European event to which others only contributed. It was as much an African and Asian war as it was a European war. Thus, as far as Africa is concerned, we agree with Richard Rathbone's apt observation that clearly the period of the First World War should not be deemed "a Eurocentric time capsule" which is being artificially introduced into the African context.[3]

Africans also fought in the theatres of the war outside Africa. They were sent there by European colonial authorities. Significantly, the forceful uprooting and shipping of Africans across the Atlantic to fight in Europe, as Nasson has pointed out, made the war a shocking watershed moment for many of those who were shipped off and their relatives in Africa. It opened old wounds of disturbing memories about the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.[4] "For some, the experience of being shipped off to the unknown awakened deep inherited memories of the feared Middle Passage of voyages into slavery."[5] Moreover, in taking men to work, toil and die for European imperial powers in Europe "the war caused the largest movement of Africans from their home continent since the Tran-Atlantic Slave Trade".[6]

France is known to have relied heavily on the various services of the thousands of indigenous African soldiers that it deployed to the battlefields in Europe. The soldiers from Africa included West Africans, popularly known as *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* (Senegalese riflemen), Algerians, also known as *Turcos* and *Spahis*, Tunisians, Moroccans, Malagasies, and Somalis.[7] On the other hand, Britain used a number of African soldiers in

[3] R. Rathbone, "World War I and Africa: Introduction", *Journal of African History*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1978, 9. (1-9).

[4] Nasson, "More Than Just von Lettow-Vorbeck: Sub-Saharan Africa in the First World War", 165.

[5] Ibid. 165-166.

[6] Ibid., citing Timothy Stapleton, "The Impact of the First World War on African People", in John Laband (ed.), *Daily Lives of Civilians in Wartime Africa. From Slavery Days to Rwandan Genocide* (Pietermaritzburg, 2007), 124-148.

[7] Christian Koller, "Colonial Military Participation in Europe (Africa)", in Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, (eds.), *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2014-10-08, n.p. DOI: 10.15463/ie1418.10193, assessed on 18/12/2017.

the Middle Eastern campaigns; however, it was not eager like France to send African troops to fight in Europe. Nevertheless, a movement for the creation of a "million black army" to fight for Britain on European battlefields started in Britain. Josiah Wedgwood, a man with imperial background, stated in 1916 that such an army was necessary "because we do not want all the whites killed - to put it bluntly. To slow down the rate of killing of our own men and to eke out the finest race on earth".[8] The "Million Black Army Movement" was supported by some British officers and politicians,[9] but the "Colonial Office resisted the idea of using Black troops outside Africa, particularly in Europe or against European troops".[10] Ultimately, the movement was not successful because of logistical issues, racist prejudices and opposition from colonial authorities in Africa. However, as Christian Koller indicates, many Black men and "coloured" men from the Union of South Africa provided non-combatant supplementary services in Europe in the "South African Native Labour Contingent", the "Cape Auxiliary Horse Transport" and the "Cape Coloured Labour Corps".[11] Some Blacks who resided in the United Kingdom were able to join the metropolitan British forces.[12] Conversely, Italy's attempt to use African troops from Libya to fight in Europe was a fiasco in 1915. The colonial troops did not get to the frontline because many died from pneumonia when they reached Europe. Those who survived the disease were sent back to Libya.[13] In contrast, a number of Congolese soldiers served the metropolitan Belgian army and fought on the Western Front. The Portuguese, however, did not send colonial units to fight in Europe, and the number of soldiers of African descent who fought in Portugal's *Corpo Expedicionário Português* (Portuguese Expeditionary

[8] "African manpower", *The Daily Chronicle*, 7 Nov, 1916, 4, cited in David Killingray, "The Idea of a British Imperial African Army", *Journal of African History*, Vol. 20. No. 3, 1979, 425 (421-436).
[9] Koller, "Colonial Military Participation in Europe (Africa)", n.p.
[10] Killingray, "The Idea of a British Imperial African Army", 425.
[11] Koller, "Colonial Military Participation in Europe (Africa)", n.p, For further information Koller points to Bill Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme: South Africa in the Great War 1914–1918* (Johannesburg; New York: Penguin, 2007); N.G. Garson, "South Africa and World War I", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 8, 1979, 68-85; Albert Grundlingh, *Fighting Their Own War. South African Blacks and the First World War* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press 1987); B. P. Willan, "The South African Native Labour Contingent 1916–1918", *Journal of African History*, 19, 1978, 61-86.
[12] Koller, "Colonial Military Participation in Europe (Africa)", n.p.
[13] Ibid.

Corps*)* on the Western Front is not known.[14] Germany also did not dispatch African troops to fight in Europe because of logistical reasons; however, it employed plenty of African soldiers in the German colonial armed forces known as *Schutztruppe* to fight the war in the "protectorates" of German East Africa, German Southwest Africa and Cameroon.[15]

Although many Africans fought on the Western Front in Europe, defending the interests of their colonial masters (with the French alone sending about 450,000 African fighters from their colonies in West and North Africa to fight against Germany on the frontline in Europe),[16] it is a fact that the war turned out to be not only a conflict in which Europeans fought Europeans, but also one in which Africans, compelled or coaxed by the colonial powers, fought against Africans in Africa. It has been estimated that over 2 million Africans were involved in the conflict as soldiers or labourers. About 10 percent of them were killed in action or died from other causes, such as disease, exposure to harsh weather conditions, fatigue and malnutrition. Among the labourers serving in Africa, the mortality rates may have been about 20 percent.[17]

The year 2014 marked the one hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the war which brought significant short and long term changes to human life and society globally. Although Africa was involved in the war immediately it broke out and the continent and its peoples were right away and belatedly affected in diverse and profound ways, the history of the war in Africa, more than other regions that engaged in the war, still lacks adequate scholarly zeal and input. Even though the East African campaign, when compared to all others, was the most protracted of the war, it appears that historiographical enthusiasm for the broader social, economic and cultural history of the themes of *the war in Africa* and *the war and Africa* has not been intense, especially in Africa. Even where the history of the issue of the war in Africa has been considered within the scholarship of military history, it has largely been viewed and discussed as an appendix, a military sideshow of a peripheral colonised people and marginal areas, to the real war in Europe, the core. Rathbone comments on this situation thus: "The War was very much a reality for Africa, a period of immense and significant change of which we have only just scratched the surface."[18] If the war is truly to be called a world war, then the popular memory and

[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] See, Hew Strachan, *The First World War In Africa* (Oxford University Press, 2004).
[18] Rathbone, "World War I and Africa: Introduction", 9.

perception of the war that has remained narrowly confined to the Western Front should change; such limited memory and perception should be engaged and a holistic historiographical review and interest in the ramifications of Africa's engagement and interaction with the war should become a major and imperative undertaking by scholars for a deeper understanding of the war as an event which was global and whose effects were international.

Although colonisers hatched the idea and resolution to turn Africa into a warzone and Africans into combatants, it was the colonised who bore the main weight of fighting the war in Africa. Many of the African combatants, who were professional soldiers in the colonial armies, zealously took pride in their service and military professionalism in the war, but other colonised Africans felt that the war "was for the white man" and an imperial enterprise which was not theirs to support or die for. However, the colonial regimes eventually conscripted more Africans into military service through wheedling and compulsion. African human resources engaged in the war in this state of ambivalence. On the one hand, it was in the vehemence of pride, professionalism and enthusiasm that some African leaders, chiefs and soldiers gathered resources to support the war effort of the two belligerent blocs: the Allies and the Central Powers. For example, it was in that spirit of enthusiasm that some people in the Gold Coast, now Ghana, which was a colony of Britain until 1957, mobilised as soldiers four days before the British actually declared war on Germany to fight in the interest and for the success of the Allied campaign. It was also in a similar state of mind to fight for France and its allies that "rifle contingents of tirailleurs from neighbouring French colonies were parading in readiness at the end of July, ahead of the declaration".[19] In fact, this same zeal was what made the first shot of the forces that were fighting on land for Britain to be fired in August 1914 by Alhaji Grunshi of the Gold Coast Regiment in German Togoland, West Africa, which was the ground for the first British military action in the war in Africa. Before this shot, which one account claims was fired on 7th August 1914,[20] and another avers was fired on 12th August 1914,[21] an

[19] Nasson, "More Than Just von Lettow-Vorbeck: Sub-Saharan Africa in the First World War", 165.

[20] For example, see Ray Costello, *Black Tommies: British Soldiers of African Descent in the First World War* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 1; Edward Paice, *World War I: The African Front* (NY: Pegasus Books, 2008), 17.

[21] See, for example, George N. Njung, "West Africa", in Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, (eds.), *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, issued by

artillery gun crew which was stationed at Fort Nepean on the Mornington Peninsula, Australia, had blasted one shell across the bow of the German cargo steamer SS Pfalz in Australian waters on 5th August, 1914. This registered the British Empire's first warning shot at sea.[22] It killed no one, but it halted the ship. *The Herald* newspaper of Melbourne recounted this incident with the headline "AUSTRALIA'S FIRST GUN. GERMAN STEAMER FIRED AT WHILE LEAVING MELBOURNE. SHOTS SENT ACROSS BOW. VESSEL AT ONCE RETURNS".[23] It is reported that the British destroyer HMS Lance also fired at a German mine layer on 5th August, 1914.[24]

The action of Grunshi, however, is very remarkable. This is because contrary to a popular belief that it was Corporal Ernest Edward Thomas of "C" Squadron, 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards, who used his gun to fire the first shot of the military forces of the British on land on 22nd August, 1914[25] near the village of Casteau, Belgium, [26] there is also the view that it was Grunshi who was the first infantry soldier in the service of Britain to

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Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2014-10-08, n.p. DOI: 10.15463/ie1418.10462, assessed on 22/01/2018; Akwasi Sarpong, "Why was the first German defeat of WW1 in Africa", BBC, http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zck9kqt, assessed on 22/01/2018.

[22] Sarah Farnsworth, "World War I: British Empire's first shot in Great War, fired in Victoria, commemorated", http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-05/thousands-commemorate-first-shot-of-wwi-in-portsea-victoria/5647724, accessed on 12/10/2017; Sarah Farnsworth, "Historians attempt to find WWI's first shot deep in Australian waters", http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-11-11/the-mystery-of-the-first-bullet-fired-in-world-war-i/5083444, accessed on 12/10/2017.

[23] *The Herald*, 5th August, 1914, 12, on "First Shots Fired" State Library of Victoria, https://blogs.slv.vic.gov.au/such-was-life/first-shot-fired/, accessed on 15/10/2017; Farnsworth, "World War I: British Empire's first shot in Great War, fired in Victoria, commemorated".

[24] Ibid.

[25] For example, see "Edward Thomas (British Army soldier)", Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Thomas_ (British_Army_soldier), assessed on 12/10/2017; Stephen White, "The British soldier who fired the first shot of World War 1. Dragoon Guard Ernest Edward Thomas fired the first shot of the war between Britain and Germany", *Mirror*, http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/real-life-stories/british-soldier-who-fired-first-4029651, accessed on 12/10/2017; Joe Shute, "First British Shot", *The Telegraph*, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-one/10996392/Firsts-of-the-First-World-War.html, accessed on 12/10/2017.

[26] Byron Farwell, *The Great War in Africa, 1914-1918* (New York: WW Norton and Company, 1989), 21.

fire his rifle. He did this some thousands of miles away from Europe after Britain had declared war on Germany on 4th August, 1914.[27]

Although the action of Grunshi has not been memorialised in a bronze plaque in Europe, he was "mentioned in despatches" (MiD), and attained the rank of Regimental Sergeant-Major (RSM) at the end of the war and was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) and the Military Medal (MM). The honours of MiD, RSM, DCM and MM conferred on him were in recognition of his distinguished service in the war, but the incident could and should be viewed in a wider perspective. The honours were symbolic of the enthusiasm and valiant conduct displayed by Africans in the war.

On the other hand, it was also in a state of disinterest and suspicion for the war that many Africans planned and proceeded to hide from recruiters or, for those who had been conscripted, chose to desert or even to have wavering loyalty and consequently changed sides from the German to the Allied army or vice versa.[28] Nevertheless, many African fighters fought with great courage, and non-combatant workers including porters, scouts, trackers, and spies also contributed their skills on many occasions to the war effort. For example, the tremendous need to convey items by the armies made a huge number of civilians – adults and even children – to be conscripted by the *force majeure* of the imperial regimes to serve as porters, carrying provisions, military equipment, and injured soldiers, for free or meagre pay. Many lost their lives through illness, lack of good nutrition and physical exhaustion. In the end the Allies won the war, and it must be mentioned that African personnel and natural resources contributed significantly to the success of the Allied cause.

Natural resources, including food and palm oil, and money were mobilised by Africans and from Africa to support the war. Gold Coasters, for example, gave a lot to support the war effort of the Allied Powers. It is a historical fact that money was provided by the people of the colony to help the Allies meet their expenses during the war. For example, J.E. Casely Hayford, an African lawyer of the Gold Coast, helped to set up the Sekondi Gold Coast Imperial War Fund. By December 1914 over GB£3700 had been transferred to London from the contribution of the

[27] See, for example, Colonel J. Hagan's "The Role of the Gold Coast Regiment towards the Defeat of the Germans in Africa during World War I" and Adjei Adjapong's "Historical Connections: Appreciating the Impact of the African Past on its Present and Future through the '3 Cs' of the First World War" in Chapter One and Chapter Twelve respectively in this volume.

[28] Nasson, "More Than Just von Lettow-Vorbeck: Sub-Saharan Africa in the First World War" 181.

chiefs and people of the Gold Coast. In 1915, GB£1500 was raised for an aeroplane.[29] Overall, it is reported that eleven (11) aeroplanes were provided by the Gold Coast to the British government for the war.[30]

The impact of the war on Africa was more momentous and had a far reaching consequence for African lives and communities as a whole. As a result of the fighting, villages, property and livelihood got destroyed. Farms and houses got burnt. Harvests suffered or were plundered and destroyed by troops passing through farms to ensure there would be no food left for their pursuers. Consequently, severe famines hit many communities and thousands of civilians perished. The war affected and shaped epidemiology in Africa, mortality trends in Africa's demographic composition, physical infrastructure, nationalist agitations against colonialism, Pan Africanism in Africa, inter and intra ethnic relations, and national and regional geographical and political cartographies in colonial Africa. The political outcomes of the war for Africans, in terms of gains, if any, were insignificant because their contribution to the war did not result in any achievements in political power. The right to self determination was not given to the peoples of the African colonies, and Africa still remained colonised until the years after the Second World War when the real collapse of the colonial empires started and the gradual spread of independence through Africa began in the 1950s.

Ordinary African men and women are largely invisible in the big narratives of the war. Most histories of the global conflict pay very little attention to the African aspect due to the fact that they fundamentally focus on the warfronts in Europe and, at times, Asia. This bias is partly due to the imperial powers' explicit attempts to marginalise the contribution of Africans and obscure the large degree to which they depended on the colonised Africans to fight the war. Furthermore, because of the clash of millions on the killing fields in Europe, the woes of the hundreds of thousands in Africa were considered as appendages during the colonial period and have thus received less attention from historians since then.

In *Researching World War One: A Handbook*,[31] edited by Robin D.S. Higham and Dennis E. Showalter, Michelle Moyd points out in the thirteenth chapter, which deals with Africa, that the scholarly treatment of Africa and the war dwindled during the 1980s and 1990s. While Moyd

[29] David Kimble, *The Political History of Ghana. The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism, 1850-1928* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 376.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Robin D.S. Higham and Dennis E. Showalter, (eds.), *Researching World War One: A Handbook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003).

commendably walks us through some of the potential areas that can be explored further about the history of Africa and the war nexus, she encouragingly reminds us that primary sources on the war in Africa are widely available in English as published memoirs, unit histories, and official histories; she draws our attention to the fact that original documents from the war in Africa are accessible in various archives in Africa and Europe, and ultimately reminds us in an instructive way about the need for more history research and work to be done on Africa's diverse experiences of the war. This is despite her acknowledgement that some secondary sources, written mainly in the 1960s and 1970s, that provide helpful syntheses of large quantities of disparate operational data, are present. Moreover, she concedes that some recent works, mainly consisting of essays in edited collections or in journals, and dissertations and book chapters of German and French scholarship, exist.[32]

This edited volume, titled *Africa and the First World War: Remembrance, Memories and Representations after 100 Years*, constitutes a study that puts into the spotlight of historical interrogation different aspects of the historical experiences of Africa and its people in and of the war. The essays that follow this "Introduction" were selected from some of the papers that were presented at the "Africa and the First World War" conference that was organised by the Department of History of University of Cape Coast in October 2015, at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the war. Together, they offer macro and micro views about some of the several layers, contours and degrees in which African contributions directed and shaped the war and the ways that the war affected individuals, impacted communities and transformed the political, economic, and social landscapes of Africa. One major question, among others, which many of the contributions in this volume explore is, what were the consequences for African societies as they supported themselves, the war effort, and the colonial countries during the war?

In terms of structure this book is organized into four themed sections, excluding the Introduction. In their endeavour to provide fresh impressions and insights about Africa's experience of the war and the centrality of Africa's human and material resources and contributions to the war effort, the sections provide interesting cases about Africa's involvement, experiences, perceptions and remembrances of the war on the continent.

The first section, *Recruitments, Battlefronts and African Responses*,

[32] Michelle Moyd, "Africa", in Robin D.S. Higham and Dennis E. Showalter, (eds.), *Researching World War One: A Handbook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 279.

features four essays. The first one, titled "The Role of the Gold Coast Regiment towards the Defeat of the Germans in Africa during World War I", is a requested essay, which was delivered as a keynote lecture by Colonel J. Hagan, who represented the Ghana Armed Forces at the conference. Hagan focuses on troops from the Gold Coast. He discusses the participation of the Gold Coast Regiment, which traces its roots to the Royal African Colonial Corps of Light Infantry, founded in 1822, in the war. In so doing, Hagan highlights the contribution of the Gold Coast Regiment, the predecessor of the Ghana Armed Forces, to the defeat of the Germans in Africa. He outlines and discusses the regiment's engagements in Kamina in Togoland, the Cameroon Campaign 1914-1916, and the East Africa Campaign 1916-1918 including military actions in Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). Hagan's paper finally argues that academics should duly emphasize the achievements and contributions of the Ghana Armed Forces to nation building and world peace in history books instead of focusing on only the army's involvement in coups d'état in Africa.

Ibiang O. Ewa in "Nigerian Soldiers in the East African Campaign of the First World War: 1916-1917" discusses why and how it became necessary for the British colonial regime to deploy Nigerian troops, who had only been disciplined for colonial military service locally, to go abroad to fight against German forces, the Schutztruppe, in East Africa, after they had previously participated in the conquest of Cameroon. He argues that it was more of innate courage than training and experience in modern warfare that enabled Nigerian soldiers to successfully conduct their first operation against the Germans on the shores of the Mgeta River in January 1917, and rapidly make further gains in East Africa. Shedding light on how the Nigerians contributed to the "chasing" of the German commanding general, Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck, and his German forces out of East Africa, Ewa asserts that Nigerian troops played the most crucial and notable role in the conquest of German East Africa by the Allies.

Whereas Ewa considers Nigerian troops, Kwame O. Kwarteng's "World War I: The Role of the Gold Coast and Asante towards the British Victory" focuses on troops from the Gold Coast. Kwarteng expands on the discussion in Hagan's paper by examining the participation of recruits from the Gold Coast, especially Asante, towards the victory of the British and French in both West and East Africa. Archival data obtained from Ghana and supplemented by secondary sources are used in the study's discussion to give insight into the processes of recruitment and to offer reasons why the British resorted to the recruitment of Africans to prosecute the war in West and East Africa. He also discusses recruits'

responses and the effect of military recruitment on the local economy. Finally, Kwarteng analyses the aftermath of the war by focusing on its political and socio-economic impact on the Gold Coast and its dependencies in particular and Africa in general.

Lastly, Jordan S. Rengshwat interprets African reactions, perceptions and interpretations of the war in Nigeria in "Bewilderment, Speculations and Benefaction: Africans' Interpretation of World War One in the Literature of the Sudan United Mission British Branch". He discusses how news and ideas about the First World War filtered to Africans through colonial agents and Christian missionaries, especially those of the Sudan United Mission British Branch, which started mission work in Northern Nigeria in 1904. Rengshwat argues that the missionaries communicated news about the war by embellishing them with religious metaphors; thus, many African Christians saw the war largely through the prism of the teachings of European missionaries, and some even went to the extent of giving spiritual interpretations to the outbreak of the war. Consequently, this served as a basis for Africans to empathise and show solidarity with the British Empire. This attitude also provided the necessary enabling environment for conscription.

Adebayo A. Lawal's work "African Mobilization of Agricultural Resources in British West Africa during the First World War", the first in the second section, *Wartime Colonial Economic Policies*, is a study of contrasts in the military and economic strategies of two European colonial powers in West Africa that behaved as strange bedfellows even though they fought a common enemy in the First World War. These powers are Britain and France. It analyses how the war affected both the British and French colonies in West Africa, and argues that French compulsory recruitment backfired and resulted in unwholesome political and economic consequences in French West Africa, but a policy of voluntary recruitment and an effective propaganda by the British endeared the colonial government and its war strategy to the African educated and political elite in British West Africa. This, the paper argues, contributed immensely to the comparatively more successful efforts of the British in their mobilization and exploitation of African labour especially for the production of food and raw materials to support the war effort. The paper further discusses the strategies for extensive and intensive colonial mobilization and exploitation of labour in West Africa for food production and military services by the British, through the agency of African chiefs, and the political and educated elites. It sheds light on some of indigenous cultivation techniques and labour strategies used in mass production and

mobilization of agricultural materials, and concludes that such efforts led to the adequate supply of food and materials at the war front.

Marciana M. Kuusaana's "Impact of the First World War on Labour Recruitment in the North of the Gold Coast (Ghana)", provides another account of the complex cooperative efforts between the colonial authorities and African leaders in mobilising labour for the war. It discusses how African chiefs of the northern regions of the Gold Coast recruited labourers for Britain's war effort often with the coercive power of the District Commissioners of the British colonial regime. This created tension between some chiefs and their subjects and, sometimes, led to violent attacks on chiefs by their people. The paper, ultimately, sheds light on how the war situation exposed and unveiled some of the complexities, contradictions and pressures in the British system of administration in the northern zones of the Gold Coast.

In "The Impact of the First World War on Africa's Transportation Systems: The Nigerian Railways as a Case Study", Tokunbo A. Ayoola analyses how the war stimulated production and export of certain items from Africa to support the war effort and brought about modest economic growth. Ultimately, however, this modest growth, according to Ayoola, was at the expense of Africa's transportation infrastructure because they were used repeatedly and intensely and without proper maintenance and rebuilding. Using the Nigerian Railways as practical case study, Ayoola argues that the war's negative impact on this infrastructure surpassed benefits that came from the economic growth from 1914 to 1918. The war damaged Africa's colonial infrastructure up to the eve of the Second World War, and the poor state of Africa's infrastructure could be traced to a stagnation and degeneration experienced from 1914 to 1918.

In the third section, *Wartime, Society and Mobility*, Augustine D. Osei in his chapter titled "Detention and Deportation: A Study of the 'De-Germanization' of Togoland and the Gold Coast during World War I, 1914-1918" interrogates and analyses why and how British colonial authorities embarked on a project of extensive arrests and detentions without trial of German nationals in Togoland and the Gold Coast. The British colonial authorities arrested both German military officers and civilians following the defeat of Germany in the war. Most of the civilians were missionaries. Contributing to the argument about whether imprisonments without trial are done for national security reasons or for quelling political opposition, Osei's paper concludes that detentions without trial were used by the British for the purpose of "de-Germanization" of the two West African territories, largely for the security of the British colonial regime.

"Chieftaincy and Indirect Rule: The Nature, Politics, and Exploits of Chiefs during the First World War in West Africa (1914-1930)", co-authored by Samuel Bewiadzi and Margaret Ismaila, next examines and compares the nature and operations of the system of the African chieftaincy supported method of Indirect Rule and the ancillary concept and praxis of clientage (patronage) in the British and French colonies in Africa during the First World War. Since chiefs, including the colonial regime created category known as Warrant Chiefs, were central to the colonial system, the paper examines their contribution to the war and colonial economic exploitation, the eventual Allied defeat of Germany, domestic political conflicts and instability, and local popular resistance to colonial policies in parts of Africa.

Lastly, Kwame O. Kwarteng and Stephen Osei-Owusu's paper titled "The Influenza Pandemic in the Gold Coast and Asante, 1918-1919" focuses on an epidemiological issue that occurred in Africa before the war could end. It was the influenza pandemic that occurred from 1918 to 1919. It killed an estimated two per cent of the population of Africa. The two authors discuss the spread and effects of the epidemic in the Gold Coast, focusing particularly on what the colonial authorities in Asante did to curb the disease. The writers also analyse the economic and social impact of the influenza outbreak on the people of the Gold Coast.

In the fourth section, *Memory, Remembrance and Representations,* are papers from three authors – Stefano Marcuzzi, Adjei Adjapong and Vitus Nanbigne. Marcuzzi's paper titled "Italy's 'Parallel War' in Libya: A Forgotten Front of World War I (1914-1922)" brings up Italy in the conversations about the war in Africa. It argues that Italy was an important, but often overlooked, practitioner of colonial fighting in the First World War. To explain and give credence to this argument, the paper highlights how the "Third Italy" attacked Ottoman Tripoli in Libya in September 1911, initiating a "parallel war" in the north of Africa and some complex diplomatic and geo-political manoeuvres by Italy. The Italian manoeuvres, the paper points out, led to an escalation of violence that contributed to the Great War. Additionally, the paper argues that the Italian "parallel war" in Libya necessitates a transnational analysis, and a temporal approach that breaks the conventional chronological divisions of the Libyan War, the Great War and the post-war crisis. Marcuzzi's paper, therefore, contributes to our understanding of the difficult geo-political game played by Italy in the colonial theatre during the First World War and resituates it in a long-term context to explain its enduring impact.

Adjei Adjapong's paper, which follows Marcuzzi's own, examines the Africa and the First World War theme from the perspective of philosophy

of history. His paper, which is titled "Historical Connections: Appreciating the Impact of the African Past on its Present and Future through the '3 Cs' of the First World War", uses the causes, course and consequences of the war to illustrate the connections between past (historical) events, present developments and future trends. Adjapong inserts Africa in these dynamics and stresses conclusively that it is crucial for the contemporary generation of Africans to pay more attention to the systematic study and reconstruction of the past, for example, the First World War, in order to understand the present and the future in their appropriate contexts.

Finally, Vitus Nanbigne's paper titled "Cinema, World War I and the New Nations of Africa: The Case of Ghana" constitutes the chapter that closes out this volume on Africa and the First World War. His paper is framed within the discourses of the relationship between cinema and history. It reflects on the connections between cinema, which broadly encapsulates the art, industry, economics and spectatorship of filmmaking, and the European imperial project in Africa and how these contributed to the production of the "new" nations of Africa, particularly after the First World War. In this trajectory, the paper initiates a discussion about the relationship between cinema and the historical evolution of Ghana during and after the war. Furthermore, the paper argues that cinema became a propaganda tool of European imperial agents to advance the imperial task and particularly win the support of continental Africans towards the First World War effort. The imperial project in Africa, the paper argues, shared a temporal historical development with the emergence and growth of cinema.

In selecting these papers from among several others that were originally presented at the conference to constitute this compendium, we have endeavoured to contribute a quota to the burgeoning construction of Africa in the full light of the history of the First World War. This collection has no pretensions of grandeur; nor can it aspire to exhaustiveness. There are many more aspects of the Africa and the First World War theme to investigate, but all those aspects will undoubtedly continue to require many more new perspectives. For our part, we wish to share the excitement of the fresh insights in this volume with a broader scholarly and reading audience. We hope that it will put the reader on the road to a more complete interest in and consideration of the subject.

SECTION I:

RECRUITMENTS, BATTLEFRONTS AND AFRICAN RESPONSES

CHAPTER ONE

THE ROLE OF THE GOLD COAST REGIMENT TOWARDS THE DEFEAT OF THE GERMANS IN AFRICA DURING WORLD WAR I

COLONEL J. HAGAN

Introduction

The Gold Coast Regiment could pride itself on being the first Military Institution to be formed in West Africa, tracing its roots to the Royal African Colonial Corps of Light Infantry which was a militia founded by Sir Charles MacCarthy in 1822. This unit fought the Asante Kingdom at the battle of Nsamankow in 1824 and they were almost wiped out. The remnants also contributed towards the defeat of Asante at the battle of Akatamanso in 1826. During the time of British Governor Captain George Maclean (1830-1843), the militias were performing police duties as well. This was their primary role up to the outbreak of the sixth Anglo-Asante battle in 1873.

In November 1873, there was a conflict between the British and the Asante Kingdom. Field Marshal Garnet Wolseley with an expeditionary force of twelve thousand (12,000) men from the United Kingdom, later to be joined by the Lagos Hausas from Nigeria under the command of Captain G. N. Glover, fought against the Asante Kingdom in the interior of the Gold Coast from November 1873 to February 1874.

At the end of this campaign, about three hundred (300) of the Lagos Hausas refused to go back to Nigeria. In 1879, they were used to form the nucleus of the Gold Coast Constabulary. This was the formal beginning of a professional military force now called the Ghana Armed Forces. The Gold Coast Constabulary in partnership with its sister organization, the West African Frontier Force, defeated the Asante Kingdom in 1900. At the end of the Yaa Asantewaa War (1900), the Gold Coast Constabulary was re-designated the Gold Coast Regiment and was made part of the West

African Frontier Force formed in 1897 in Nigeria by Lord Lugard (Governor of Nigeria).

In 1870-1871, after the Franco-Prussian war, a new nation emerged in Europe called Germany. In 1884, the German Government under Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck sent Dr. Nachtigall to establish a trade agreement with Togoland and Cameroon indigenes but he proclaimed a protectorate over these two countries. In 1885, Great Britain and France signed an agreement recognizing German influences in both colonies. Administrators were given almost absolute powers and this was so resented by the indigenes especially in Togoland that there was a steady emigration to the Gold Coast. The total area of Togoland was 160 to 240 km wide from east to west and 640 km from north to south. In the Cameroon, the territory acquired covered an area of about 480,000 square km. The country is roughly triangular in shape with its apex on Lake Chad in the north and its base, some 960 km long, from the sea to the French territory Congo. Apart from these two colonies, the Germans were in East Africa precisely, Tanganyika—present-day Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi less the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba.

After the Asante Kingdom and the Northern Territories were conquered in 1900 and 1901, the Gold Coast Regiment had sub-units in both territories. In accordance with the principles laid down by the Imperial General Staff in 1911, the forces of each territory throughout the British Empire were to maintain and equip sufficient troops for self-defence for which local defence schemes were prepared. It was in these circumstances that on 5 August 1914, the British Government set up the Offensive Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence to decide the combined Naval and Military operations that should be undertaken in foreign territories; it was agreed that the objectives must all be naval and of these the most important were the enemy's foreign bases and centres of intelligence. Togoland, with its powerful wireless station at Kamina, and Cameroon with its deep-water harbour at Duala, quite definitely fulfilled these requirements. For these reasons, it was decided to invade Togoland and Cameroon. Major General C. M. Dobell, Inspector General West African Frontier Force (WAFF) prepared the estimates for the invasion. It is therefore appropriate at this juncture to look at the contributions of the Gold Coast Regiment towards the defeat of the Germans in Africa.

Aim and Scope of this Study

Drawing views from my personal knowledge as a member of the Ghana Army and employing historical information from some existing writings[1] I discuss the participation of the Gold Coast Regiment in the First World War with the intention of highlighting its contribution towards the defeat of the Germans in Africa. The scope of this paper covers the battle to destroy the German wireless station at Kamina in Togoland, the Cameroon Campaign 1914-1916, and the East Africa Campaign 1916-1918 including actions in Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique).

Battle of Kamina—Togoland (August 1914)

Togoland—the present-day Republic of Togo, two-thirds of the Volta Region and the eastern part of the Northern and Upper East Regions, with a native population estimated at over a million—was bordered on the west by the Gold Coast and on the north and east by the French colonies of Upper Volta and Dahomey, now Burkina Faso and the Republic of Benin. Until its annexation by the Germans in 1884, the majority of the tribes inhabiting the districts along or adjacent to the coast and adjoining the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast had regarded themselves as being under the suzerainty of Great Britain. In this colony was a recently completed high-power German wireless station situated at Kamina about 176 km north of Lome, the capital of Togoland.

This wireless station was able to communicate direct with Berlin in Germany and other wireless stations in East Africa, the Cameroons and Monrovia (Liberia) and also with any German ship in the Atlantic Ocean. It was the chief receiving and distribution centre for Africa and a pivotal point of naval communication. The Anglo-German Frontier for more than half its length was marked by the left bank of the Volta River. A strip of territory extending about 130 km along the left bank of the Volta's lower reaches lay in the Gold Coast colony. The military significance of this land was however lessened by lagoons, swamps and the road-less bush country which covered its surface.

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[1] For example, General F. J. Moberly's *Official History of the War, Military Operations, Togoland and the Cameroons 1914-1916*; Lieutenant Colonel Charles Hordern's *History of the Great War, Military Operations, East Africa—August 1914-September 1916*; Colonel A. Haywood and Brigadier General F. A. S. Clarke's *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force*; General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck's *My Reminiscences of East Africa;* and Sir Hugh Clifford's *The Gold Coast Regiment in the East African Campaign*.

At this time, the Gold Coast Regiment of the West African Frontier Force was composed of a battery armed with 76 mm mountain guns and one engineer, and seven infantry companies armed with Lee-Enfield rifles and with a machine gun for each company. Each of the infantry and the engineer companies was about 160 rifles strong with a total establishment of 38 British Officers, 11 British Warrant Officers and 1,584 native ranks including 124 carriers and there were also 330 reservists. The locals were made up of Hausas, Fulanis, Yorubas and men from the Northern Territories with some from the Asante confederacy and the Gold Coast. On 3 August 1914, Major General Dobell drew up brief estimates dealing with the employment of the West African Frontier Force in the event of war. The objectives which seemed worthy to him were Lome and Kamina in Togoland and Duala, Buea and Victoria in the Cameroons.

In Togoland, the total German force was estimated as being 300 Germans and 1200 natives, ill-armed and not too well trained. At this time, the Governor of the Gold Coast Sir Hugh Clifford was on leave as well as Lt. Col. R. A. De B. Rose, the Commanding Officer, Gold Coast Regiment. Mr. W. C. F. Robertson was the acting Governor and Lt. Col. F. C. Bryant was the Acting Commanding Officer. These two gentlemen with approval from London mobilized the Gold Coast Regiment to attack Togoland. Sub-units were drawn from Krachi, Kumasi, Gambaga, Sunyani, Zuarungu, Kintampo and Accra to march to Togoland. Most of the troops were concentrated at Ada. On the morning of 5 August 1914 came a telegram from the colonial office announcing the declaration of war. On the same date, Maj. von Doering, the acting Governor of Togoland sent the following message to Mr. Robertson:

> As I understand from home, war has broken out between Great Britain and the German Empire. Having regard to the insecurity of native tribes, it is in the interest of Togoland and the Gold Coast to omit warlike enterprises likely to have no bearing on decisions arrived at in Europe. Propose further that we remain neutral and would be glad to receive an early reply.

Mr. Robertson replied that he could not answer without instructions from London. On 6 August, the Cabinet in London decided that the Togoland proposal of neutrality could not be entertained and thus approval was given to capture the wireless station at Kamina. Mr. Robertson communicated this to Lt. Col. F. C. Bryant. The French in Dahomey (Benin Republic) and Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) were also ready to cooperate with the British offensive in Togoland. On the morning of 7 August, a wireless message from Kamina to Germany was intercepted to the effect that the Governor of Togoland was leaving Lome with the troops

the next day to defend Kamina and that the district commissioner of Lome would surrender that place if the enemy pressed. At 7 pm on the same date, Maj. von Doering left with the troops and authorized the district commissioner to surrender from the coastland up to 120 km inland as far as Khra village. The Germans destroyed telephone cables at Lome before their evacuation.

Receiving colonial office instructions to move against Kamina, Lt. Col. F. C. Bryant had issued orders for the concentration of three companies at Krachi under the command of Capt. P. E. L. Elgee for an advance towards Kamina by land. The French sent in 500 auxiliary cavalry to march to Sansane Mangu in Northern Togoland. At Accra, medical officers, railway personnel and members of public works department also volunteered in various capacities. Lt. Col. F. C. Bryant's men marched and occupied Lome on 12 August 1914. Whilst at Lome, it was learned that a railway bridge and a small wireless station at Togblekove about 10 km north had been destroyed by the enemy. The advance from Kamina commenced on the morning of 14 August when the two companies moved along the road and railway line to the north respectively. The road and the railway line run parallel to one another. On 15 August, Tsevie was occupied and by 4 am on 16 August, Agbeluvoe was captured. At 7 am on 16 August, two German prisoners, Baron Codelli von Fahnenfeldt, the designer of the Kamina wireless station, and one other were captured. The engagement on the railway line and on the road was progressing. At this time, the British casualties were 6 killed from the indigenous ranks and 35 wounded.

In Northern Togoland, British and French detachments had occupied Yendi and Sansane Mangu without opposition. Most of the 400 German local troops had deserted. Other French troops came from Fada N'gurma in Upper Volta.

On 19 August, Lt. Col. Bryant's men captured the railway bridge on Haho River 11 km north of Agbeluvoe while those on the road captured Adakakpe. On the same day, Nuatya was occupied while the French were pressing from the east and the north. On 20 August, there was engagement around Khra village where the Germans had dug defensive positions well supplied with machine guns on their flanks to cover all approaches. On August 22, simultaneous attacks on the railway line and on the road were launched against prepared German positions. On this day, out of the 450 combatants engaged, the allies suffered 75 casualties from the well-concealed German positions, and the Gold Coast Regiments which were facing machine-gun fire for the first time were demoralized. On 23 and 24 August, Lt. Col. Bryant sent officer patrols to Glei and the Amu River

where the Germans had taken defensive positions. The German positions were pounded from the south, east, west and north.

On the night of 24 and 25 August, loud explosions from the Kamina direction were heard at Khra village and in the morning, the mast of the wireless station was no longer discernible. Apparently, the Germans had blown up the wireless station to prevent it from falling into the hands of the British. On the morning of 26 August, two German officers bearing a letter of unconditional surrender reported to the British. In the afternoon of same day, it was found that the great wireless station had been wrecked beyond repair and its huge 9-metre mast lay on the ground twisted and broken and the base was in fragments. To complete the destruction, kerosene had been poured on and ignited. All that remained of this most modern and powerful station was a smoking ruin. Though the use of this wireless station by the Allies would certainly have been an advantage, its loss to the enemy was infinitely more important. Without this direct means of communication, the German ships in the Southern Atlantic were out of touch with current events. At the end of this battle, the Gold Coast Regiment composed a poem:

Oh! Most of us are from the far North,
And some of us from Asante are,
And some of us from the Gold Coast be,
We marched to Togoland in August 1914,
We marched so fast, we marched so far,
That the very first victory of the First World War,
Was won by the men of the Gold Coast Regiment.

At the end of the Togoland campaign, the Regiment was awarded battle honours for Kamina and the Legislative Council of the Gold Coast decided to bear the whole financial cost of the British share of the operation. This generous act fittingly crowned the military achievement of the first capture in the war of a German colony and it was in this campaign that the first shot was fired to start the First World War, credited to Regimental Sergeant Major Alhaji Grunshi, DCM, MM, of the Gold Coast Regiment of the West African Frontier Force.

At the end of this campaign, the Gold Coast administered two-thirds of the present-day Volta Region, the eastern part of the Northern Region and the eastern part of the Upper East Region which became known as Togoland under the British Administration until 1956 when they decided through a plebiscite to become part of the Gold Coast.

Cameroon Campaign 1914-1916

As mentioned earlier, Dr. Nachtigall was sent as an imperial commissioner to promote German trade in West Africa. Having first proclaimed a protectorate over Togoland, he did the same with the Cameroons. At the beginning of the war, the total number of German troops was 200 Europeans and 3,200 Africans with about a dozen guns and a plentiful supply of machine guns. The troops were organized in 12 companies. The capital Duala possesses one of the finest natural harbours on the coast of West Africa. Other prominent features are the Mandara mountains in the north-west, the Central Ngaundere plateau rising to 2,500 ft and in the extreme south-west, the Cameroon peak (Cameroon mountain) towering up to 13,000 ft. Roads were practically non-existent except the one from Kribi to Yaoundé. There were also two railway lines, one from Duala to Eseka 180 miles away, and the other from Bonaberi to Nkongsamba, a distance of 160 km.

In pursuance of estimates made by Major General Dobell, the offensive sub-committee formulated the plan of making Duala, Victoria and Buea the first objectives. The total strength of the allied force was 3,500 with a two and a half four-gun mounting battery. Troops were divided under the Maidiguri, Yola, Ikom, and Calabar columns of the West African Frontier Force from Nigeria.

The Gold Coast Regiment first came into the picture when Sir Hugh Clifford was asked to send two companies of the Gold Coast Regiment into the Cameroons. Under Major General Dobell himself, the Gold Coast Regiment took part in the attack and capture of both Duala and that of Yaoundé. After this, they took part in other battles in the Cameroons. Troops from the West African Frontier Force—Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia, all participated in this campaign. The French also participated from present-day Chad, Gabon and Congo Republic. Heavy battles were fought at Nsanakang, Mora, Maka, Bapele Bridge, Yapoma, Buea, Chang, Kribi, on Sanga River and Wumbiagas before the Germans were defeated. The total numbers of casualties suffered by the allies were:

	Europeans	**Africans**
a. Killed or died of wounds	24	192
b. Wounded	30	557
c. Died of disease	6	84

Out of the total, 864 British Europeans and 5,927 combatant Africans, 151 Europeans and 434 Africans had been invalided. Of approximately 20,000 carriers sent to Duala, 574 became casualties of battle or disease. The French casualties were almost similar. The Gold Coast Regiment was awarded battle honours for Duala 1916 and Cameroon 1914-1916. These awards are symbolically embossed in the Ghana Army colours. In 1943, in remembrance of those who perished in this campaign, a barracks was built and named Duala Lines, which is in Burma Camp, Accra.

East Africa Campaign 1916-1918 including Action in Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique)

At the beginning of World War I, German East Africa lay between the Indian Ocean and the general line marked by Lakes Kivu, Tanganyika and Nyasa. The East Africa theatre of war stretched for some 1,280 km south-west from the Equator to the River Ruvuma—the boundary between Portuguese East Africa—Mozambique and German East Africa.

At the outbreak of the war, the German forces in East Africa were under Col. Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, later General, from Saarland in Germany. He surveyed the whole of German East Africa and dumped weapons, ammunition and rations in some strategic places where he would fight and retire to supply his men. After the Togoland and Cameroon campaigns, the Gold Coast Regiment embarked on a transport ship, *Aeneas*, from Sekondi to the port of Mombasa in Kenya. Their total strength was 1,423 under the command of Lt. Col. R. A. de B. Rose. The breakdown of the force was 36 British officers, 15 British NCOs, 11 African clerks, 980 rank and file, 177 gun carriers, 1 storeman, 204 other carriers and 4 officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps. Taking part in this campaign were West African Frontier Force troops from Nigeria and a brigade from South Africa under General Smuts, the Commander-in-chief of the Allied Forces. After arriving at Mombasa port, the Gold Coast Regiment was engaged at Kikarungu Hill, at Dutumi River, at Gold Coast Hill and Kibata until the arrival of the Nigerian brigade. One of the important battles fought by the Gold Coast Regiment was at Narungombe on 19 July 1917.

Between the Matandu and Mbemkuru Rivers, a distance of 160 km, there was no water in the immediate vicinity except at Narungombe and it was at Narungombe that Col. Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck took up a defensive position after he was defeated at Makengaga. As mentioned earlier, the importance of Narungombe lay in its water holes and as the existing supply of water for the force was very limited, the capture of this

ample supply became a matter of urgency. Little was known of the strength and dispositions of the German force occupying the water holes but a combined attack was ordered made up of the Gold Coast Regiment in the centre, with the South African battalion to the left and the King's African Rifles from Kenya to the right. The German frontage was covered with open forest and long grass. It was believed that the enemy had 4 companies in the firing line with another four in reserve with 48 machine guns and some mortars. The attack started at around 0815 hrs in the morning and the Gold Coast Regiment occupying the centre of the Allied dispositions suffered greatly. The Germans camouflaged their positions very well and their rifles were interlocking while their machine guns were overlapping across the frontage. British shells caused a grass-fire on the left flank which made the South African troops and the King's African Rifles deployed on either side of the Gold Coasters withdraw leaving the flanks open.

The Gold Coast Regiment pressed on but suffered heavy casualties in relation to its strength. One British officer was killed and 3 were wounded, also 2 NCOs were also wounded and 37 other ranks were killed and 114 were wounded. Among them was CSM Awudu Bakano, a very fine soldier. On this day they fought without success so they beat a hasty retreat and at the following dawn when the attack was re-launched it was learned that the Germans had abandoned the position. Never had the men of the Gold Coast Regiment shown more grit than at Narungombe and at the end they were awarded battle honours for Narungombe 1917 which are in the colours of the Ghana Army Units.

Further engagements went on in German East Africa including that of the Lukuledi mission and Mkwera until the Germans under Col. Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck abandoned German East Africa and entered Portuguese East Africa. The Gold Coast Regiment fought the Germans at Medo. Here too, due to the activities of the Regiment, the Germans left Portuguese East Africa and entered Nyasaland (Malawi). From Nyasaland, they went to Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) where Col. Paul von Lettow- Vorbeck surrendered.

It must be acknowledged that Col. Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck with his comparatively smaller force and meagre resources kept a vastly superior British Army at bay for over four years, that is, from 1914 to 1918. It must be acknowledged that it was a brilliant feat of arms. It was the East Africa campaigns which made Tanganyika become a British Colony. It was reported that the East Africa Campaign claimed approximately 90,000 casualties. Today the East Africa Campaign is still perceived largely in romantic terms. It must be remembered that those soldiers who fought to

liberate Africa from the German occupation in the First World War suffered as much as their counterparts on the Western Front. It must be remembered that from German East Africa, we had Tanganyika, Rwanda and Burundi.

Concluding Remarks

It must be noted that when it comes to the history of the First World War, historians and books written by African and non-African professors hardly mention the exploits or the contributions of troops in Africa especially those of the West African Frontier Force and its subsidiary the Gold Coast Regiment. We Africans must tell our side of history. No other people can tell it better than us. When it comes to the making of Ghana, which is mostly the work of the Gold Coast Regiment, especially with the defeat of the Asante in 1873-74 (Sagrenti War), the Yaa Asantewaa War 1900, the defeat of Samori Toure and Babatu in the 1890s up until 1901, which made us acquire the present-day Asante, Bono Ahafo, Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions, as well as the First World War which practically gave Ghana part of the Volta Region, we normally see historians writing virtually nothing about the Gold Coast Regiment. Let us erase this impression and credit the Gold Coast Regiment as one of the major makers of Ghana. The Gold Coast Regiment, the predecessor of the Ghana Armed Forces contributed significantly towards the defeat of the Germans in Africa especially at the battle of the Kamina wireless station in Togoland, the capture of Duala and Yaoundé in Cameroon and more importantly the defeat of Col. Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck and his German lieutenants in the East African campaigns. As mentioned earlier, there is the need for academicians to highlight the achievements of the Ghana Armed Forces in history books so that posterity will know the good works done by their ancestors. At this point, the Ghana Armed Forces High Command is entreating all not to highlight our involvement in *coup d'etats* but our contributions towards world peace.

CHAPTER TWO

NIGERIAN SOLDIERS IN THE EAST AFRICAN CAMPAIGN OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR: 1916-1917

IBIANG O. EWA

Introduction

Before the advent of the First World War, Nigerian soldiers of the Nigeria Regiment of the West African Frontier Force were enlisted and trained essentially for internal security operations and frontier defence. This was in line with British colonial military policy, which limited their engagement to these two functions.[1] As Ewa aptly renders it,

> the responsibilities of the regiment… were to maintain the internal security of Nigeria, defend her territorial frontiers and, if necessary, give military support to other British colonies in West Africa.[2]

The policy did not, therefore, envisage that Nigerian soldiers could be required to function outside the framework of these traditional responsibilities, let alone fight an international war in which sophisticated European forces would be involved. This understanding of the role of the colonial force and the conception of the First World War as a European conflict were behind the initial reluctance of the Colonial Office to think that Nigerian soldiers should fight the First World War outside Nigeria or West Arica. However, as Africa was brought within the orbit of the war by

[1] CO 537/395, R. J. Chancellor, Secretary of the Committee on Imperial Defence, Memo on Imperial Defence, 24 January, 1911.
[2] Ibiang Oden Ewa, "A History of the Nigerian Army 1863-1966", PhD Thesis, Department of History and International Studies, University of Calabar, Nigeria, 2010, 35-37.

certain dynamics,[3] which were beyond the control of the Colonial and War Offices in London, Nigerian soldiers' participation in the First World War beyond Nigeria was allowed. This was done amidst expressions of misgivings by Brigadier-General F. G. Cunliffe, the commandant of the Nigeria Regiment, who had drawn attention to the difficulty of engaging Nigerians in military service far away from home.[4]

While "the idea that the Great War was essentially a European event is gradually changing,"[5] it has not changed enough to reckon that the participation of African soldiers was a significant factor in the overall course of the war. In fact, outside recognizing the "South African" soldiers' participation in the war, other African soldiers who fought in the war are still being referred to in the current popular literature on the war as "other colonial troops."[6] Thus African soldiers' participation is still largely a footnote in the military historiography of the war. Therefore, this paper, apart from attempting to establish the Nigerian soldiers' participation as a factor in the Allied victory in East Africa, is aimed at further changing the view that the First World War was, essentially, a European event.

It is certainly not a simple task to particularly sort out the role of Nigerian soldiers in a multilateral campaign in which over 50,000 African troops and one million African carriers were involved;[7] but even more difficult is to consign to oblivion the gallant participation and experience of a four-battalion infantry brigade in such an arduous campaign as the East African campaign. Nevertheless, we hope to be able to suggest that Nigerian soldiers made a significant contribution to the Allied victory in the East African campaign of the First World War.

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[3] David Killingray mentions these dynamics as: "the long drawn out war, the growing shortage of Imperial manpower by early 1916, and the lengthy war in East Africa…?" See his *The British Military Presence in West Africa* (Oxford: Rhodes House Library, 1983), 83.

[4] Jide Osuntokun, "Problems of Military Recruitment in Nigeria during the First World War", *The Calabar Historical Journal*, Vol. 1 No. 2 (1976), 115. See also CO 445/35, General Cunliffe to Lugard, 12 August, 1915.

[5] "Philosopher's Tree: African Soldiers in World War One", *https://a/shaw.blogspot.com/2007/12/african-soldiers-in-world-war-one-html* (Accessed on 27 August, 2015).

[6] "East African Campaign (World War 1), *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_African_Campaign_(World_War)* (Accessed on 27 August, 2015).

[7] Peter B. Clarke, *West Africans at War 1914-18 1939-45* (London: Ethnograpica, 1986), 16.

Outbreak of War and East Africa's Involvement

By 1914 Bosnia, a Slav state, was under the imperial yoke of Austria-Hungary. However, Bosnia detested being under Austria-Hungary and continually maintained a disposition to free itself and join its sister independent Slav state of Serbia. Bosnians' irredentism was also being tacitly supported by Serbians, under the bond of a growing Pan-Slavism. It was in this climate of relations, that on 28 June, 2014, Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian student and member of the Serbian Black Hand,[8] assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and his wife, in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo during their official visit there.[9] A state of conflict ensued, as Austria-Hungary not only accused Serbia of complicity in the assassination of Ferdinand but also made demands[10] for peace, which were repugnant to the sovereignty and independence of Serbia. Austria-Hungary demanded that the Serbian government should clamp down on all anti-Austrian groups in Serbia, dismiss all Serbian officials to whom Austria was opposed, and allow Austrian police and officials to enter Serbia to ensure the implementation of these demands.[11] Although Serbia was inclined to peace and was willing to negotiate, Austria seemed to have decided to follow the path of war.

On 28 July, 1914, encouraged by Germany,[12] Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Serbia turned to Russia, from which it had secured a promise of protection, for support. Both Russia and Germany mobilized their military forces, and the threat of war reverberated across Europe. Britain's effort to prevent war through its foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey, and other European leaders ended in failure, as Germany declared war on Russia on 1 August, 1914 and, two days later, on France.[14]

Germany first invaded Belgium on 4 August, 1914 for refusing German forces passage to France. On the same day, Britain declared war on Germany in support of Belgium, which also declared war on Germany. On 6 August, 1914 Austria-Hungary declared war on Russia, and four

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[8] F. K. Buah, *The World Since 1750* (London: Macmillan, 1969), 272. For more on Princip, see A. J. Grant and Harold Temperley, *Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries 1789-1950*, 6th Ed (London: Longman, 1952), 387.

[9] For more detail see H. L. Peacock, *A History of Modern Europe 1789-1976*, 5th Ed. (London: Heineman, 1977), 277; B. E. Schmitt's two-volume book, *The Coming of the War 1914* (New York, 1930).

[10] Peacock, *History of Modern Europe*, 277.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] Grant and Temperley, *Europe*, 389; Buah, *The World*, 272.

[14] Buah, *The World*, 272.

days later, Britain and France declared war on Austria. In 1915 Italy entered the war on the side of Britain. A battle line was thus drawn between the Allied Powers led by Britain, and the Central Powers led by Germany.[15] Given this bipolar alliance, Japan, Romania, Portugal, and Greece joined the Allied powers; while Turkey and Bulgaria went the way of the Central Powers. In 1917 Russia pulled out of the war because of its being rocked internally by the Bolshevik Revolution. Meanwhile, the United States joined the Allies with Liberia and the Central and South American states following suit. The colonial territories and dominions of Europe also naturally got involved in the war along with their respective metropolitan states.[16] What, indeed, started as an isolated high-profile homicide in a street in Sarajevo had rapidly developed into a cosmopolitan war, known as the First World War, or the Great War.

The war plans of the belligerents were focused on the control of Europe. Europe thus became the epicentre of contending military attention. The war was mapped into four areas of military operation, referred to as the Western Front, the Eastern Front, the Middle Eastern Front, and the Colonial Front.[17] The first two fronts—the Western and Eastern—which covered Europe were the most important in the strategic calculations of the belligerents. The Colonial Front, from the beginning, was seen by military strategists on both sides as peripheral to military victory in the war. It was, therefore, given the least consideration in their military plans.

Owing to the importance of the Western and Eastern Fronts, most of the military manpower and action in the war were focused on Europe. The thinking of the belligerents was that victory in Europe, especially on the Western Front, would be the key to victory on all the other fronts of the war. This thinking informed the initial German strategy of attempting at once to overrun Europe in a speedy, frontal move, seen as a blitzkrieg. This strategy failed, and Germany began to experience great pressure in the European theatre of the war from Allied troops, which were numerically superior.

Against this background, Colonel Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck, the generalissimo of the German colonial forces in East Africa, was moved to do something to reduce the pressure of the Allied troops on the German forces in Europe. Lettow-Vorbeck, a veritable German imperialist, who

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[15] See John J. Rourke, *International Politics on the World Stage*, 12th Ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 45.
[16] For these military alliances, see Buah, *The World*, 272-275.
[17] Kennedy Hickman, "World War 1 Battles: A Clash of Empires," *http://militaryhistory.about.com/od/worldwari/a/v* (Accessed on 27 August, 2015).

eventually courted a reputation as a military genius and was elevated to the rank of General,[18] reenacted a military strategy which profoundly influenced the course of the First World War and made the East African campaign the longest[19] and one of the costliest in the war.

Lettow-Vorbeck adopted the strategy of using a relatively small number of well-disciplined African colonial soldiers (Askaris), led by a small ratio of German officers, to aggressively attack Allied positions in East Africa and to also create battles where they could not have existed in order to draw the attention of the Allied forces to East Africa. For example, although the campaign in East Africa began on 5 August, 1914, when a British colonial force from Uganda attacked German outposts near Lake Victoria and followed up with a naval bombardment on Dar es Salaam on 8 August,[20] Lettow-Vorbeck quickly seized the initiative of offensive warfare from the British. On 15 August, 1914, his forces began their first offensive of the campaign from their garrison in the New Moshi region, taking Taverta in the British territory and pushing further into the interior of British East Africa.[21] These offensives, together with the German defeat of a British amphibious force at Tanga in early November, 1914, provoked a significant reaction from the Allies. In accordance with Lettow-Vorbeck's calculations and expectation, the Allies responded by releasing tens-of-thousands of Allied troops, who had been fighting in Europe, for the campaign in East Africa.[22] That was, partly, how and why East Africa came fully into the Great War.

In his approach to warfare in East Africa, Lettow-Vorbeck avoided, as much as possible, engaging the better equipped and numerically superior Allied forces in frontal and pitched battles, as that could have drastically reduced the size of his force, which Kathleen Bomani has estimated to be only about 25,000 men, as against 150,000 men on the Allied side.[23] He

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[18] See E. P. Hoyt, *Guerrilla: Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck and Germany's East African Empire* (New York: Macmillan, 1981), 175.

[19] Kathleen Bomani, "WWI's Untold Story: The Forgotten African Battlefields," *http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/08/world/ africa/world-war-in-africa/index.html/* (Accessed on 27 August, 2015).

[20] C. Miller, *Battle for the Bundu: The First World War in East Africa* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 42.

[21] Miller, *Battle for Bundu*, 43.

[22] See Brian Garfield, *The Meinertzhagen Mystery* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2007), 274; East African Campaign, *Wikipedia*, (Accessed on 27 August, 2015).

[23] Allied soldiers were better equipped than the Germans. See Rose Anderson, *The Forgotten Front: The East African Campaign, 1914-1918* (Stroud: Tempus, 2004), 27.

was rather preoccupied with military actions which were meant to tempt the Allies to continually divert troops from the European fronts to East Africa in pursuit of his elusive forces, in order to expend enormous resources to their disadvantage. To sustain this trend, Lettow-Vorbeck necessarily had to combine the guerrilla approach with conventional methods of warfare in the East African campaign.

Lettow-Vorbeck's diversionary strategy, whose relationship with the war has not been committed to further investigation by scholars,[24] brought far-reaching changes to the course and character of the First World War. Apart from causing the diversion of Allied troops from Europe to East Africa, it brought the region fully into the First World War. Most importantly, it resulted in the large-scale participation in the East African campaign of other soldiers from British Africa, including Nigerian soldiers.

Nigerian Soldiers in the East African Campaign

A Nigerian brigade of about 200 British officers and 3,000 Nigerian rank and file was organized in Nigeria in October, 1916; it was reinforced later, in a separate journey, by another 3,000 Nigerian soldiers and 330 British officers.[25] The brigade was made up of 4 battalions and one battery of four 2.95 inch guns.[26] This force, together with the Gambia Company, set sail from Lagos and disembarked at Dar es Salaam in November and December, 1916. The main operations in which Nigerian soldiers were involved in East Africa commenced on 1 January, 1917 at the Mgeta River, on both banks of which the Germans had established their positions. A Nigerian column, led by Brigadier-General F. G. Cunliffe, skillfully

[24] Even a most recent work by Colin S. Gray has not mentioned Lettow-Vorbeck's strategy. See Colin Gray's *War, Peace and International Relations: An Introduction to Strategic History*, 2nd Ed. (London: Routledge, 2012), 101-112.

[25] *Nigeria Handbook 1919* (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, 1919), 106. These figures contrast slightly with those furnished by William N. M. Gearry. He states that "in September and October 1916… a force of 128 British officers and 78 British NCOs and 2,400 rank and file… were embarked from Nigeria for service in East Africa… In 1917 further reinforcements were sent from Nigeria to East Africa—in all 3,352 native rank and file." See his *Nigeria Under British Rule* (London: Frank Cass, 1965), 232.

[26] James Lunt, *Imperial Sunset: Frontier Soldiering in the 20th Century* (London: Macdonald Futura Publishers, 1981), 179.

engaged them at their positions until the Germans were forced to withdraw completely from the Mgeta River within four days.[27]

Among the notable actions in which the Nigerian soldiers were involved within the first four days of January 1917 was the move for the occupation of Behobeho, a German stronghold on the Mgeta River. On 3 January, 1917 a column of the 2nd Battalion of the Nigeria Regiment, led by Colonel Lyle, advanced for Behobeho, which was garrisoned by about 200 German soldiers and a detachment of 3 machine guns. In spite of casualties sustained from German snipers, the Nigerian troops continued their advance until they came within battle range of the German position. They held up gallantly against the Germans. On 4 January, 1917 the German troops withdrew from Behobeho, persuaded by the tenacity of the Nigerian troops and the advancing troops of General Sheppard from the south. The Nigerian column seized the opportunity of the German withdrawal to occupy Behobeho.[28]

During the Mgeta River operation, a Nigerian soldier, Lance Corporal Suli Bagarimi of the 4th Nigeria Regiment, in spite of heavy fire against him, voluntarily led and guided a party to detect the exact location of a concealed and menacing German 4-inch Howitzer. This made it possible for the subsequent release by Nigerian troops of an artillery barrage that forced the gun to stop operation and withdraw from its position. He was, for his gallantry, awarded the Military Medal.[29]

Apparently, the same Howitzer was, later in the course of the Mgeta River operation, captured from a retreating German force by an advance party of the 2nd Nigeria Regiment under Captain (later Major) Gardner, who received the Military Cross for the action.[30] At the end of the war, the captured Howitzer was taken to the 2nd Battalion headquarters in Lokoja, Nigeria, to commemorate the battle of Mgeta. It was mounted in a commanding position on top of a plinth, where it would pose as a monument and a "memorial to all ranks of the 2nd Battalion, who lost their lives during the Great War…"[31] In addition to Corporal Bagarimi, Nigerian Sergeants Moma Jegga and Sambo Bauchi were each awarded the Military

[27] Nigeria Regiment, "2nd Battalion Notes," *The Journal of the Nigeria Regiment,* Vol.1, No. 2 (January, 1926): 66.
[28] W. D. Downes, *With the Nigerians in German East Africa* (London: Methuen, 1919), 65-66.
[29] Downes, *With the Nigerians,* 65.
[30] CSO 19/5: 2701/1917, Enclosure, Overseas Contingent of the Nigeria Regiment: Report of F. G. Cunliffe to Sir Fredrick, 20 June, 1917.
[31] Nigeria Regiment, Battalion Notes, 66.

Medal for gallantry in the Mgeta operation.[32] While medals were won in the Mgeta operation, losses were also sustained. The losses included British Lt. Stronge who was killed, Lt. Dyer was wounded, and 20 Nigerian rank and file were killed, with 49 wounded.[33]

Nigerian troops also campaigned in the Rufiji area, with the specific objective of throwing out the German forces from all their positions on both banks of the Rufiji River. The campaign was begun with an operation, in which Nigerian troops advanced from Kipenio on the Rufiji River on 17 January, 1917. After warding off a German scouting party during the night, the Nigerian troops reached the enemy position at Mkindu the following morning, 18 January, 1917. Fighting ensued, and the Germans were forced to concede Mkindu to the Nigerian troops at about 11.00 am. During the action one of the Nigerian rank and file was killed, seven were wounded and two British officers, Lieutenants Newton and Young, were wounded.[34]

From Mkindu the Germans withdrew to Kibongo, where they took a strong position. The Nigerian troops marched towards Kibongo in pursuit of the Germans, advancing, in so doing, along the road linking Mkindu with Kibongo. The advance for Kibongo, which was led by Colonel Morris of the Cape Corps, was seriously disputed and eventually interdicted by German forces positioned along the entire length of the road to Kibongo. What helped matters was an advance section of the Nigeria Battery, which had previously pushed round the rear of the German position at Kibongo. Under the command of General Feneran, the battery moved back and threatened the left flank of the German position, thereby diverting much of the attention and opposition against the advance of Colonel Morris's force. Morris skilfully took advantage of the situation to advance further. At about 5.00 pm on 20 January, 1917 Morris and Feneran's forces, having joined together, pushed into Kibongo and occupied it, sustaining casualties but forcing the Germans to withdraw southwards to Ngwembe.[35] The casualties included one British officer killed and fourteen wounded.

A decision was immediately taken to invade Ngwembe. Therefore, on 24 January, 1917 a Nigerian column under Colonel Archer advanced from Kibongo towards Ngwembe, which was about ten miles from the former. After about three miles of the advance from Kibongo, Archer's force was engaged by the Germans. The Germans were at first routed in this

[32] CSO 19/5: 2701/1917, Overseas Contingent.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.

engagement, resulting in their two guns being captured and the two gun detachments, together with some Askaris, killed.[36] In a short while came a reversal of fortune, however, when the Germans returned in a swift and unanticipated counterattack, which was so intensely and ferociously delivered, that it compelled Colonel Archer's column to retreat to Kibongo after sustaining heavy losses.

It would take up to May 1917, with incidents and two notable engagements, for Nigerian troops to get to Ngwembe. One of the engagements took place on 17 February 1917, when Major Uniacke, acting on the orders of the commander-in-chief, General Hoskins, consolidated with another force from Kibambawe to send the Germans away from their position at Nyakisiku. The other engagement came on 4 March, 1917 at a place between Mkindu and Mpangas, where a Nigerian detachment that was one company strong, with a battery, beat off a German force from Ngwembe. Since this engagement, Nigerian troops had carried out patrols along the Rufiji River, which culminated in their occupation of Mtarula, Loge, and Mpanganya on 8 May, 1917. By these moves the Nigerian troops established undisputed control of the Rufji River, up to Utete and Mohoro, where other British forces were. As these places were being occupied, the Germans were withdrawing from Ngwembe; and about two days later, Nigerian troops entered Ngwembe and occupied it, but not before sacking a German garrison of a small rearguard that was there.

The tempo of the war was slowed down during the rainy season by a continuous downpour, which heavily wetted and flooded the field and rendered military operations hardly possible. Between July and November, 1917, when the war ended, Nigerian troops fought in the southern part of German East Africa, to which the German forces had been confined. They gallantly took on the Germans in numerous engagements, the most notable being the battles of Nahungu and Nyangao (or Mahiwa, as the Germans called it), the Mkwera action, and the pursuit of the elusive General Lettow-Vorback and his forces out of German East Africa.

At the battle of Nyangao, for instance, Nigerian soldiers frontally engaged a most tenacious German force in a most profound combat that lasted from 15 to 19 October, 1917. They demonstrated great courage, intrepidity, and gallantry in the midst of mounting casualties. While Lettow-Vorbeck was promoted to the rank of General after the battle, the Nigerian soldiers were awarded a battle honour, known as "Nyangao." After this battle, however, General Lettow-Vorbeck found himself

[36] Ibid.

retreating continuously for safety from the pursuing Nigerian forces, who eventually evicted him from German East Africa.

By 30 November, 1917 German East Africa had been completely liberated from the German forces.[37] On this date General Van Deventer, the commander-in-chief of the Allied forces in East Africa, was thus messaged by His Majesty the King: "I heartily congratulate you and the troops under your command on having driven the remaining forces of the enemy out of German East Africa."[38]

General George Giffard, who had commanded the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the King's African Rifles during the East African Campaign, said this about the performance of the Nigerian soldiers:

> We fought alongside the Nigerian Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General Cunliffe, in the heaviest fighting of that campaign in the autumn of 1917. Together we helped to drive the Germans out of German East Africa and into Portuguese East Africa. I well remember how high an opinion we in the King's African Riles had of the Nigeria Regiment.[39]

Nigerian troops demonstrated unswerving loyalty to their British officers, a remarkable devotion to duty, and the utmost gallantry in their engagements with the Germans and, *ipso facto*, paid dearly in terms of casualties. During the entire campaign, the Nigerian rank and file suffered 1,359 casualties, of which 350 were killed in combat, 263 died, and 746 were wounded.[40] The great contribution of the Nigerian soldiers in the East African campaign was more evidently reflected in the numerous awards and mentions credited to them. A total of 83 awards and 49 mentions were obtained by Nigerian soldiers for gallantry and devotion in the course of the campaign.[41]

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[37] Although Lettow-Vorbeck continued to skirmish his way as he was retreating and did not formally surrender until 25 November, 1918, the campaign had practically terminated in November, 1917. See Richard Holmes, *The Oxford Companion to Military History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 361.

[38] Downes, *With the Nigerians*, 282. C. Miller differs with Downes in his estimation of Nigerian casualties. He notes that Nigeria recorded 2,700 casualties against 519 sustained by the Germans. See his *Battle for Burundi*, 287.

[39] George J. Giffard, "Foreword," *Regimental Journal of the Nigeria Regiment Royal West African Frontier Force*, Vol. 9. No.1 (January, 1949): 1.

[40] Downes, *With the Nigerians*, 343.

[41] Downes, *With the Nigerians*, 324-337.

The battle honours—"Behobeho" and "Nnyangao"—were also won by the Nigerian soldiers.[42] Furthermore, the four battalions that participated in the campaign were awarded regimental colours.[43] Burns describes the colours as "Muhammadan green", with Arabic inscriptions, which have been translated as "Victory is from God alone."[44] The colours were actually received by the battalions in 1922.[45] To further recognize and appreciate their contribution to the success of the East African campaign, the Nigerian non-commissioned officers (NCOs) who participated in it, were retained in the Nigeria Regiment.[46]

So gallant, excellent, efficient and effective was their participation in the East African campaign that a proposal was made for the Nigerian troops to fight the war in the Middle East, particularly in such places as Salonica, Palestine, Egypt, and Mesopotamia or India. Indeed, in August, 1918 they were intended particularly for Palestine, when the war ended and the plan was abandoned.[47]

Conclusion

The First World War remains one of the greatest instances of conflict escalation in human history. From a reconcilable dispute between two states over a homicide committed by a non-state actor, the world moved rapidly into a dismal conflict, hitherto unknown to mankind.

Although it was initially seen and planned as a war to be fought and concluded in Europe by the European powers alone, changes in the war strategies of the belligerents, the dynamics of power politics and international alliances, and imperial interests transmuted the war from a

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[42] A Correspondent, "The West African Frontier Force," *2 Infantry Division Mirror: A Military Quarterly Journal* , Vol.1 No. 1 (April-June, 1971): 6; Alan Burns, *History of Nigeria* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1978), 230.

[43] Federal Republic of Nigeria Historical Report on the History of Regimental Colours during the 55th Independence Day Anniversary and Ceremonial Change of Guards at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, Nigeria, 1 October, 2015.

[44] Burns, *Nigeria*, 230.

[45] Yan Jagaban Nasara, *The Nigeria Regiment: Spearheads of Victory* (London, National Army Museum, n.d.), 3.

[46] James K. Matthews, "World War 1 and the Rise of African Nationalism: Nigerian Veterans as Catalysts of Change," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 20, 3 (1982): 496-497.

[47] David Killingray, "The Idea of a British Imperial African Army," *Journal of African History* 2/3 (1979): 421-436. War Office, *Military Report on Nigeria 1929* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1929), 39; C. R. Niven, *A Short History of Nigeria* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Longman, 1971), 241-242.

European affair to a cosmopolitan conflict. As soon as the war was extended beyond the frontiers of Europe, East Africa came into it. German East Africa in particular came into a keen military contest and under intense crossfire in the entire period of the war.

Nigerian soldiers entered East Africa in 1916, when the continued diversion of Allied troops from Europe to East Africa was becoming a worrisome development to the Allies. Their entry, therefore, significantly encouraged the desired stoppage of the diversion of Allied military personnel to East Africa at the end of 1916.

Nigerian troops took on the Germans in a series of battles which ended in the defeat of the German forces and the eventual flight from East Africa of the German General Lettow-Vorbeck. Even though they participated in the campaign with the King's African Rifles and Belgian forces, the battles in which they particularly engaged the Germans were the most critical in the Allied victory in East Africa. In fact, it can be argued that German East Africa was effectively conquered in 1917 due to the battles in which the Nigerian soldiers were engaged against the Germans. No wonder Peter Clarke points out that German East Africa had been overrun in 1916-1917 before the final defeat of the German forces in 1918.[48]

Though not sufficiently trained for the task they had to face in East Africa, the Nigerian soldiers possessed unique courage, intrepidity, tenacity, and self-confidence, borne out of their excellent warrior tradition and their most recent defeat of the German forces of the First World War in Cameroon. Outside pecuniary benefits, the good relationship with their officers, and the love of adventure that animated them,[49] they were sustained by these qualities in their military operations against the Germans in East Africa.

[48] Clarke, *West Africans at War*, 15.
[49] Lord Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 5th ed. (London: Frank Cass, 1965), 575.

CHAPTER THREE

WORLD WAR I: THE ROLE OF THE GOLD COAST AND ASANTE TOWARDS THE BRITISH VICTORY

KWAME O. KWARTENG

Introduction

The First World War (WWI), also known as the Great War, broke out in Europe on 28th July 1914 and ended on 11th November 1918. Initially, it was centred on Europe but soon engulfed the whole world as the theatres of war extended beyond the borders of Europe to other parts of the world, particularly, Africa and Mesopotamia. The war ended with estimated casualties of more than 9 million military and 7 million civilian deaths.[1] The war divided Europe into two opposing camps of alliances to wit, the Triple Entente comprising Britain, France and Russia and the Central Powers consisting of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Other countries such as Italy, Japan and the United States of America joined the Triple Entente or the Allies, whilst Turkey and Bulgaria supported the Central Powers.[2] The purpose of this paper is to examine firstly, why Africans and for that matter African territories were drawn into a purely European war, and secondly, to place particular emphasis on the military role played by the Gold Coast and Asante (Ashanti) towards the Allies' victory in what has been described by historians as the "European War in Africa"[3] in

[1] Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I, accessed on 14/10/2015; Otoabasi Akpan, in his article "Africa and the First World War" in *AKSU JOURNAL of History & Global Studies* Volume I, Numbers 1 & 2, 2014 states that in this war six soldiers died for every civilian killed; totalling 8.4million soldiers and 1.4 million civilians, p. 101.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

Togoland, Cameroun and East Africa, and to show the economic and political effects of the war on the Gold Coast and Asante.

African Colonies and the Outbreak of the War

Before any discussions on the involvement of Africans in World War I, it is imperative to briefly shed light on the European colonization of Africa which linked Africans to Europeans. Between 1880 and 1900 the entire African Continent with the exception of Liberia and Ethiopia was partitioned by European imperial powers, to wit, Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Portugal and Italy.[4] More specifically, Britain colonized Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Gambia in West Africa while in East Africa it colonized Uganda and Kenya. Germany had also colonized Togo in West Africa, Cameroun in Central Africa, Namibia in Southern Africa and Tanganyika in East Africa. France, which acquired the largest of the colonial possessions, had Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco in North Africa, and Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) and Dahomey (Benin) in West Africa. Other European nations such as Portugal, Belgium and Italy all possessed colonies in Africa.[5]

These developments undoubtedly made Africans lose their sovereignty and royalty, and they were reduced to colonial and dependent subjects.[6] Having therefore colonized Africans and reduced the majority of them to the status of subjects and dependents, the European powers saw it as a right to use Africans to prosecute their war agenda. The European colonization of a greater part of the African continent thus explains why and how Africans came to be involved both directly and indirectly in the hostilities of World War I when it broke out.[7] The campaign on the African continent was in two phases: the first phase was critical to the Allied global strategy while the campaigns of the second phase aimed at the conquest of German colonies in Africa.[8] According to Crowder "once war had been declared in Europe, the governments of colonies belonging

[4] A.A. Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987), 27.
[5] Knowlton Wallbank World History Map, see also Akpan, "Africa and the First World War", 102.
[6] Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism*, 27.
[7] Michael Crowder, "The First World War and its Consequences" in A. A. Boahen (ed.), *UNESCO General History of Africa VII: "Africa under Colonial Rule Domination 1880-1935"* (Berkeley: James Currey, 1990), 132.
[8] Ibid.

to the Allied powers—France and Britain—had to decide what to do about the Germans in Togo and Kamerun."[9] Such a decision was informed by Cameroun's strategic possession of a deep-water port, and Duala and Togo's Kamina wireless transmitter which was crucial for communications with the South Atlantic.[10] On the other hand, the Germans saw Sierra Leone as strategic with its deep-water port and coaling station which could be "used as a staging base for troopships and food ships from Britain to the Antipodes and Far East".[11]

Having thrown light on the European colonization of Africa and the connection with Africans' participation in World War I, a European war, it is now useful to examine the history and evolution of the Gold Coast Regiment and its military strength at the outset of the war. In an unpublished paper entitled "The Contribution of the Gold Coast to the Allied War Effort, 1914-1918," Der[12] provides an insight into the Gold Coast's military strength and composition, relying on archival information, secondary material and the reports of British officers who participated in campaigns in Togoland, Cameroun and East Africa. He notes that:

> At the outbreak of war in 1914, the military forces in the Gold Coast consisted of regular troops of the Gold Coast Regiment, the Gold Coast Volunteer Force, the Police, and the Preventive Service. The latter three were, however, organised on a para-military basis and it was the men of the Regiment who bore the responsibility of defending the colony from internal disturbances and external attacks.[14]

Quoting Brackenbury,[15] Der traces the origin of the Gold Coast Regiment that saw action in the three theatres of war to the Sagrenti war of 1873-1874. He states that in 1863 Captain Sir John Glover of the Royal Navy raised a constabulary force of 300 Hausa slaves for service in Lagos. This force was dispatched to Asante in 1873 under the command of Captain Glover himself assisted by Captain Goldsworthy, the Controller of

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[9] Michael Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War and West Africa" in J. F.A. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, Vol. 11 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 484.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] B. G. Der was an Associate Professor in the Department of History, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
[14] B. G. Der, "The Contribution of the Gold Coast to the Allied War Effort, 1914-1918", unpublished manuscript, n.d., 3.
[15] E. Brackenbury, *The Ashanti War: A Narrative* (London, 1874), Vol. I, 331 and 394.

Customs at Cape Coast Castle. Having accomplished the Asante campaign, Sir Garnet Wolseley, the commanding officer of the British forces to Asante, proposed that the Hausa constabulary should be made to constitute the core of the Gold Coast Constabulary in 1879, and this was reinforced with local recruits. This comprised 16 European officers and 1,203 Africans. In 1901 it metamorphosed into two battalions and was given the new name of the Gold Coast Regiment which became part of the larger West African Frontier Force[16] (WAFF).

The pertinent question to pose at this juncture is where were these battalions located and what were their functions considering the fact that the British colony of the Gold Coast, which later became Ghana, was made up of three parts—the Colony (Gold Coast), Ashanti and the Northern Territories. Data gleaned from the Gold Coast Defence Scheme indicate that the original function of the Gold Coast Regiment was to safeguard the peace in Ashanti. To this end, its headquarters were located at Kumasi, with four companies and a battery. One company each was kept at Mampong, Nkoranza and Odumasi. The Regiment was also responsible for the maintenance of internal peace and security within the Gold Coast. Consequently, one company was stationed at Accra while its second Battalion served the Northern Territories.[17]

> The First Battalion of the Regiment consisted of the only regular troops in the Gold Coast. It was composed of a battery, armed with four 2.95 inch Q.F. mountain guns and eight infantry companies. These were armed with Lee Enfield rifles and a machine gun for each company. The Regiment also possessed 303 Colt automatic guns and a number of obsolete muzzle 7-pounder guns distributed at various posts. Each of the companies was about 160 rifles strong and the total establishment of the regular troops by 1914 was 38 British officers, 11 British non-commissioned officers and 1,557 African soldiers. There were also about 330 reservists at the time of the outbreak of war in 1914.[18]

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[16] Ibid., 278; Der, **"**The Contribution of the Gold Coast….", Col. A. Haywood and Brigadier F. A. S. Clarke, *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force* (London, 1964), 7.

[17] Public Records and Archives Administration Department (hereafter PRAAD), Accra, ADM12/5/120, Gold Coast Defence Scheme, 1913. See also Der, "The Contribution of the Gold Coast…," 7. Michael Crowder adds that the African Troops before the outbreak of the war also had a ceremonial role representing the pomp, circumstance and might of the colonial powers. See Crowder, 485.

[18] PRAAD, Accra, ADM12/5/120, Gold Coast Defence Scheme, 1913, see also Der, "The Contribution of the Gold Coast….," 5.

The Second Battalion, which was initially based at Tamale, the capital of the Northern Territories, had 550 strong men as a defence force. However, it was disbanded following the setting up of a civilian administration in the territory in 1907. The men were transformed to constitute the nucleus of a semi-military force with a new name—the Northern Territories Constabulary—which mainly performed police duties but were occasionally called upon to carry out military duties as well.[19] The strength of the Second Battalion by 1914 was as follows:

> It had an establishment of two British officers and 321 local ranks recruited mainly in the Northern Territories. The men were armed with Martini Enfield rifles. At each of the administrative posts like Tamale, Gambaga, Lawra, Wa and Navrongo, a 7-pounder gun, and three machine guns were kept.[20]

Apart from these regular troops, there were four semi-regular and volunteer corps of the Gold Coast Regiment. These were Gold Coast Volunteers based at Accra, Cape Coast and Sekondi. In addition, there were Gold Coast Railway Volunteers at Sekondi and Obuasi and Gold Coast Mines Volunteers stationed at Obuasi, Dunkwa and Bibiani. The numerical strength of these volunteer corps was 900 men armed with rifles or carbines, four 7-pounder guns and four machine guns.[21] Further, there were the Gold Coast Police and the Customs and Preventive Service. By the time WWI broke out the strength of the police force was 10 European officers and 25 West Indians and local superintendents, as well as 937 men. All the men were partly treated as semi-military trainees and recruits, and were mostly armed with Lee Metford rifles or carbines. Most of them were enlisted in the volunteer corps when the war broke out.[22] In the main, this was the composition and strength of the Gold Coast Regiment when WWI hostilities broke out on the African continent.

Crowder notes that at the outbreak of the war, the troops of German colonies of Togoland and Cameroun were militarily ill-prepared as opposed to the British and French soldiers in the Gold Coast, Dahomey and Nigeria. Whereas the German stationed *Polizei-truppe* were armed with rifles dating back to the 1870 Franco-Prussian War, the British and French marshalled soldiers from their colonies and dependencies and

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[19] Der, "The Contribution of the Gold Coast….," 5. Der sourced his information from the Annual Reports on the Northern Territories.
[20] PRAAD, Accra, ADM12/5/120, Gold Coast Defence Scheme, 1913, 10, Der, "The Contribution of the Gold Coast…," 5.
[21] PRAAD, Accra, ADM12/5/120, Gold Coast Defence Scheme 1913, 9.
[22] PRAAD, Accra, ADM12/5/123, War Documents: Defence of the Colony.

equipped them with rifles and artillery. In terms of numerical strength the French together with the British were able to mobilize 1,738 troops as against 1,500 German *truppe* in Togoland. The German Governor in Togoland, Von Doering made a proposal to his French and British counterparts to make Togo a neutral territory and confine the war to Europe so that Africans would be saved from witnessing the scourge of war.[23] However, both the Acting Governor and the Commanding officer of the Gold Coast as well as the Lieutenant-Governor of Dahomey jettisoned Von Doering's request and went ahead with their planned invasion of Togoland on 14th August, 1914 which met little or no resistance. The attempt by the Allied forces to capture the Kamina wireless station was a fiasco as the German *truppe* blew it up and surrendered on 26th August, 2014.[24] The destruction of the Kamina Wireless station was a major setback to both the Allies and Germans considering its military and communication significance.

It is noteworthy that the Togoland campaign prepared the African soldiers from the Allies side for the Cameroun campaign which proved a tough one because of natural obstacles such as dense forest, numerous rivers and difficult plateaus which impeded easy access and thus imposed a huge problem to the war strategy of the Allied forces. These factors made the Cameroun battle long drawn out lasting from August 1914 to February 18, 1916.[25] Nonetheless, the Allies emerged victorious after sending about twenty thousand African carriers to the battlefield.[26]

Reason(s) for the Gold Coast Regiment's Involvement in the War

As indicated earlier, the British and French forces saw action in three battlefields, namely, Togoland, Cameroun and East Africa using the West African Frontier Forces, which were predominantly African, but commanded by British officers. The question is: why did the Allies depend on African soldiers to prosecute a European war on the African continent? The answer to this question of the Allies' reliance on African troops in Togoland, Cameroun and East African is not far-fetched. An examination of the history of the European colonization of Africa shows that the

[23] Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War and West Africa", 486.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa* (Third Edition) (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 355.
[26] Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War and West Africa", 486.

colonizers used African troops whom they armed with sophisticated weapons to fight other poorly-armed African soldiers who were defending their kingdoms and empires against the onslaught of European imperialism. Thus, Crowder posits the Allies' dependence on African troops as a recurrence of an old *modus operandi*. He notes that "actually…the West African campaigns were, as in the case of the original colonial occupation, largely a matter of African troops fighting each other…."[27] Additionally, Crowder intimates that France, which was an ally of Britain before the outbreak of the Great War, had a history of using West African troops outside their homelands, particularly in Guiana, Mexico, the Franco-Prussian war, Algeria, Morocco, the Congo and Madagascar.[28] It is abundantly clear from the above evidence that the Allies in particular, and of course all the European nations, knew the value of the African troops in the African terrain and even beyond, and this underscores the Allies' heavy reliance on African troops from the Gold Coast, Nigeria, Dahomey and Upper Senegal in prosecuting the war in Togoland, Cameroun and East Africa.

The Gold Coast Regiment as an integral part of the larger West African Frontier Force was principally in charge of the land defence of the British West African colonies or dependencies. The British authorities between August 1914 and February 1916[29] successfully used the West African Frontier Force in combat in Togoland and subsequently in Cameroun. These brave and impressive successes chalked up by the WAFF and its French counterparts were to culminate in a policy decision which entailed the expansion of the recruitment of African troops to prosecute the war abroad. Downing Street, in consultation with the Army Council considered "the question of raising additional native forces in West Africa for service overseas."[30] The British authorities acknowledged that the West African Frontier Force was largely responsible for the conquest of Cameroun, which was seen as a credit to Nigeria and the Gold Coast administrations for providing the troops. For this reason, it was suggested that there was

> …the necessity of developing to the full the resources in man-power of the empire make it incumbent upon His Majesty's Government not to rest content with this contribution from West Africa to the force now engaged on the side of the Allies; and it is considered advisable that a special

[27] Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War and West Africa", 486.
[28] Ibid., 185.
[29] Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War and West Africa", 490-493.
[30] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/39, from A. Bonar Law, Downing Street to the Officer Administrative, the Government of Gold Coast, 28th November, 1916.

> recruiting campaign should be set on foot at once with a view to providing a considerably increased force for service overseas.[31]

To this end, the British authorities set in motion a scheme deemed as the best line of action. This entailed the appointment of Major A. H. W. Haywood of the Royal Artillery who had enormous experience of West African people as the Assistant Director of Recruiting in the West African Frontier Force, with a temporary rank of colonel, responsible to the Director of Recruiting at the War Office.[32] Colonel Haywood, who had previously commanded a battalion of the Nigerian Regiment, did not only serve in that dependency, but also served in Sierra Leone and Cameroun, all together for a period of ten years, and was an interpreter in Hausa.[33] Undoubtedly it was these wide experiences of working with West African people that served as the main consideration for his appointment for "raising Oversea Contingents from West Africa." Another *raison d'être* for the appointment of Colonel Haywood was Bonar Law's strong belief that it would relieve the commanding officers of the WAFF and their staff who were working with depleted personnel and were at the same time preoccupied with the special difficulties of the re-organization and performance of administrative duties alongside the supervision of recruitment.[34]

Colonel Haywood, as noted already, who was to be directly responsible to the War Office in London, had as part of his mandate, the responsibility of recruiting West African people into the Royal West African Frontier Force for the duration of the war. All the new recruits were to be paid and equipped from Army funds purposely established and raised for services abroad.[35] After his appointment Colonel Haywood was directed to proceed first to the Gold Coast and then to Nigeria. As a strategy for the realization of the objective for his appointment, the Home Office requested the Governors of the British dependencies in West Africa to impress upon not only the colonial officials—military and civil—but also the native Chiefs and all employers of labour, the desires of the Government on the subject under discussion as well as soliciting their loyalty.[36]

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[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.

The Asante Recruits

In furtherance of this goal, the colonial authorities in the Gold Coast on December 2nd 1916 sent a confidential letter to the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti, Francis Fuller, instructing him to immediately implement the new policy of recruiting additional African forces in West Africa into the West African Frontier Force by enlisting "Ashantis" into the Gold Coast Regiment.[37] Hitherto, the Asante had been barred from enlistment into the Gold Coast Regiment.[38] However, it appears that before this directive, the military authorities in Ashanti had commenced recruitment in Ashanti of people who were not necessarily ethnic Asante but maybe Akan. This is borne out by the military report of December 7, 1916 which intimates that "practically none of those enlisted are real Ashantis."[39] This evidence is further buttressed by the report of the officer commanding the number one training centre in Kumasi to the Chief Commissioner on 14th July 1917 that "some Ashantis left here [Kumasi] in November, 1916 for East Africa" but he could not give the number involved because he had sent the records to Accra.[40] This view is strongly supported by the fact that the confidential telegram from the Colonial Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, regarding the enlistment of "Ashantis" into the Gold Coast Regiment, was written on December 2, 1916.

At this point, it is of the essence to provide a brief insight into the recruitment to the Gold Coast Regiment prior to the outbreak of WWI. Recruitment to the Gold Coast Regiment until 1916 was exclusively voluntary and restricted to people from the Northern Territories whilst people from the colony or the coast were precluded from recruitment. Similarly, the Asante were declared disqualified; the reason being that the Asante were warlike by nature, so the thinking of the British officials was that the Asante would be undisciplined if they were not fighting under the

[37] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG1/9/1/39, from the Colonial Secretary, Accra to the Chief Commissioner, Francis Fuller, Coomassie, 21st December, 1916.
[38] Der, "The Contribution of the Gold Coast…," 7.
[39] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG1/9/1/39, from the Chief Commissioner, Francis Fuller, Coomassie to the Colonial Secretary, Accra, 21st December, 1916. The report stated that out of the total "Ashantis enlisted 94, Discharged for misconduct and Deserted 24, which gives a percentage of 24 56% which is most unsatisfactory from a military point of view".
[40] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/40, from the Officer Commanding no. 1 Training Centre, Kumasi to the Chief Commissioner, Kumasi, 14th July 1917.

command of their own chiefs.[41] This line of thinking, though discriminatory and untenable, became redundant following the new policy decision enunciated by Downing Street and the Army Council to raise additional forces in West Africa for service overseas.[42] Accordingly, Der notes that in 1917 British officials permitted the Asante to join the Gold Coast Regiment when the need arose for the British to embark on a general recruitment drive to reinforce its troops in the war zone in East Africa.[43] However, the available evidence which has been alluded to supra seems to suggest that the recruitment of the Asante began much earlier than 1917.

It should, however, be noted that the Asante were initially reticent to join the Gold Coast Regiment. This is exemplified by Francis Fuller's confidential report to the Colonial Secretary on the initial Asante response to the new policy decision of raising additional African forces. He stated among other things that "this morning, I mentioned the contents of your coded telegram of December 2nd …to the Coomassie Councillors but they held out no hopes of their subjects enlisting, stating that the strict discipline makes the work unpopular among the young men."[44] Additionally, a correspondent from the Acting District Commissioner, Ejura, to the Chief Commissioner, Francis Fuller in February 1917 noted that both Mampon and Nsuta "cannot find recruits for the regiments" as "none of the young men will come forward although bounties and other inducements have apparently been offered."[45] The nonchalance of the Asante towards recruitment to do military service abroad, according to Fuller, was because it "was started at a particularly unlucky period...as war was declared shortly after enlistment had been thrown open."[46]

In order to persuade the Asante to change their *laissez-faire* attitude towards recruitment, in February 1917 representatives of the Recruiting Committee set up by the government sought permission from the Chief Commissioner and met the Kumasi Chiefs on the subject of recruiting for

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[41] Haywood, *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force*, 84, Der, "The Contribution of the Gold Coast…," 7.

[42] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/39 from A. Bonar Law, Downing Street, to the officer Administrative, the Government of the Gold Coast, 28th November, 1916.

[43] Der, **"**The Contribution of the Gold Coast…," 7.

[44] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/39, from Francis Fuller, Coomassie to the Colonial Secretary, Accra 21st December, 1916.

[45] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/43, from Acting District Commissioner, Ejura to the Chief Commissioner, Kumasi, 10th February, 1917.

[46] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/39, from Francis Fuller, Coomassie to the Colonial Secretary, Accra 21st December, 1916.

overseas.[47] In March 1917 Francis Fuller, who was also not content with the lackadaisical attitude of the Asante towards recruitment for service overseas, wrote to all the paramount chiefs in Asante to impress on their youth to subscribe to the enlistment. He noted among other things that

> …the government is making for Volunteer Soldiers for service overseas…that they are raising many men in the Colony. It will be a shame and slur on Ashanti therefore, if we do not come forward and claim our share of honour and glory. I shall expect every Head Chief to produce at least 50 men to commence with and I hope at the meeting to be held on Tuesday 20th instant that men are ready and eager to go forth and do battle for right and justice.[48]

Apart from his request to the Asante Chiefs to induce the Asante youth to make them offer themselves for enlistment to the Gold Coast Regiment, the Chief Commissioner whose predecessors had in the past bastardized the Asante as troublesome and bellicose, also eulogized the Asante's military prowess by reminding them of the "fine traditions of Ashanti; the bravery displayed by its warriors; the fighting reputation of your Ancestors".[49] Apart from this appeal from Francis Fuller, the representatives of the Recruitment Committee that the authorities had set up sought permission from the Chief Commissioner, Ashanti and addressed the Kumasi Chiefs on the subject of recruiting for overseas.[50]

Francis Fuller's appeal and compliment seem to have yielded the desired result as the Asante responded with alacrity to the request and mobilized 1,150 volunteers who were conscripted into the Gold Coast Regiment. The Principal Chiefs or paramount rulers who made a contribution of men towards the Allies' war effort were Mampon 50, Juaben 50, Bekwai 50, Kokofu 50, Adanse 50, Nsuta 50, Offinso 50, Ejisu 50, Gyase 50, Kontire 50, Berekum 50, Nkoranza 50, Wam (Domaa) 50, the Adonten division of Kumasi 30, the Akwamu division of Kumasi 50, the Kyidom division of Kumasi 30, the Oyoko division of Kumasi 30, and the Ankobia division of Kumasi 30; then eleven other head chiefs also contributed 30 each, altogether making 330 men.[51]

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[47] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/43, from the Chief Commissioner, Kumasi to Messrs Swanzy Limited, Kumasi, 19th February, 1917.
[48] Ibid., from the Chief Commissioner, Ashanti to all the Head Chiefs in Ashanti, 10th March, 1917.
[49] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/40 from the Chief Commissioner, Ashanti to all the Head Chiefs in Ashanti, 10th March, 1917.
[50] Ibid.
[51] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/40, men contributed by Asante Head Chiefs.

It is however worth noting that not all the Asante paramount divisions were able to provide the fifty (50) recruits requested by the government. The chiefs who could not provide all the 50 recruits made financial donations in lieu. For instance, the Adansehene and Kobina Foli who initially managed to provide twelve men to the Provincial Commissioner for onward transport to Kumasi for recruitment into the Gold Coast Regiment donated £1,000 to the Red Cross and declared his support for the war effort.[52] The inability of the Adansehene to secure the full complement of fifty recruits initially was due to the fact that the youth were employed in the Obuasi Mines. In making the presentation of both the recruits and the cash donation to the Provincial Commissioner the chief stated that

> …all our young men are working in Gold Mines of Obuasi here…our young men, some are cutting firewood, some are working down below, some in the mill, and many maken [sic] farms supplied the company food. We are helping the company. Therefore we are unable to stop our young men in the mines work. If your worship divid[e] the labourers in Obuassie [sic] Gold Mines, half is Adansis [sic]. We beg to inform Your Worship that, we can't get men to join the soldiers, because all our young men is[sic] working in Mines.[53]

Further, Kwasi Akyeampon, the Omanhene of Agona,[54] Kwaku Darko, the Omanhene of Ejisu[55] and Kwabena Kumadu, the Omanhene of Offinso[56] made donations of £500 each to assist the war effort.

Besides the financial donations, the paramount chiefs and others purchased three aeroplanes for the prosecution of the war in January 1916. All three aeroplanes were named after the Ashanti in appreciation of the Asante's invaluable air support to the Allied war effort. The aeroplanes were thus labelled "Ashanti" No. 1, "Ashanti" No. 2 and "Ashanti" No. 3.[57] The third aeroplane was procured out of the donations made by

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[52] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/73 from the Provincial Commissioner, Obuasi to the Chief Commissioner, Kumasi, 27th March 2017.

[53] Ibid., Omanhene, Kobina Foli, Obuasi to the Provincial Commissioner, South Province, Ashanti, Obuasi, 26th March, 1917.

[54] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/40, from Omanhene Kwasi Achampong, Agona to the District Commissioner, Central Province, 1st February 1917.

[55] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/73 from Kwaku Darko, Omanhene of Ejisu to the District Commissioner, Central Province, Coomassie, 9th February, 1917.

[56] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/38 from Kwabina Kunadu, Omanhene of Offinsu to the District Commissioner, Coomassie, 17/2/1917.

[57] PRAAD, Accra, ADM/1/2/116, Hugh Clifford, Governor, Government House, Accra to the Right Honourable Walter H. Long, MP, 25th July, 1917.

Adansehene, Kobina Foli who paid £1,000 and Juabenhene, Kofie Boaten who contributed £250, whilst the Central Province Chiefs who did not want to be outdone supplemented it with £250.[58] In addition to the three donations by the Asante, other private subscribers in the Gold Coast presented eight aeroplanes to the Overseas Club making a total of eleven to support the Allies' war effort.[59] Hugh Clifford construed the donation of the three aeroplanes by the Asante Chiefs as "…further evidence of the generous loyalty of the Chiefs in Ashanti." At the same time, he hinted that the Officer Commanding Troops' report indicated that the majority of the over 500 Asante recruits were "shaping well." [60]

Despite the Officer Commanding Troops' compliments in relation to the conduct and performance of the Asante recruits, evidence abounds that there were some unscrupulous elements among them. It was clear that some of the young men conscripted into the Gold Coast Regiment became disinterested after the initial experience at the centre, and so they deserted. For instance, about 30 Asante recruits were reported to have returned to their villages without obtaining a pass.[61] Again, the Asante recruits misbehaved by taking advantage of their military training and the uniforms they had donned to misconduct themselves in Kumasi. This misconduct was seen as an affront and shame by the chiefs who complained bitterly to Francis Fuller to dispatch them from Kumasi and the country immediately to the battlefield for peace to prevail in Kumasi.[62] All these could be described as unruly and detestable to the military high command and the Asante Chiefs. Notwithstanding the displeasure expressed about the misbehaviour of some recruits, the chiefs showed concern about the welfare of recruits from their area. The Omanhene of Kokofu, for example, requested the Chief Commissioner through the Provincial Commissioner of Southern Ashanti, to apprise him "from time to time of the welfare, and special happenings to the Kokofu recruits."[63] On the whole, it can be inferred from the foregoing that in spite of the naughtiness of a few Asante recruits, who incurred the displeasure of the Chiefs, the majority of the

[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] PRAAD, ARG/1/9/1/43, from the Officer Commanding No. 1 Training Centre to the Chief Commissioner, Kumasi, 3rd April 1917.
[62] Ibid., from the Chief Commissioner, Ashanti to the Officer Commissioner Commanding No.1 Training Centre, Coomassie, 3/5/1917.
[63] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/73, from the Acting Provincial Commissioner, Obuasi, to the Chief Commissioner, Coomassie, 3rd May, 1917.

recruits were disciplined and committed to the cause of the Allied war effort. This is exemplified by the available statistics.

The statistics indicate that in all a total of 553 Asante recruits were trained in 1917; 100 left for Lome on May 4, 1917; 346 left for Accra on May 28 1917; and 109 left for East Africa on July 3 1917.[64] The above analysis clearly shows that the Asante were not recruited solely to reinforce the British troops in East Africa but they also saw active service in Togoland, Cameroun and of course East Africa. It is however, worthy to note that recruitment into the Gold Coast Regiment following the outbreak of war was not limited to the Asante only. There is evidence to show that some people from the colony were also recruited into the Gold Coast Regiment albeit on a small scale. Hugh Clifford reported in April 1917 that though the government was expecting a large Fante enlistment during the recruitment tour of the Central Province "however the number of Fanti recruits is small …."[65]

In addition to the Fante recruits, the policy of raising additional forces in West Africa for service overseas as discussed already also involved the military and civilian employees in both the government and the European firms. In line with the government policy on the subject under discussion, the Acting Colonial Secretary on January 9, 1917 sent a coded telegram to the Chief Commissioner, Ashanti to

> …send at once the full return of officials and non-official Europeans in … [Ashanti] with military experience distinguishing between Officers and NCOs [Non-commissioned Officers] and indicating those available and willing to accept employment with the WAFF Overseas….[66]

Following this order, the Chief Commissioner carried out an investigation and discovered that there were "9 officials in his Dependency with useful Military experience" and seventeen (17) non-officials who were eager to serve, whose particulars he submitted to Accra.[67] He, however, pleaded for some of the officials, namely, Bennett, the Station Master at Kumasi and Messrs. Culfield, Morris and Ekeme to be spared in

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[64] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/40, from the Officer Commanding No. 1 Training Centre to the Chief Commissioner, Coomassie, 14th July, 1917.

[65] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/2/116, Hugh Clifford, Governor, Government House, Accra to The Right Honourable Walter H. Long, MP, 25th July, 1917.

[66] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/9/1/39, from the Acting Colonial Secretary, Accra to the Chief Commissioner, Ashanti, 23rd January, 1917.

[67] Ibid., a circular with the full list of all the official and non-officials was signed by Francis Fuller. The list indicated the name, military experience, present age and whether the person was willing or not to serve in the WAFF, dated 10/1/17.

the event that the government decided to close down Wenchi, Goaso, Ejura and Juaso substations, because their services would still be required in the dependency.[68] The non-officials were volunteers whose release was contingent upon the consent of their Directors since they had a contractual agreement with their employers. This policy of drafting both officials and non-officials into the Gold Coast Regiment to fight abroad, undoubtedly affected the operations of British firms as they risked being outcompeted by other European firms. The Chief Commissioner came to this stark realization when he drew the attention of his superiors to the fact that the recruitment of the non-officials would impact negatively on British firms, because their staff strength would reduce drastically thereby making it difficult for them to compete with the Swiss and French firms in Kumasi not affected by the policy directive.[69]

With respect to the mining industry, on January 12, 1917 the Chief Commissioner requested the Directors of the Ashanti Goldfields in Obuasi to furnish his office with a list of staff members who were ready for military service.[70] J. S. Watkins, the Manager of the Ashanti Goldfields in Obuasi on 23rd February 1917, succinctly responded to the Chief Commissioner's request on behalf of the Directors of the Company that "the question of this Company's Staff, and the national importance of its industry, have been fully considered by both the Colonial Office, and the status of the Company decided upon…."[71] He further noted that the mines staff who were on annual leave in England, on February 3, 1917 followed the established arrangement with the Army Council, under the supervision of the Director of Recruiting to whom names of every new man of military age had to be submitted for permission, and that a list was submitted to the War Office and all the men on the list were allowed to return to Obuasi to work after finishing their annual leave in England without further reference to the authorities.[72] J. S. Watkins, without mincing words, pointed out the impracticability of the request of the authorities as it had serious implications for productivity. He argued that

> The present staff being at its minimum consistent with the efficient working of the Mines, and it being extremely difficult to obtain new men, the Colonial Government should recognize that it is quite impossible for

[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid, from Francis Fuller, Chief Commissioner, Coomassie to J. S. Watkins, Manager, Ashanti Goldfields, Obuasi, 12th January, 1917.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.

> you to lose any of your staff without seriously interfering with operations.[73]

He put out further argumentation that

> …for any man to enlist in the Colony after he, or some other man, has been released from military duties at home on account of the national importance of the gold-producing industry, is not only illogical but would put us in an entirely false position with the War Office.[74]

In effect, J. S. Watkins, just like the Adansehene, Kobina Foli, was more in favour of maintaining the workforce at the mines of the Ashanti Goldfields to ensure continuous operations than enlisting them into the Gold Coast Regiment for service abroad. But that notwithstanding, the Colonial Authorities succeeded in their recruitment drive by conscripting men from the Northern Territories, Ashanti and the Colony who were augmented by military and civilian officers in the government and private employment to constitute the Gold Coast Regiment that saw active service in Togo, Cameroun and East Africa.

The East African Campaign: the Composition and Strength of the Gold Coast Regiment

As intimated earlier, by 18th February 1916 the Allied forces had emerged victorious by successfully capturing Cameroun from the Germans. It was this decisive victory which occasioned the Colonial Government's policy to raise additional forces in West Africa for service overseas ostensibly in East Africa. Crowder proffers reasons for the British Government's resort to the WAFF to fight in East Africa. He writes

> though the Germans only had a small army in East Africa the British forces there in 1916 could not deal with them, so the WAFF were diverted to East Africa. Partly this was because of the lack of British or other European Allied troops, partly because West African troops had shown themselves highly capable in bush warfare and finally because of the need for carriers, a task that European soldiers were incapable of.[75]

Clearly, the role played by the carriers from the WAFF in the East African campaign cannot be quantified and overemphasized considering

[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War and West Africa", 492.

the fact that by 1916 the African hinterland had not been sufficiently opened up by roads and wheel transport as we have it now. Therefore, there was the need to rely on African carriers who were very vital to the successful prosecution of the war. To this end the Gold Coast Regiment, the Gambia Company and troops from Sierra Leone[76] were sent to East Africa to play this role which they effectively and efficiently executed to bring about the British victory in East Africa. Corroborating this, Crowder attributes the success of the British campaign in East Africa to both the carriers and troops from the WAFF.[77]

As at July 1, 1916 the Gold Coast Regiment, which was continuously in active service throughout World War I[78] had a numerical strength of 1,771 comprising 55 officers, 13 non-commissioned officers and 1,702 rank and file.[79] However, on July 6, 1916 an Expeditionary Force code-named "Pamforce" of 1,428 made up of 36 officers, 15 British non-commissioned officers, 11 clerks, 980 rank and file, 177 carriers (battery), 204 carriers (others), 1 store man and 4 RAC officers[80] was dispatched to the battlefield in East Africa. Their motto was "Kulum Shiri" which meant ever-ready and indicated their readiness to die for their colonial masters.[81] On November 25, 1916 the first draft of 407 left the Gold Coast for the battlefield to reinforce the "Pamforce". This included 4 officers, 1 clerk and 402 rank and file. The second draft of 503 composed of 2 officers, 1 British non-commissioned officer and 500 rank and file was sent to again beef up the strength of the Gold Coast Regiment.[82] The third, fourth and fifth drafts were sent on July 5, 1917, October 6, 1917 and December 10, 1917 respectively. The third draft had a total of 804 consisting of 3 officers, 2 British non-commissioned officers and 799 rank and file. The fourth draft of 401 and fifth draft of 500 were all rank and file.[83]

Evidently, the statistics above are not only indicative of the fact that the scheme to recruit additional native forces in West Africa for service overseas was a huge success, but it also, in no small way, contributed to the victory in East Africa which resulted in the defeat of the Germans. Specifically, the Gold Coast Regiment was responsible for the expulsion of the German forces from the following places: the area between the

[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., 493.
[79] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/2/124, Appendix iii.
[80] Ibid.
[81] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG 1/9/1/73, Memorial Speech for the ex-service men, 1-3.
[82] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/2/124, Appendix iii.
[83] Ibid.

Tanga-Moshi and Dar-es-Salaam-Lake Tanganyika railways and from the last-named line and the Rufiji River. The ability of the Regiment to force the German troops to desert their stronghold at the Uluguru Mountains astride the German Central Railway was perhaps its greatest contribution to the campaign as it enabled Smuts to force a passage through this block of mountains and to capture the railway line. The feat facilitated the British drive to Dar-es-Salaam, Kilwa and the expulsion of Von Lettow-Vorbeck's forces beyond the Rufiji by Smuts. In the same vein, the Regiment was responsible for the defeat and scattering of the German forces at Kibata, Narungombe and Mahina.[84] The bravery displayed by the Gold Coast Regiment was rewarded when twenty of them were awarded Distinguished Conduct Medals.[85] At the end of hostilities the Gold Coast Regiment had seen active service throughout the WWI in Togoland, Cameroun and East Africa and casualties included 215 killed in East Africa, 270 died of disease, 725 wounded, thirteen missing in action and 567 rendered invalids.[86] With respect to Togoland, the numerical strength of manpower that the Gold Coast Regiment sent there was 38 Officers, 1,595 rank and file and 2,000 carriers, while in Cameroun where the fiercest fighting was experienced between September 1914 and February 1916, 1,025 soldiers and 3,294 carriers were involved.[87]

The role and feat of the "Pamforce" are vividly encapsulated in a letter that the General Officer Commanding "Pamforce" sent to the Officer Commanding Gold Coast Regiment on June 3, 1918 at the end of hostilities. He notes:

> The departure of the Gold Coast Regiment from my Command furnishes me with a fitting opportunity to place on record my high appreciation of the distinguished and gallant services which the Gold Coast Regiment has never failed to render within the period that I have had the honour to Command Pamforce. The greatest testimony to the excellence of the services rendered by the Gold Coast Regiment is to be found in the fact that during the period which the Regiment has formed an integral part of Pamforce, it has assisted in reducing the enemy force by at least one-half of his former strength, and the measure of the achievement of the

[84] Der, "The Contribution of the Gold Coast…," 52.
[85] Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War and West Africa", 492-493.
[86] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/2/124, Appendix iii; see also B. G. Der, "The Contribution of the Gold Coast," 53.
[87] Der, **"**The Contribution of the Gold Coast…," 52.

> Regiment is the contrast between the strength of the enemy force when Pamforce was formed and his strength today.[88]

The foregoing acknowledgment by the General Officer Commanding Pamforce corroborates the contention that the contribution of the Gold Coast Regiment towards the Allies' victory was immeasurable and vital; and that it was this role which laid the basis for the niche that its successor, the Ghana Armed Forces carved the world over as a well-drilled, professionally competent military institution, that is well-known and excellent in its peacekeeping duties and in protecting the territorial integrity of Ghana.

All the Expeditionary Forces did not return to the Gold Coast at the same time; they came back in batches after the successful accomplishment of the mission in East Africa. By September 6, 1918 there is evidence to suggest that the first batch of the Regiment had arrived in Kumasi. This is borne out by the Acting Colonial Secretary; C. H. Harper's congratulatory message to the returning Expeditionary Forces on behalf of the Governor through the Officer Commanding the Gold Coast Regiment. Harper wrote that

> On the occasion of your return to the Colony with the first portion of the Gold Coast Regiment which is now on its way back from active service in East Africa, I am directed by the Governor to convey to you and to ask you to transmit to the officers, European and Native Non-commissioned Officers and the men of the Gold Coast Expeditionary Force under your command, the thanks of the Government of the Gold Coast for the brilliant and gallant services which they have rendered, and His Excellency's warm congratulations to them on their safe return.[89]

The second batch landed almost immediately afterwards at Sekondi and was transported by train to Kumasi in the same month of September 1918.[90] The brilliance and gallantry displayed by the Gold Coast Regiment and the ultimate victory chalked up by Britain and her Allies in the war were acknowledged not only by the Colonial government, but also by the chiefs and people from all walks of life in the Gold Coast. As soon as the terms of the Armistice signed between Britain and Germany were

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[88] Ibid., Farewell Message to the Gold Coast Regiment by the General Officer Commanding, Pamforce, June 3, 1918.

[89] Ibid., from C. H. Harper, Ag Colonial Secretary to Colonel R. A. De B. Rose, Officer Commanding Gold Coast Regiment, Coomassie, September 6, 1918.

[90] Nancy Lawler and Ivor Wilks, "The World War One Service of Jacob Dosoo Amenya of Ada," in *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, New Series, No. 12, 2009-2010, 31.

published and gazetted by the Governor to signify the defeat of Germany and her Allies, the chiefs and people of the Colony and dependencies received the publication with alacrity and almost immediately sent congratulatory messages to the government with some thronging the seat of government.

> For several days after the announcement of the Armistice, Government House was besieged by bands of women, wearing the emblem, singing the songs and dancing the traditional dances with which in ancient days it was their custom to greet the warriors of their tribes [ethnic group] when returning home from victorious campaigns.[91]

The song contained a message of appreciation to the British government "for saving us"[92] from the tyranny of the Germans. The action of the women created the impression that they were saved by the British. This was not the case. On the contrary, it was the gallantry and brilliance of their kith and kin who were conscripted into the Gold Coast Regiment that saved them. If the Africans who were conscripted into the Regiment had declined conscription or failed to fight and die for the colonial masters, the British and their Allies could not have defeated the Germans on the mountainous and jungle terrains in Togoland, Cameroun and East Africa.

Apart from the women besieging Government House to express their appreciation, the Muslim Community visited Hugh Clifford with a large delegation to congratulate the government; the visit afforded the Governor the opportunity to explain "the present position of Turkey in the world of Islam, and the part which the king of the Hejaz had taken in the campaign in Palestine".[93] In addition to the visit congratulatory messages were sent via telegram on behalf of the people of the Northern Territories by the Chief Commissioner and a group of chiefs from the Western Province of the Colony to the Government. From Tamale, on November 12, 1918 Armitage sent a telegram to the Colonial Secretary with the statement that: "Glorious news contained in your telegram of yesterday's date received

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[91] PRAAD, Accra, ADM 1/2/123,from Hugh Clifford , Governor, Government House, Accra to the Rt Honourable Walter H. Long, MP, London, December 16, 1918.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid., from Hugh Clifford, Governor, Government House, Accra to the Rt Honourable Walter H. Long, MP, London, December16, 1918.
[93] Ibid.

with profound gratitude and joy throughout protectorate."[94] Three chiefs—Kwamin Anaisie II, Kwaku Bompeh and Cobina Kumah—ostensibly representing chiefs in the Western Province of the Colony on November 12, 1918 also sent a telegram to the Governor with the following message "we highly congratulate you and your staff for the victorious success you have achieved in bringing this bloodthirsty war to such a close. God save our King."[95] All these visits and congratulatory messages made Clifford think and conclude that

> The people of the Gold Coast and its Dependencies have given many and consistent proofs of their loyalty throughout the war. Very few subjects of His Majesty the King, I think, rejoice more genuinely at the signal victory which the Navy and the Army of Great Britain, in conjunction with those of her Allies, have achieved after four and half years of warfare.[96]

The evidence adduced above, indeed, justifiably confirms the extent to which the chiefs and people of the Gold Coast supported the British cause in prosecuting World War I. Though the British and their Allies emerged as victors in the war in the three theatres already alluded to, nonetheless, their heavy reliance on African recruits undoubtedly had a negative effect on the local economy in the Gold Coast and its Dependencies.[97]

The Effects of WWI

There is no gainsaying the fact that the recruitment of Africans to prosecute the war in Togoland, Cameroun and East Africa had a wide ramification on the Gold Coast and its Dependencies in particular and Africa in general. The available literature on WWI has variously described the consequences of the war in Africa and has also identified the impact of the war as economic and socio-political. The *UNESO General History of Africa* articulates simply that "the declaration of [world] war [one] brought considerable economic disruption to Africa." It adds that "generally there followed a depression in the prices paid for Africa's primary products, while knowledge that henceforth imported goods would be in short supply

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[94] Ibid., Telegram from the Chief Commissioner, Northern Territories, to the Colonial Secretary, Accra, 12th November, 1918.
[95] Ibid., Telegram from Ohene Kwamin Anaisie II and others, Seccondee, to the Governor, Accra, 12th November, 1918.
[96] Ibid., from Hugh Clifford, Governor, Government House, Accra to the Rt Honourable Walter H. Long, MP, London, December 16, 1918.
[97] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG 1/9/1/39, Letter from the Chief Commissioner, Ashanti to the Colonial Secretary, 23rd January, 1917, 1.

led to a rise in prices."[98] On his part Akpan, while discussing the impact of World War I on Africa, writes that the African economy was

> …dislocated. A number of foodstuff[s] which used to come to Africa were stopped because of problems of shipment. [The] Gambia, for instance, was starved of rice. Again, it was not easy for farmers to perform their functions properly because of the fear of bullets. This brought Africa a step further to becoming a dependent economy.[99]

In addition to the *UNESCO General History of Africa* and Akpan, Crowder depicts the state of the economy of West Africa as "dislocation of the import-export trade, followed by reorientation in favour of the British commercial houses which began to establish the monopolistic situation which became the major feature of the economy in the inter-war years."[100] The foregoing observations undoubtedly provide an inkling of the state of affairs regarding the consequences of the war in Africa during and/or at the end of the four years that it lasted.

Following the outbreak of the war, the Allied powers took certain drastic measures, among which were detentions, seizures and expulsions of German nationals engaged in missionary and commercial activities in Allied territories in West Africa. Germans had established plantations, commercial houses and industries; they were also engaged in the import-export trade in palm kernel, palm oil and cocoa with Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Ghana respectively, which accounted for 80% of the trade. Their expulsion and exclusion from the import-export trade therefore negatively impacted the West African economy.[101] Since this article is on the Gold

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[98] Crowder, "The First World War and its Consequences," 138. For detailed information on the impact of WWI on Africa in general see 132-143.

[99] Akpan, "Africa and the First World War," 107; see also Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War and West Africa," 503 in which he throws more light on the issue. He explains that the people of Gambia used imported rice as their main subsistence food, but the French shipping line ceased to call at Bathurst and British traders at the beginning of the war controlled a little over 10 per cent of the total trade of the Colony.

[100] Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War and West Africa," 505. For comprehensive information on this subject see pp. 503-513.

[101] Crowder, "The First World War and its Consequences," 138; Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War and West Africa," 503 and 504. Crowder throws more light by stating that prior to the outbreak of the war Germany was the major importer of crops from West Africa and an exporter of processed goods to the sub-region importing crops from Sierra Leone, Nigeria and the Gold Coast. For instance, Germany imported eighty per cent of palm kernel crops from Sierra Leone and in 1913 she imported 131,885 tons out of 174,718 tons of palm kernel

Coast and its dependencies, it is now imperative to shift the discussion and narrative to how the war impacted these territories.

In the Gold Coast, according to Kimble, the closure of the German market, coupled with considerable uncertainty over British prices made the buyers delay their crop purchases thereby resulting in the heavy tumbling of prices. Though the prices had inched up marginally by the end of 1914, they were nonetheless only half what they had been in the previous year. Consequently, farmers in the Central Province were reluctant to sell their cocoa notwithstanding government attempts to explain the circumstance of the market to them, because they were unhappy about the price offered, and most of them preferred to leave the cocoa pods on their trees.[102]

The situation was no better or different in Ashanti where during the 1917-18 crop season, it was approximated that no more than three-quarters of the total crop was harvested and only half was sold.[103] Evidently, the outbreak of WWI and the actions taken by the Allies, particularly, the expulsion and exclusion of Germans from participation in the import-export trade had grave economic repercussions for the economy of the Gold Coast and its dependencies. The reluctance of the farmers of the Central Province to sell their crops coupled with the lack of a market for the estimated half of the harvested cocoa beans in Ashanti was indeed a setback for the young and booming cocoa industry and also caused economic hardships for the farmers. These two developments certainly affected the expansion of existing cocoa farms and the establishment of new ones.

One major outcome of the recruitment of troops and carriers was the shortage of labour in many parts of Africa between 1914 and 1918[104] and the Gold Coast and its dependencies were no exception. The young men recruited into the Gold Coast Regiment to fight for the British could have remained at home and engaged in cocoa farming to boost production of the young cocoa industry, but their recruitment into the army deprived the cocoa industry of their labour. The labour shortage was even exacerbated by the outbreak of the influenza pandemic which decimated most of the

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from Nigeria. However, following the outbreak of the war the British pursued a policy which barred the German firms from trading in British West African colonies and thus entrenching the British firms as the major importers and exporters in British colonies and this had dire economic consequences in colonies.

[102] David Kimble, *The Political History of Ghana 1850-1928* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 48.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Crowder, "The First World War and its Consequences," 138.

returning soldiers and carriers in most parts of Africa.[105] In tracing the source and spread of the influenza pandemic of 1918, Akyeampong ascribes it to US troops from Kansas who through their participation in the war in Europe, transferred the microbe from military camp to military camp and infected other soldiers. After the war the mutated microbe accompanied the servicemen returning home from the war front.[106] Patterson attributes the introduction of the influenza epidemic in the country to the arrival of the American Shipping Vessel, SS Shonga which berthed at Cape Coast from Sierra Leone in August, 1918.[107] However, considering the fact that the spread of the pandemic globally was associated with the movement of WWI troops, coupled with the fact that returning batches of the Gold Coast Regiment from East Africa started arriving in the country in September 1918, coincided with the outbreak and spread of the disease in Ashanti and the Northern Territories, then it may be reasonable to conclude that the returning recruits were another source of introduction of the outbreak of the disease in Ashanti and the Northern Territories as was the case in Kenya and Rhodesia.[108] Though the available statistics do not indicate the number of returning recruits that succumbed to the pandemic, there is no doubt that it took a heavy toll on them considering the speed with which the disease spread from the Coast through Ashanti to the Northern Territories. Both Stephen Addai[109] and Patterson[110] indicate that between early October and early November, that is, in a space of one month, the disease had reached Yeji and the French colony of Upper Volta. This period coincided with the arrival of the returning recruits and civil officers who were made to join the army when recruitment became critical. Upon arrival in the country, they were sent to their bases or stations throughout the country and this may explain the rapidity with which the disease diffused to Ashanti and the Northern Territories in such a short space of time.

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[105] Ibid.

[106] Emmanuel K. Akyeampong, "Disease in West African History", in Emmanuel K. Akyeampong (ed.), *Themes in West Africa's History* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 200-201.

[107] David K. Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic of 1918-19 in the Gold Coast," *African History*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1983, 485-502.

[108] Crowder, "The First World War and its Consequences," 138.

[109] Stephen Addai, *Evolution of Modern Medicine in a Developing Country: Ghana 1800-1960* (Durham Academic Press Ltd, 1997), 348. By the first week of October 1918 the epidemic had begun penetrating the interior extending as far as the Northern Territories.

[110] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic….," 490.

Political Consequences

The *UNESCO General History of Africa* explicitly states that the consequences of the war for Africa varied considerably from territory to territory and this was contingent upon their involvement, more especially, the degree of recruitment or military activity in them.[111] The Gold Coast and its dependencies were actively involved in the recruitment and prosecution of the war in Togoland, Cameroun and East Africa; therefore, the war had dire economic and socio-political consequences for the colony and its dependencies. The belligerent European nations concluded the war at the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919 after the signing of an armistice. The socio-political consequence of the Versailles Peace Conference which culminated in the signing of the Versailles Peace Treaty was that Germany was declared vanquished and made to transfer her colonies in Africa including Togoland to France and Britain, which emerged the victors, to administer as a mandated territory.[112] Britain added its half of Togoland to the Gold Coast and administered it together with the Gold Coast colony. Eweland, Dagbon and other northern ethnic groups like the Konkomba, Bimoba, Bassari and others had been split into two as a consequence of the European partition of Africa in the late 1890s. The western half was colonized by the British whilst the eastern section was colonized by the Germans; the Ewe chiefs were unhappy about this development and nursed the hope of reunification. Therefore, when the British declared war on German Togoland, the Ewe chiefs who were looking forward to a reunification aided the British and those in German Togoland welcomed the allied forces with alacrity. But their expectations were dashed with the division of Togoland in 1920 between Britain and France.[113] This political separation which has lingered to date has also split into two the people of the same lineage who owe allegiance to the same traditional authority (chief).

Another political consequence of the war, according to the *UNESCO General History of Africa*, was the outbreak of widespread revolts and protest movements which challenged the colonial authorities in some parts of Africa. These revolts and challenges manifested in French West Africa,

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[111] Crowder, "The First World War and its Consequences," 138.
[112] Adu A. Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Accra: Sankofa Educational Publishers Ltd, 2000), 70. The other German colonies it lost to the Allies were Cameroon, Tanganyika and South West Africa.
[113] Ibid., 70-71.

Libya, and Portuguese and German East Africa.[114] All the pockets of African resistance that existed prior to the outbreak of the war and those that erupted in the course of the war were decisively crushed. In West Africa, the British used the WAFF to suppress any revolt that manifested itself.[115] Akpan adds that these revolts afforded the colonial powers the last opportunity to consolidate their rule in Africa.[116]

Conclusion

This work, relying on primary and secondary data, has demonstrated how Africans who were under colonial rule came to be involved in a purely European war on the African continent. The successes which the Allies chalked up in WWI in the three theatres of war, to wit, Togoland, Cameroun and East Africa were, more or less, largely due to the bravery, determination, sacrifices and martial ardour displayed by the Gold Coast Regiment and their counterparts from Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the French colonies in West Africa. Without the sacrifices and gallantry of the Gold Coast Regiment perhaps it would have been extremely difficult for the allies to have won the war in the three theatres. An allied defeat would have changed the course of colonial history in Africa. The allies could not have defeated the Germans, much less capture their colonies which were split between Britain and France who emerged the victors at the end of the war. Though the Gold Coast Regiment's involvement in the war brought honour to them and for that matter the country and its colonial master, Britain, nonetheless, their participation was a mixed blessing as the country was not spared the scourge of the influenza pandemic of 1918-19 which was spread by the American soldiers who also took part in the war. War indeed is destructive—it destroys human lives and properties. Lastly, the recruitment of Africans affected the labour supply, thus the war had economic ramifications as well.

[114] Crowder, "The First World War and its Consequences," 136.
[115] Akpan, "Africa and the First World War," 107.
[116] Ibid.

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CHAPTER FOUR

BEWILDERMENT, SPECULATIONS AND BENEFACTION: AFRICANS' INTERPRETATION OF WORLD WAR ONE IN THE LITERATURE OF THE SUDAN UNITED MISSION BRITISH BRANCH[1]

JORDAN S. RENGSHWAT

Introduction

In Africa, information about World War One (henceforth WW1) arrived in bits and pieces as there was not the sophisticated information technology that we know today. It seems that when Africans, especially those who had converted or were thinking of converting to the Christianity which European colonial agents and missionaries brought to their communities, got fragments of news of the War, they were deeply confused. They could not reconcile what they were taught from the Holy Bible by European Christian missionaries and the state of social disorder and belligerence that they were hearing about the Christian Europe of the missionaries. They faced a paradoxical situation, a condition of disillusionment and contradiction similar to the one that resides in the philosophical poem "Lest We Should Be the Last"[2] by the renowned Cape Coast poet, Kwesi

[1] This is to distinguish it from the Sudan United Mission Danish Branch or South African Branch, etc.

[2] *Lest We Should Be The Last*—Kwesi Brew

Lest we should be the last
To appear before you
We left our corn in the barn
And unprepared we followed
The winding way to your hut

Brew. As Africans listened to the fragmented stories, they tried to fill in the blank spaces. In so doing they found themselves making speculations about the war. In their interpretation of the war they necessarily had to see it through the prism of the teachings of their European mentors who had come to share with them their faith of "love". Using Nigeria, a British colony in West Africa, as an illustration and entry, this paper examines Africans' interpretation of WW1 as portrayed in the literature of the Sudan United Mission British Branch (SUMBB). The paper seeks to answer the following questions: why did Christian missionaries take pains to tell their converts news of WW1? How and why did the literature of the SUMBB capture the response of Africans to news about WW1?

News of WW1 mainly filtered through to Africans through colonial agents and Christian missionaries. Clearly, many African Christians therefore saw the war largely through the prism of the teachings of European missionaries. Hence, they spiritualized the war and also found a basis for empathy and solidarity with the British Empire. This attitude prevented anti-British feelings and provided the necessary atmosphere for conscription.

The Paper in the Context of Existing Literature

There are some informative literary works on WW1 such as the one we find in *Man's Unfinished Journey*.[3] There are also references to Africans' involvement in the Great War in some church history texts including those of Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed.[4] But there is no single available

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Our children begged for water
From the women bearing golden gourds
On their heads
And laughing on their way from the well
But we did not stop,
Knowing that in your presence
Our hunger would be banished
And our thirst assuaged
By the flowing milk of your words
Now we have come to you
And are amazed to find
Those you have loved and respected
Mock you to your face

[3] Marvin Perry (ed.), *Man's Unfinished Journey: A World History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974).

[4] Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000).

item on how missionary literatures captured Africans' interpretation of the Great War. This paper's examination of how the literature of a European mission society portrayed Africans' conception of the War, therefore, contributes to that field that is still being explored.

The Sudan United Mission British Branch: A Brief History

The Sudan United Mission (SUM) was founded by Hermann Karl Wilhelm Kumm (henceforth Karl Kumm) and his wife, Lucy, in Sheffield in November 1902.[5] From the outset, the Mission was called the Sudan Pioneer Mission. By May 1904 the organizational structure of the Mission consisted of a central committee and four local committees in Ireland, London, the Midlands and Scotland. In June 1904 the Scottish council suggested that the name of the Mission should be changed from the Sudan Pioneer Mission to the Sudan United Mission. Between July and November 1904 three missionaries of the Mission were led by the founder to Nigeria where they opened their first station at Wase in present-day Plateau State. This became known as the Sudan United Mission British Branch (SUMBB).

Meanwhile, the perceived spiritual crisis in the Sudan, and the desire to quickly build a chain of mission stations from the Niger to the Nile in order to stem the advance of Islam into "pagan" territories, led to the global promotion of the spiritual need of the Sudan. Thus, between 1906 and 1912 Kumm visited the USA, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Denmark with his characteristic crusading rhetoric in the form of "To the help of the Lord against the mighty."[6] This led to the formation of American, South African, Australian/New Zealand and Danish branches of the Mission.[7] More branches were formed in the years that followed.

Each branch of the SUM was autonomous, but served in a federation with the other branches. Each branch had a field committee, except for the British and South African branches which had a joint field committee for

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[5] J. Wolfenden, "Retrospect: November, 13th, 1902-November, 1912" in *The Lightbearer* (November, 1912), 188-190.

[6] J. L. Maxwell, *Half a Century of Grace*, 35. At a conference in Edinburgh, after describing "'The Serious State of Affairs in Central Africa'" Karl Kumm said, "'I call upon you, the people of Scotland, who have sent out men like Livingstone, Moffat and Mackay, to come and help us in the huge task of stopping Mohammedanism in Africa;'" Mogens Jensen, *Two Men and Their Mission* (Christianfeld: Forlaget Savanne, 1992), 75.

[7] "Origin and Progress of the SUM," *The Lightbearer*, July-August 1921, 101.

many years.[8] There was a Field Council that brought the branches together. Similarly, an International Committee, which was consultative in character, brought the national offices together.[9] Each branch had its own geographical sphere of influence in the field. The sharing out of spheres of influence among the branches was occasioned by the desire to cover much ground against the advance of Islam. By January 1916 the four branches of SUM working in Nigeria had 37 missionaries working in ten mission stations in what is today North-central Nigeria. In contrast, there were only four missionaries of the Australian branch of SUM working in one mission station in Southern Sudan among the Dinka.[10] The Australian Branch of SUM was not the only Christian mission society that was working in Southern Sudan. There were also the Catholics, Anglicans and Presbyterians.[11]

The SUMBB took a leadership role over the other branches of the SUM for two reasons: it was the British branch that invited all the other branches to work in the Sudan Savannah and the other branches were non-British so they relied on the SUMBB in dealing with the colonial government.[12]

During its history the SUMBB had a bi-monthly magazine called *The Lightbearer*. The Mission also had many other publications.[13] It is from a

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[8] Jordan Samson Rengshwat, "First COCIN President: The Life and Work of Rev. Damina Bawado." Master of Theology Thesis (Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru, 2002), 57-60.

[9] Mogens Jensen, *Two Men and Their Mission* (Christianfeld: Forlaget Savanne, 1992), 86.

[10] "SUM Roll Call" *The Lightbearer* (January 1916) 6; *From Pioneers to Partners* (London: Sudan United
Mission, n.d.), 6.

[11] Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, 148-149.

[12] Boer, Jan Harm, *Missionary Messenger of Liberation in a Colonial Context: A Case Study of the Sudan United Mission* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1979), 116.

[13] Other publications of the mission include: News-letters; Bristow, W. M., *Training Africans for Christ* (London: Sudan United Mission, 1948) (*Microfilm*, Part III Reel 5, Adam Matthew Publications Ltd, 2006. TCNN Archives, Bukuru); *Facing the Challenge: Sudan United Mission-Action Partners 1904-2004* (Doncaster: Action Partners, 2004); Maxwell, J. L., *Half a Century of Grace* (London: Sudan United Mission, n.d.); *From Pioneers to Partners* (London: Sudan United Mission, n.d., 29-44); Moles, Margaret, *A Place Called Vom* (n.c. Sudan United Mission, n.d.); Rimmer, E. M., *Go Ye and Teach: An Account of the Growth and Work of Gindiri Training School* (London: Sudan United Mission, n.d.); Suffill, T. L., *The Birom* (London: Sudan United Mission, n.d.) (*Microfilm* Part III Reel 3. Adam Matthew Publications Ltd, 2006. TCNN Archives Bukuru); Tett, Mollie E., *The Road to Freedom: The Story of the Sudan United Mission* (Kent: Sudan United Mission, n.d.); Tett, Mollie E., *The Bridge Builder: The Life*

few issues of this body of literatures that the main thrust of the paper is built. But before focusing on this, it is important to look at a sketchy picture of WW1 and the role of European missions in Africa.

World War One and European Missionaries in Africa

Although WW1 was between white men beyond the oceans, Southern Cameroon, Tanzania and Namibia seem to be principal theatres of the war in Africa. By the time the war ended, about 120,000 African soldiers and over a million African "carriers and other labourers" had been involved in the war in Africa. Contingents of African soldiers in France also ran into the thousands. Andre Matswa of Congo emerged as a warrior of repute in France and was promoted to the rank of sergeant.[14]

The European missionaries, for their part, took part in it in varying degrees depending on the proximity of their location to the principal theatres of the war. In French West Africa Fr. Dubernet warded off an African rebellion against conscription; and "In both Kenya and Tanzania British missionaries took the initiative in forming a mission carrier corps of their own...."[15] For their involvement in the recruitment campaign in French West Africa, the French Government rewarded a French mission led by Bishop Lemaitre with a subsidy for mission schools.[16]

Africans' Interpretation of the War in the Literature of SUMBB

For the missionaries of the SUMBB, as was probably the case with most European Christian missions in Africa, there was a dearth of news about the war. In the words of Lowry Maxwell, one of the pioneer missionaries of the Mission:

> And then, as the summer was at its height, the war came. I remember well the day when we first heard of it. Of its probability, or its causes, we had heard nothing. Our newspapers from home were already old by the time that they reached us [...] We were sitting at lunch—quite a group of us [...]

Story of W. M. Bristow, OBE (Kent: Sudan United Mission, n.d.); Tett, Mollie E., *Toma the Pastor* (*Microfilm*, Part III Reel 3, Adam Matthew Publications Ltd, 2006. TCNN Archives, Bukuru); and Williams, David, *Students for Christ* (Kent: Sudan United Mission n.d.).

[14] Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, 610-612.

[15] Ibid., 611-612.

[16] Ibid., 612-613.

> An orderly from the Government lines then appeared at the door, and I was handed a little note. It was curt, official, and appalling in its stern announcement: 'His Excellency the Governor announces for general information that war has broken out with Germany.' That was all. No details; no explanation [...] What could we do? What was going to happen? In those days there was no BBC to give us any explanation, or to warn us what to expect.[17]

As news of the war came to the missions in Africa in bits and pieces, so was the communication of the same by those missionaries who were willing to tell their converts.

At first, the missionaries working among the Dinka of the "White Nile" were in a fix as to whether or not they should tell their indigenous converts of news of the war. In the end they concluded that if they did not tell the converts they might get to hear it anyway, and maybe, as "On the White Nile: Dinka Ideas of the War", an editorial in *The Lightbearer* of 1916 warned "...with an anti-British bias."[18] The political situation in some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa in the years leading up to and during the Great War was such that in a number of spots there were already in existence ill-feelings against some colonial policies. These were occasionally voiced by people like Garrick Braide of the Niger Delta Area and *Mairigan karfe*[19] of Jukun land.[20] Thus, for these missionaries the motive for telling the converts news of the war was to prevent the rise of ill-feelings among Africans against the British Government.[21] Elsewhere, in part of French West Africa, Africans became rebellious to the French government over the conscription of their kith and kin.[22]

With this motive in mind, the missionaries used the simplest terms possible to disclose news about the war to their converts:

> So the situation was explained to one or two of the more intelligent 'boys'; a small nation was threatened by a big one against previous treaties. The Great Chief of the British had telegraphed to the Great Chief of the

[17] J. L. Maxwell, *Half a Century of Grace*, 109-110. *Half a Century of Grace* is the Golden Jubilee book of the mission. The writer, J. L. Maxwell was among the first SUMBB missionaries to Nigeria. He came to Nigeria in 1904 and worked in the Nigerian mission field for about three decades. The present writer considers this work a primary source.

[18] "On the White Nile: Dinka Ideas of the War" *The Lightbearer*, January-February 1916, 8-9.

[19] This is a Hausa phrase which means iron-shirt.

[20] J. L. Maxwell, *Half a Century of Grace*, 117-120.

[21] "On the White Nile: Dinka Ideas of the War", 8.

[22] Sundkler and Steed, 612-613.

> Germans, to desist by such time that the sun should be in such a position. The German Chief had refused to listen, and so the Great Chief of the British had called all his men to go and support the weak and small nation.[23]

To ensure that their message was understood, the missionaries selected "...the more intelligent 'boys'"; and they used such phrases as "the Great Chief" and "...by such time that the sun should be in such a position."

It seems the missionaries' brief explanation of the war paid off. The converts understood the message, and comparing the British motive with the teaching they had received from the mission on supporting the weak and not to make life difficult for them, they approved Britain's role in the war and concluded "...the English are so good...."[24] Margaret Nissen, writing about forty-eight years after WW1, opined that Africans' perception of the British continued for decades after the war.[25] Thus, it seems that the mission achieved its objective for disclosing the news about the war.

In the weeks and months that followed, the converts often went to the missionaries for updates about the war. During one such visit, the converts asked why the war was not over. In their estimation the war was taking too long. The Europeans had taught them about forgiveness, so they wondered why the war could not be over. Even from the stand-point of their own intra- and inter-ethnic wars which lasted for only days or weeks in the days before the advent of European missionaries, they expected the European war to end quickly.

In their bid to satisfy the Africans' curious questions about the war the missionaries gave the converts the impression that Britain was a saintly country and Germany was a land of "savages," like Africa before the advent of European occupation. This caused the Africans to raise two fundamental questions: "Have no missionaries been sent to the Germans?" and "...the English are so good, why does God not hold back the spears of the Germans?"[26] To both of these questions no recorded answers were given to the Africans. From their interaction with the missionaries they were taught that mission societies could convert "savage tribes" into peaceful and useful members of a society, and if the Germans were savages then missionaries could not have been to their land. Although most of the African converts were not fully familiar with German religious

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[23] "On the White Nile: Dinka Ideas of the War", 8.
[24] Ibid., 8-9.
[25] Margaret Nissen, *An African Church is Born: A Story of a Lutheran Church in Nigeria* (n.c.: Sudan United Mission Danish Branch, n.d.), 71.
[26] "On the White Nile: Dinka Ideas of the War", 8-9.

history, it seems that their logic was not too far from being correct; but, as an editorial note, Germany's problem was not one of a lack of missionaries but one of a want of trust for the Christian scriptures. In the words of the editorial,

> Well, shortly after the teaching of higher criticism [...] into those young inflated minds of Germany these critics instilled distrust of the scriptures, and [...] taught that the Bible has no right to dictate to armies of men [...] It is because of that undermining of the standard of right [...] that Protestant pious people, as many of the Germans are, are found prepared to tolerate and condone acts that make humanity shudder.[27]

But it is difficult to tell whether this was the answer that the missionaries gave the African converts. To the question "... the English are so good, why does God not hold back the spears of the Germans?" the editorial admitted that "This was...difficult to explain." One wonders whether this question hinged on an understanding or misunderstanding of some teachings they had received from the missionaries or on their reminiscences of the protective power of the deities in African Primal Religion (henceforth APR). Contrary to some of the lingering racist European notions and Social Darwinist conceptions that the African was impervious to logic, the fact that the Africans being indoctrinated with some Christian teachings were able to hear news about the war, relate the news and interrogate aspects of the information shows that they had the ability to synthesize, analyse and ask sensible and logical questions.

But not all Africans had the chance, as in the case of the Dinka of the White Nile, to occasionally have an update of the war. As the information that the people in Jukun land in Northern Nigeria received about the war was in bits and pieces, they could not figure out exactly what was happening. An old man, who was lacking information or not very satisfied with the answers he received as to the cause of such a large-scale conflagration, came up with an inventive theory that was deeply-rooted in Christian missionary teaching to explain the cause of the war and why the war lasted so long. According to the old man, as captured by an editorial in *The Lightbearer*,

> The dead all rose and stood before God and said, 'Lord, we are tired of waiting, you must bring the resurrection day:' but God replied that he could not bring the resurrection for there were still the living on the earth. Then the dead returned to the earth and rose up in the midst of men to set them to war on each other, and ever fresh hosts of dead rise up to fan the

[27] "The Bible and the War" *The Lightbearer,* August-September, 1915, 119-120.

> flame of war that it may not die until every man is killed. Then the dead will return to God and say, 'Lord, there are now no living, deliver us therefore from our prison,' and God will command the resurrection and the dead will enter into their rest.[28]

If this was not meant to be a joke then it was a sincere attempt to fill in the blank spaces owing to a lack of coherent information about the war. At this time the SUM was only about ten years old in Jukun land. At the risk of a value judgement, it seems that this old man was a brilliant student of the mission. He seems to have understood very clearly the missionaries' teaching on the intermediate state[29] and the *parousia*.[30] The intermediate state is somewhat akin to the world of the living dead in APR; and according to the teachings and worldview of APR don't the ancestors sometimes cause trouble for the living? His background in APR probably promoted his understanding of the intermediate state as taught by the mission, and perhaps even helped him to come up with this ingenious theory; a theory that did not point an accusing finger at any one particular nation for starting the war.

As in the "Dinka Ideas of the War" editorial of *The Lightbearer*, this theory, that did not indict any particular nation, had the potential to prevent anti-British feelings when propagated among the Jukun, one of the largest minority ethnic groups of Northern Nigeria.[31] In Northern Nigeria about 25,000 people were conscripted and sent to Cameroon during the war.[32] Jukun nationalities could not have failed to be among those who were conscripted. So such non-anti-British bias theory which had roots in missionary teachings seemed to provide the necessary atmosphere for conscription.

In the "Dinka Idea of the War" the editorial ended in the following words: "[...] so Christian missions prove to be one of the strong links binding the Empire."[33] Undoubtedly, this captures a reason for including Africans' interpretation of the war in the publications of the SUMBB. The

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[28] "The Cause of the War" *The Lightbearer*, September-October 1916, 96.

[29] That between the resurrection day and the present there is a place where the dead stay to await the resurrection when good people will eternally enjoy a blissful life in the skies.

[30] The *Parousia* is a theological concept that comes from the Greek word *parousia* meaning "coming" or "presence". In the study of Bible prophecy, *Parousia* is used in reference to the Coming of Jesus Christ.

[31] Probably the old man's theory was a story in circulation among some of the Jukun for the missionaries to capture in their literature.

[32] Sundkler and Steed, 612.

[33] "On the White Nile: Dinka Ideas of the War", 9.

article's inclusion in the publication of the Mission sought to show that Christian missions were not only passively praying for Britain's victory in the war, but were also actively involved in binding the Empire into a compact whole necessary for success in the war. It also seems that the article was intended to make a point against the colonial policy of restricting the activities of Christian missions in Sudan. According to Andrew Wheeler,

> The British authorities (Lord Cromer, the British Agent in Cairo, Kitchener, the Governor-General in Khartoum, and his successor, Wingate) were extremely reluctant to permit missionary activity in the Sudan. They feared what they regarded as Muslim 'fanaticism' and regarded missionaries as potential trouble-makers who might provoke further Mahdist rebellions. Public opinion in Britain and America however was so strong that they were unable to exclude the missionaries but they did endeavour to restrict their work as much as possible. All direct evangelism was forbidden, and the government reluctantly gave permission for educational and medical work as long as no attempt to spread the Christian faith amongst Muslims was made. This policy lasted throughout the Condominium period.[34]

By means of the story, the missionaries conveyed the notion that the presence of missions could tame and not incite a "savage" people contrary to the colonial office's thoughts. Both the Dinka and the Jukun stories obviously pointed to the influence of Christian missionaries in creating an atmosphere that was conducive for conscription. Michael Crowder has identified indirect rule, humane colonial policies and "the righteousness of the British cause" as reasons for the absence of revolt against conscription.[35] Although "Crowder's book is the standard work on the colonial period in the vast and varied areas of the coast and hinterland of West Africa,"[36] his work has failed to see the missionary factor in the absence of local resistance against conscription in British West Africa.

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[34] Andrew C. Wheeler, "Christianity in Sudan," in *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* http://www.dacb.org/history/christianity%20in%20sudan.html. Date Accessed, 17/10/2015.

[35] Michael Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), 254-255.

[36] Michael Crowder, see back cover page.

Conclusion

So far this paper has shown that the influence of European Christian missionaries made many Africans see WW1 through the prism of the Christian faith. This helped prevent anti-British bias necessary for conscription. This partly explains why there was no significant protest against conscription. The missionaries therefore became unarmed combatants of the war. The responses of Africans were documented in the literature of the SUMBB to probably show readers in the home constituencies of the missionaries how British missions also contributed to the war cause. In this way, mission and colonialism stood together to protect the castle of Caesar and that of Christ in the British Empire, as was the case in the collaboration of Church and State in Ethiopia to resist an Arab conquest.

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SECTION II:

WARTIME COLONIAL ECONOMIC POLICIES

CHAPTER FIVE

AFRICAN MOBILIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES IN BRITISH WEST AFRICA DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

ADEBAYO A. LAWAL

Introduction

In an attempt to answer the question, "what are the components of what we call national power?" the answer that naturally comes to our mind will include: the armed forces, manpower and ample finance. But natural resources constitute a stable factor that influences the power of a nation in relation to other nations.[1] The natural resources in British West Africa included the principal export crops like: cocoa, cotton, groundnuts, palm produce, rubber, minerals and food crops. They are essential wartime strategic materials that must be exploited to win the war.

A country that is self-sufficient in food production has a great advantage over a nation that is not. If it does not grow food crops, it must import foodstuffs to avoid starvation. If a country imports food during a war, it must ensure that the sea lanes are not blocked for shipping vital food supplies. Whenever its food imports are challenged through submarine warfare and air attacks, its power is challenged and its survival is hanging in the balance.[2]

When the First World War broke out, British military intelligence knew that Germany was deficient in foodstuffs and the British strategy was to pursue three principal goals to survive a war: it planned either severally or in combination to avoid a long war through a speedy victory before its food reserves were exhausted; to conquer the great food-

[1] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc, 1978), 117.
[2] Ibid., 120; Alan S. Milward, *War, Economy and Society, 1939-1945* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), 246.

producing areas of eastern Europe; and use British sea power to cut Germany off from access to overseas sources of food. It was not surprising therefore that the Allied Powers blockade sapped the German will to resist and was one of the essential factors in the victory of the Allies.[3] Hence in international politics, self-sufficiency in food has always been a source of great strength, while insufficiency of food is a source of weakness.

As mentioned above, raw materials are also valuable assets to national power. Indeed, they are very important to industrial production and for waging war, but an appropriate technology will boost national power, in terms of food processing, and agro-allied industry. A country with this industrial endowment and control of raw materials, wields an increasing bargaining power in international relations and diplomacy. Raw materials make it possible for a nation to engage in the mechanization of warfare by virtue of its improved military techniques.[4] In other words oil, iron, copper, lead, tin, manganese, sulphur, zinc, aluminum, nickel, coal, uranium, etc., are basic minerals in industrial production for military purposes.

Theoretical Framework

The concept of a strategic synthesis in a war economy is adopted in the analysis of the paper. A correct assessment of the potentiality of the economy for waging war is very instrumental to a functional strategic plan. In other words, war economics must include a strategic plan involving economists and the military. The strategic plan is a synthesis of all other factors—political, military, social and psychological. These factors must be correctly assessed by experts and incorporated into the synthesis to guarantee the required success in terms of the uninterrupted working of the economy and the sustained morale of labour and the army.[5]

An effective propaganda network will boost this morale. In war, the economists and military strategists, who make their calculations and plans, must integrate their strategies rather than operate at cross-purposes. Regular meetings and correspondence will be useful in resolving strategic paradoxes and conflicts in accordance with the prevailing exigencies. Thus, in practical terms, the synthetic strategy must function in some

[3] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 120.
[4] Ibid., 121-122.
[5] Milward, *War, Economy and Society*…, 19.

complicated context, i.e. in social, economic, military, political and psychological considerations within the wartime restrictions and controls.[6]

All the personnel involved in the operation of the synthetic strategy have only one economic priority—the maximization of production, no matter the cost by ensuring the ample supply of capital, land and labour to meet production targets. However, they must be aware of the unpredictable course of war and unexpected developments, which may nullify their calculations. Hence, in war, nothing works according to mathematical calculations. Therefore, in anticipation of disruptions and emergencies, there must be flexibility in the synthetic strategy and adaptability to changing circumstances and situations, hence, the indispensability of strategic thinking and creativity based on a consistent monitoring and study of war situations.[7]

Economic strategy must encompass the potential of the economy to defeat the enemy by out-producing him in strategic agricultural resources and in the weapons of combat. However, care should be taken to prevent enemy access to the strategic materials through smuggling and the black market, hence the instrumentality of economic espionage and economic warfare by trade embargoes.

The various institutions and agencies involved in the British war strategies during the First World War included: the War Office, Army Council, War Cabinet, the Admiralty, the Colonial Office, the Colonial Governors, Residents, District Officers, Directors of Agriculture, the Ministry of Food, the War Trade Department and the Foreign Office.[8]

The Outbreak of War in 1914 and Emergency Laws

The outbreak of war in 1914 compelled the British Government to enact and proclaim some new rules and regulations which were simultaneously enforced in the British colonies. The emergency laws were contained in the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) passed on 8 August 1914 for securing public safety.[9]

DORA gave the British Government and colonial governments, the power "to prosecute anybody whose actions were deemed to 'jeopardize

[6] Ibid., 19, 20.
[7] Ibid., 20
[8] Akinjide Osuntokun, *Nigeria in the First World War* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1979), 237-269.
[9] Amanda Mason, "10 Surprising Laws Passed," www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar. Defence of the Realm Act, November 27, 1914. Accessed on 21-2-2016.

the success of the operations of its majesty's forces or to assist the enemy'". As the war continued, the enforcement of the Act regulated virtually every aspect of life in Britain. Indeed, the Act was expanded and given a wide interpretation.

DORA introduced and imposed these measures: the whistling or horn blowing of cars was forbidden so that the sound was not mistaken for air raid warnings in towns and cities; loitering was forbidden near bridges and tunnels; the lighting or the making of bonfires by members of the public was prohibited; clocks were moved forward in British Summer Time, in May 1916 to maximize daytime working hours in the agricultural sector; drinking alcohol at work was banned and it was an offence to buy drinks for others to avoid drunkenness; blackouts were introduced in certain towns and cities to protect against air raids; and press censorship was enforced to limit the reporting of war news. Apart from banning many publications, the censorship board prosecuted many news reporters for disclosing secret information to some particular newspapers. In postal censorship, mail sorted at post offices by women was sent to various censorship departments. In particular, military censors examined 300,000 private telegrams in 1916 alone.[10]

Lastly, DORA imposed restrictions on the movement of foreign nationals from enemy countries. The Germans in Togo, the Gold Coast, Nigeria and the Cameroons, were arrested and interned.[11]

The Conflicting Wartime Strategies in West Africa

It must be underscored that British and French Colonial authorities in West Africa failed to forge a common front in fighting Germany, their enemy. Hence, they failed to harmonize both their respective economic and military strategies. The French policy of compulsory recruitment precipitated revolts in several areas as the colonial subjects refused to be used as cannon fodder. According to the official projection, the total population of the French Federation was 12 million out of which one million had to be recruited while the rest concentrated on the increased production of foodstuffs. When the major recruitment drive began in 1915-1916 for 50,000 men, there was an open rebellion against the French

[10] Ibid.
[11] Osuntokun, *Nigeria in the First World War*, 181, 194-196.

in several local government areas or "native" administrations especially in the Ivory Coast and the Upper Volta.[12]

The grievances of the revolters included: heavy taxation, forced labour, compulsory cultivation, labour conscription, demotion of their chiefs, their public humiliation by flogging and exile, colonial police repression, arbitrary police arrests, and imprisonment and injustice in Native Courts. The French fired guns at the escaping revolters, violated the women, and burnt their huts and villages. The exodus meant depopulation and a loss of manpower for war and the production of agricultural materials like cocoa, and coffee, for war.[13]

Between 1916 and 1917, about 18,000 refugees migrated into the Gold Coast, settling in villages. Over 100,000 Mossi fled to the Gambia, Senegal and Guinea. By 1918, the number of migrants had increased to 186,633.[14]

The refugee communities in the British colonial territory of the Dagara ("Dagarti") constituted a formidable labour reservoir which contributed immensely to the growth of the agricultural and mining industries of the Gold Coast. Similarly, the exodus from Senegal and French Guinea into the Gambia provided an unprecedented labour force that promoted groundnut cultivation in the British territory. Thus, between 1915 and 1916, out of the estimated 50,000 only 39,798 were recruited from the other six colonies, yet France needed more men on the battlefields in Europe. It was Blaise Diagne, the Senegalese Deputy, who was appointed High Commissioner for the Recruitment of Troops in Black Africa, while acting in the capacity of Governor General, who succeeded in recruiting 63,378 men.[15]

By contrast, the British were known for some liberal indirect rule howbeit not perfect, unlike the French who failed to implement their earlier policy of liberal reform. No wonder they reaped the fruit of their rigid colonial fundamentalism. The British used persuasions, appeals and propaganda in addressing the chiefs, the educated and political elites, churches and mosques for moral support and contributions. British

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[12] Jean Suret-Canale, *French Colonialism in Tropical Africa, 1900-1945* (London: Heinemann, 1971), 135, 138; Michael Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War and West Africa", in J. F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder (eds.) *History of West Africa*, Vol. 2 (London: Longman Group Ltd, 1975), 497-499.

[13] A. I. Asiwaju, "Migrations as Revolt: The Example of French West Africa with Reference to Ivory Coast and the Upper Volta: up to 1945," (21st Annual Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria, 1978), 4 and 8.

[14] Ibid., 14

[15] Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War…," 501.

promises of more liberal reforms of the colonial economy and the structure of colonial administration and the appointment of more colonial subjects appealed to their instincts in mobilizing the general populace for voluntary recruitment.[16]

The anti-French protest and exodus naturally precipitated frequent Anglo-French diplomatic correspondence for mutual trust, cooperation and understanding.

Rather than embark on an instant abolition of the illiberal, oppressive and exploitative colonial policy, the French appealed to the British, Portuguese and Liberian authorities to repatriate the refugees from their colonial spheres and close their borders against intending migrants. The British only cooperated in a half-hearted way by just issuing orders in the Gambia and the Gold Coast to arrest and deport refugees. The latter, in their flight across the border, could hide in the bush to escape capture and find their way to their intended destinations.[17]

Mobilization of Agricultural Resources in British West Africa

Generally, agriculture was and is still, the major sector of the West African regional economy, apart from other sectors such as: mining, transport, banking, trade and manufacturing. Economic units like the family, village, ethnic groups and guilds produced surplus foodstuffs and tree crops that were exchanged in trade with other units to create more varied diets, or improve manufactured goods. Labour could be withdrawn from agriculture and diverted to local manufactures in response to some pressing demand. On festival holidays, labour could be withdrawn from material production and diverted to religious services, entertainment or artistic production. However, during the First World War, labour was available for defence, warfare and material production.[18]

In the Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Nigeria, the British Colonial authorities extensively appealed to various communities, villages, towns, and market guilds, through the chiefs, and the political and educated elites for tangible contributions to winning the war.

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[16] Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War…," 501; Osuntokun, *Nigeria in the First World War*, 64-99, 139-168.

[17] Asiwaju, "Migrations as Revolts…," 3; Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War…," 499.

[18] Adebayo A. Lawal, *Nigeria: Culture, Politics, Governance and Development* (Ibadan: Connel Publications, 2015), 171.

The regular programmes of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) on the progress of the war attracted the attention of the urbanites and stimulated them to cooperate with the British in obeying the emergency laws of DORA. Thus, apart from intensifying the production of foodstuffs and strategic agricultural materials, the colonial subjects also made substantial financial contributions for which the British were grateful.[19] The strategic raw materials included cocoa, groundnuts, cotton, rubber, palm produce, minerals, hides and skins, which were produced in the hinterland and transported by rail to the coastal port cities and railway terminals such as: Lagos, Port Harcourt, Takoradi, Accra, Tema, Freetown and Bathurst for shipment overseas.[20]

In villages, market towns and cities, farm produce was disposed of by the wives and children of farmers while specialists in animal husbandry, hunting, fishing, craftsmanship and trade plied their wares in local, regional and extra-territorial trade.

In the savannah belt, farmers used ploughs and draught animals in producing maize, manioc, peanuts, sweet potatoes, yams, millet, sorghum, gourds, stalk vegetables, beans, cotton and indigo. Those who specialized in pastoral farming combined food and vegetable production with cattle rearing and sold meat, milk, cheese, leather and skins. In the rainforest areas, farmers used iron implements like hoes, cutlasses, axes, diggers and shovels on their farms to produce yams, cocoyams, bananas, plantains, oranges, wet and dry rice, vegetables, cassava, kolanuts, palm produce and rubber for domestic consumption and for sale in the local market.[21]

Farmers in the two climatic zones adopted these methods of agriculture which were integral to their cultural heritage where possible: shifting cultivation, rotational farming, the fallow land system, and terrace and irrigation systems. Also, in both zones, the producers engaged or applied different types of labour: wage labour and migrant share-croppers like: the Igbira on Yoruba cocoa farms, household hands, pawns and cooperative labour among the Yoruba, Tiv and Jukun, in Nigeria; among the Yoruba were the "Aro" and Owe which were similar in organization and functions

[19] A. A. Lawal, "A History of Financial Administration in Nigeria, 1900-1945," PhD Thesis, University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria, 1981, 121-138.

[20] Lawal, *Nigeria: Culture, Politics…*, 171-172; N. A. Cox-George, *Studies in Finance and Development: The Gold Coast (Ghana) Experience, History of West Africa* Vol. 2 (London: Dennis Debson Books Ltd, 1973), 30.

[21] J. E. Flint, "Economic Change in West Africa in the Nineteenth Century" in J. F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa* Vol. 2 (London: Longman Group Limited, 1975), 383-385.

to the "dokwe" and "sososе" among the Dahomeans and the Mossi of Upper Volta.[22]

The manufacturing sector was an integral part of the informal sector which has survived the predations of colonialism till today. Here were craftsmen and craftswomen who formed guilds and produced household goods which were sold in the daily and periodic markets. There were production and distribution trade guilds which specialized in retail and wholesale business among the Ewe, Tic, Katab, Lobi, Laurunsi, Birom, Laa, Tallensi, Efik, Ibiobio, Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Edo, and Asante communities. The Hausa diaspora specialized in marketing: cattle, kola nut and dyed cloths. Thus, there were guilds for the production and sale of leather goods, woven and dyed cloths, iron tools, pots, glass, silver, brass, woodwork, beads, canoes, sewn dresses and carved ivory.[23]

As European banks refused to extend loans to the guilds, the members depended on their indigenous institutions of credit, insurance, brokerage, exchange of business information, transport and arbitration in business disputes. The most popular of the pre-industrial economic institutions was Esusu as a source of capital for their businesses. The operation of the thrift society complemented the services of money lenders, consumers' societies, marketing organizations, community improvement associations, progressive unions, cooperative societies, rotational joint contributions and household financial contributions.[24]

The Domestic Economy

Thus, during the uncertain wartime inflation as a result of the general scarcity of imported consumable items, Africans resorted to several substitutes like: locally made cloths, iron traps, cutlasses, knives, axes, sandals, slippers, and locally brewed gin called "ogogoro" in Nigeria or "akpeteshi" in the Gold Coast, despite the periodic market raids by colonial police. Most consumers with low purchasing power could not afford the high cost of limited imported commodities. This predicament was caused by the menace of German U-Boats on the Atlantic and the retrenchment and cost of shipping, hence, the demand of local consumers for import substitutes especially in major towns and cities.[25]

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[22] Lawal, *Nigeria: Culture, Politics*…, 172.
[23] Ibid., 173.
[24] A. G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (Harlow, Essex: Longman Group Ltd, 1982), 184-185.
[25] Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War…," 503-504; Cox-George, *Studies in Finance and Development*…, 35-37.

External Trade

From 1914 to 1918, the external trade was depressed on account of shipping bottlenecks. There was a decline in the volume and value of imports and exports on account of violent price fluctuations. The export commodities that were adversely affected included: gold dust, palm produce, rubber, kola nuts, timber, and cocoa. Germany, the major importer of 80% of Sierra Leonean and Nigerian palm kernel, cocoa from the Gold Coast and groundnuts from the Gambia, had been shut out by economic warfare not only from West Africa, but from her colonial markets. Thus, some British firms took over Germany's position. French firms were unable to compete with the British for that position because their personnel had been conscripted and sent to Europe to defend France.[26] Consequently, the British formed the West African Shipping Conference which controlled regional trade. What further encouraged this British monopoly was the licensing system for exporting export commodities. African farmers were not given licences to ship their goods direct to Europe. It was when the US joined the Allies in 1917 that a convoy system was introduced to pilot ships safely across the Atlantic to Europe.[27]

Food Shortages and Rationing in Europe

Several countries in Europe including: Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Turkey and Holland experienced food shortages as a result of the war. Special arrangements were made to step up the production of food by women, whose husbands were at the war fronts. Thus, farm labour was diverted to military service. Yet local production was inadequate to satisfy an increasing demand for bread, meat, sugar, butter, bacon, cheese, fresh eggs, jam, tea, and breakfast cereals. Urban dwellers were mostly affected by scarcity, and only the wealthy could afford to pay high prices for the consumable items. Price controls and food rationing were introduced from 1917 onwards. Yet scarcity persisted.[28]

Germany introduced several controls on food production and sale but the agencies badly managed the schemes and the policy failed to neutralize

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[26] Michael Havinden and David Meredith, *Colonialism and Development: Britain and Its Tropical Colonies, 1850-1960* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 115-122.

[27] Crowder, "The 1914-1918 European War…," 506.

[28] World War I Food Shortages and Rationing, http://www.history.com/news/hungry-history/21-2-2016. Accessed on 21-2-2016.

the effects of the British naval blockade. From 1916 onwards, Germany experienced increasing malnourishment on account of food shortages. Its campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare was intended to cause food shortages in France, Italy and Britain. These countries depended on imported grain to feed their population and supply their war industry.[29] The British had the Royal Navy which was superior in numbers and could operate throughout the British Empire while the German Kaiserliche Marine Surface fleet was confined to the German Bight and used commerce raids and unrestricted submarine warfare to operate elsewhere.

In the early months of the war, the Imperial German Navy used surface vessels as commerce raiders to pursue its war on Allied commerce.[30] They had a number of successes in damaging the Allied naval strategy. In particular the Moewe, among other commerce raiders, sank 38 ships totalling 174,905 tons. Later, about 38 German U-boats sank and destroyed many Allied merchant ships. This development prompted the entry of the US into the war in reaction to the destruction of 430 Allied and neutral ships totalling 850,000 tons in April 1917. The US stepped up the output of warships and introduced the system of convoys on major sea routes. The schemes turned the tables against Germany even though the latter built more U-boats.[31]

By and large, the Allied blockade of German colonies, ports and airspace, as well as frequent patrols of hostile ports, did a great deal of damage to German wartime economic and military strategies. As a result of the blockade, Germany suffered greatly from the prolonged naval operation from 1914 to 1918 as the maritime supply of goods and food was restricted to the central powers (German Empire, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire). The German Board of Public Health in December 1918 declared that 763,000 Germans had died from starvation and disease as a result of the blockade up and until the end of December 1918.[32]

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[29] Paul Cornish, "Rationing and Food Shortages during the First World War," www.mylearning.org/wwi-Food-Shortages-21-2-2016. Accessed on 21-2-2016.
[30] "WWI blockade of Germany," Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, Accessed on 21-2-2016.
[31] "German Commerce Raiders in World War I," Wikipedia: 21-2-16, http://histocio.com/essay/war/wwi/sea/coy/ger. Accessed on 21-2-2016.
[32] "Blockade of Germany," en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blockade-of-Germ. Accessed on 21-2-2016.

Conclusion

The paradigm of strategic synthesis, which can be applied to any organization, has been adopted in analysing how a war economy can guarantee the required success according to the wartime policies formulated by government economists in the relevant ministry and the military strategists in the army. The synthesis of their strategic plans must include: political, social and psychological factors to guarantee an uninterrupted working of the economy, and the sustained morale of labour and the army.

The synthesis is necessary, to resolve some inevitable strategy paradoxes to create a competitive advantage to be appropriated by all collaborative agencies and institutions. The collaborators work for a common purpose and through an effective communication channel respond instantly to some changing circumstances or challenges and instructions from an established network of coordinators. The paradigm has afforded an insight into how colonial labour was mobilized and exploited for food production and military services in British West Africa. Thus, there was an adequate food supply to the local population, the army in its various structures and locations and to colonial government agencies monitoring the food requirements of soldiers at the war front.[33]

Different levels of synthesis were established in accordance with the hierarchy of objectives to be achieved. At stake were the safety of lives and property in Britain and the British Empire, victory over Germany, the preservation of British trade and foreign investments, etc. Thus, many institutions and agencies in Britain and British West Africa were involved in the gigantic strategic synthesis. The several stakeholders of the war who collaborated for victory were in London. These included: the War Office, Army Council, War Cabinet, the Admiralty, the Colonial Office, the Ministry of Food, the War Trade Department, the Supreme War Council of the Allied Forces, and the Foreign Office. In British West Africa there were the four colonial Governors, the Residents of provinces, District Officers, Directors of Agriculture, Chiefs, village heads, labour, and the educated and political elites.[34]

Then in the various theatres of war in Europe and West Africa, there were different military structures and ranks. In the British colonial army, there were so many people who were fed, housed, clothed, trained and

[33] David Killingray and James Matthews, "Beasts of Burden: British West African Carriers in the First World War," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 13. No. 1/2, 1979.
[34] Osuntokun, *Nigeria in the First World War*, 237-269.

organized before they were sent to fight. There were also thousands of porters who received similar attention.

As there was an unbroken chain of cooperative relationship at every segment of the strategic synthesis in Britain,[35] so there was in each colony in British West Africa. An instant response was required to telegraphic instructions and orders for requisitions to keep the synthesis functional no matter the dynamics of the economic and war situations, the morale of the military, labour, and carrier corps and the unbending loyalty of the colonial subjects. The paradigm facilitates an analysis of the logistics of the food supply chain in Europe and British West Africa that contributed to the Germans' defeat in 1918.

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[35] For more details, see Ron Mayer and Bob de Wit, *Strategic Synthesis: Resolving Strategic Paradoxes to Create Competitive Advantage* (Singapore: Centre for Strategy and Leadership, 2013).

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CHAPTER SIX

IMPACT OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR ON LABOUR RECRUITMENT IN THE NORTH OF THE GOLD COAST (GHANA)

MARCIANA M. KUUSAANA

Introduction

At the outbreak of the First World War, all of West Africa except Liberia was under colonial rule. Britain and France dominated the region.[1] Both the British and French relied heavily on the indigenous or traditional form of political authority (chieftaincy) to carry out their colonial agenda. In the north of the Gold Coast, where some non-centralized states existed, forms of leadership other than the chief were in vogue. For example, there was the office of the *tendaana* (priest of the earth) which was more concerned with issues of the land. Yet in the absence of a chief, the functions of the *tendaana* sometimes became political. The colonial government established the institution of chieftaincy and appointed people to occupy them. There is a view that the British did not create chieftaincy in these non-centralized states, and that only the institution of paramount chief was of colonial origin.[2] Therefore, whatever form of authority by which the people governed themselves was equal to the chief in places where chieftaincy was firmly established before British colonization. This argument is important but it is not the main concern of this study.

The centralized polities included: the Gonja, Dagomba, Mamprusi, Nanumba and Waala. The non-centralized groups, many of which inhabited

[1] M. Crowder, and J. Osuntokun, "The First World War and Africa", in J. F.A. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, Vol. II (New York: Longman Inc, 1971).

[2] B. Der, as cited in Carola Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 44.

the north-east and north-west, included: the Kusasi, Frafra, Kasena, Sissala Lobi and Dagaaaba. Rattray notes that those designated as centralized were of a migratory origin and,

> …were better armed, better clothed, familiar with the idea of kingship or chieftainship. . . in some cases conversant with the rudiments of Mohammedanism.[3]

They managed to impose their rule and their political institutions on the non-centralized indigenous people. Thus, the *tendaana*'s authority was reduced to the land while the chiefs of the migratory groups exercised political authority over the people. By this deal, the former was placed under the latter. Noteworthy is also the fact that what was termed "chiefs" here weighed little with regard to exercising "real power". The British were disappointed to find out that there were not "really big chiefs" in the Northern Territories.[4] The few chiefdoms like Dagomba, Mamprusi and Gonja were also disrupted.[5] In other places where there were chiefs, the British realized that they were ceremonial heads rather than wielders of significant power and influence.

Significantly too, very little is known of women's political leadership and activism during the colonial period in the north, yet the terms "Magasia" and "Wurikye" are traditional titles for women leaders in some areas there, and they are not contemporary creations. Also, there are female chiefs among the Mamprusi and Dagomba, while the Gonja, Chokosi, Nawuri and Nchumuru have queens. Despite the presence of these traditional offices, there is no evidence of women's political activism in the north during the colonial period. Indeed, women's impact in decision-making at the traditional level in the north of Ghana remains low as compared to the south even in contemporary times.[6] This is somehow reversing as since the 1990s, some women have been installed as queens in some areas where there were none. What is clear however is that the seemingly patriarchal nature of northern communities foregrounded men in politics, and when the colonial government established chiefdoms but

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[3] P. A. Ladouceur, *Chiefs and Politicians: The Politics of Regionalism in Northern Ghana* (London: Longman Group Ltd, 1979), 29.

[4] A. E. G. Watherson, "The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast", *Journal of the African Society*, VII, 28, 1908, 356.

[5] Ladouceur, 40.

[6] T. C. McCaskie, *State and Society in Pre-colonial Asante* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); I. K. Odotei, "Women in Male Corridors of Power in Traditional Institutions and Governance," www.papers.ssrn.com/so13/Delivery.cfm?absractid=1836884. Accessed on 16 October, 2016.

failed to install "queendoms" or women traditional leaders where none existed, it helped to put women in the shadows of political leadership and activism in the north.

British indirect rule was not actually operationalized in Northern Ghana; direct rule worked till about the 1930s. Both the existing chiefs and the newly-created ones simply lacked the wherewithal to effectively work on their own. On this situation, A. W. Cardinal, a senior British officer, observed that:

> In reality the administration is a direct one; the chiefs are practically powerless; they have neither revenue nor authority; they have tended to become mere sergeant-majors through whom the Administration can address the rank and file.[7]

The chiefs were therefore mere auxiliaries to the district administration and their importance depended largely on the visible presence of the colonial district officers. They assisted mainly in the following matters: providing labourers for the construction and maintenance of roads and rest houses, transmitting information from the colonial authorities to their subjects, and settling minor disputes which could be handled without the attention of the District Commissioner.

Regarding the new chiefs that were installed by the colonial authorities in the north of the Gold Coast, a place which the colonial regime deemed to be a factory of labour power, it must be mentioned that they became conduits through which local labour needed for the war effort was accessed and retrieved from the north by the British colonial government. As clients of the colonial administration, the chiefs were powerful only when the British colonial officers were around. What then was their fate to be when some of the British colonial officers were recalled and reassigned when the First World War occurred?

The Northern Territories as a Labour Reserve

As underscored, the British colonial government deemed the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast a labour reserve. It was with this enduring perception that a colonial report even claimed later that

[7] Public Records and Archives Administration Department (hereafter PRAAD), Tamale, ADM /1/7, A. W. Cardinal, "Report on Native Administration in the Northern Territories", July 1928, 10.

> ...this 'hinterland' is a most valuable field for recruiting, the men are of excellent material, most amenable to discipline, fairly intelligent, and extremely desirous of learning their work.[8]

Because the north had been an early and reliable source of manpower, another colonial report noted of the area that:

> The principal asset of the Dependency is the amount of manpower it sends down to relieve the labour shortage in the Colony and Ashanti, and also in the recruits it supplies to the Northern Territories Constabulary, the West African Frontier Force, and the Police.[9]

Before the war broke out, labour was required for the following areas: public works like roads including railways, mining and cocoa farming. However, the war effort necessitated a greater supply of labour and as much of it had to come from the north, those who were responsible for recruitment had to double their effort. In doubling their efforts to recruit people sometimes without the coercive power of the European officers, the chiefs incurred insubordination, resistance and ridicule from some of their own subjects.

Chiefs and Labour Recruitment in the War Period

Between 1914 and 1917, there was a reduction by thirty per cent of the number of colonial personnel. Some of these officers were recalled to either serve at the war front or were reassigned to new areas. In the Northern Territories, some stations like Bawku, Zuarungu and Yeji were closed down. At Zuarungu, the withdrawal of the District Commissioner and the garrison created the impression that the white man was leaving.[10] The old men and headmen who resented the imposition of chiefs on them used the situation to stir up trouble in the area. During an enquiry which was held concerning one of these cases it was observed that

> … the old men were responsible for the trouble they had so played on the feelings of the young men by their constant jeers at what they were pleased to term their effeminacy on submitting to their chiefs' authority that the latter were only awaiting the first opportunity that offered itself to show their 'manhood' by fighting. They had therefore secretly prepared a

[8] Northern Territories Report for 1922/23, as cited in Ladouceur, 48.
[9] Northern Territories Report for 1922/23, as cited in Ladouceur, 49.
[10] PRAAD, Accra ADM 5/1/25, Annual Report of the Northern Territories for 1916.

> large store of poisoned arrows, far more in excess of their normal requirement as hunters for that day.[11]

Clearly, the elderly men were not comfortable with the choice of chief of the colonial administration. Perhaps, they wished that the youth in the area had repudiated the imposition which apparently was not done. To get the young men to act against the chief, the elderly resorted to this method of instigating them into it once the political protective power was out of sight.

When the chief of Zuarungu was contacted to give his opinion on the cause of the insurgence, he explained that some people had decided to take the law into their own hands because the District Commissioner was absent. By this, the chief acknowledged his own powerlessness resulting from the absence of the colonial political officer. He declared that:

> My opinion is that it is only because there has been no white man [DC] stationed in Zuarungu that the people have started to go against their chiefs. The people would not look to a white man who travelled from one district to another. They said that it was like a trader arriving and going and no one would take notice of travelling strangers (sic).[12]

Another instance occurred in Bolgatanga in 1917 when the chief went on a recruitment tour without guards:

> …yesterday afternoon, the Chief of Bolga [Bolgatanga] sent word to me to say that while he was out summoning recruits, he was held up at a compound and threatened with bows and arrows. I sent out two constables to try and arrest offenders, but to avoid friction with the people. When they got to the compound, they found a crowd of twenty so they withdrew. I left for Bolga [Bolgatanga] and visited the compound at which the chief was held up. It was deserted as well as … [sic]. I sent for the headman to tell his people to come back and not to be foolish, but that I would not allow any bow and arrow palaver.[13]

Crowder and Osuntokun also observe that:

> …In upper eastern Ghana the extraordinary conditions of wartime provided the occasion for the people to rid themselves of unpopular imposed chiefs many of whom had exploited their subjects ruthlessly. Disturbances associated with the resentment of chiefs were treated by the

[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/71, Extract from Navarro (Navrongo), Zuarungu Diary, 22nd-30th November, 1917.

British as signs of revolt, possibly by French Africans in Upper Volta, and were ruthlessly crushed.[14]

The position of the chief then was important insofar as his political counterpart was within his reach. However, another twist that the war gave to the status of chiefs was that while the absence or the scarcity of political officers diminished their powers, the presence of the few had an equally diminishing effect on their authority. The situation created more strained relations because whatever pressure that was brought to bear on the district officers by their superiors to produce recruits was released onto the chiefs, often with threats. But against this background, a wider range of methods was used to obtain recruits for the West African Frontier Force (WAFF). These ranged from mild campaigns to crude methods involving brutalities which the chiefs suffered the most. Among the initial campaigns, meetings were held to persuade young men to join the army. Provincial and District Commissioners also toured their areas of jurisdiction to convince people to volunteer as recruits. A musical band of the Gold Coast Regiment toured the Protectorate to entice men to join the army. Collecting centres were established as convergence points for those willing to join the army. These efforts did not seem to yield enough recruits for the army.

Earlier, the British Colonel Haywood and others like the then Governor of the Gambia had suggested that Africans should be enlisted compulsorily into the army. Fearing that such a compulsion could lead to widespread revolts, General Charles Dobell, once the commanding officer of the WAFF, and Sir Frederick Lugard, and Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor of the Gold Coast, denounced the use of force for recruitment to the army in particular.[15] This might have accounted for the reason why mild campaigns were initially used in the Northern Territories.

Other Factors resulting in the shortage of Labour

The refusal of men in the Northern Territories to enlist in the army was not only linked to their fear of overseas service, but it could also easily be realized that the remuneration for mining recruits was higher than that received in the army. This made working in the mines appear more like a necessary evil because high death rates among mine workers at Tarkwa had already come to light by 1918. In spite of both the gain and the

[14] M. Crowder, and J. Osuntokun, "The First World War and West Africa", in J. F. Ade Ajayi, and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, Vol. II (New York: Longman Inc, 1971).
[15] Ibid., 557.

possible loss associated with it, government intervention could sometimes halt the activities of those recruiting for the mines altogether. Arriving in Tamale with a group of African recruiters, Mr. C. R. Miller had the permission of the Acting Chief Commissioner to recruit under certain conditions, among which were, proper respect to the chiefs and to present all labour recruited for a medical inspection and registration.[16] Yet in April 1917, further organized recruiting was suspended altogether because of the urgent call for military recruits. The boom in the cocoa industry also offered far better prospects than enlisting in the army. Apart from this monetary advantage in mining and the cocoa industry, there was a far less fortunate and undesirable factor which was the outbreak of influenza between 1918 and 1919. This was conservatively estimated to have caused at least 28,000 deaths in the Northern Territories alone and 60,000 in the whole of the Gold Coast, out of a total population of one and a half million.[17]

The ineffectiveness of the use of mild campaigns compelled the political officers to follow up with the application of force to get the chiefs to produce their quota of recruits. When the Bole District Commissioner received instructions from above to obtain recruits in February 1917, all that was left for him to do was to summon the Yagbumwura, the paramount chief of Gonja, and his sub-chiefs to a meeting at Bole where he ordered them to meet the demand without delay. When the chiefs were unable to meet the demand, he publicly stripped both the Yagbumwura and the Bolewura, paramount chief of Bole, to the waist and had them locked up for several hours.[18] Similarly in May 1917, the Recruiting Officer in the North Eastern Province ordered the headmen of each section to immediately supply two men without any regard for whatever means they were going to be procured.[19] These acts which were usually perpetrated in the presence of their own subjects further revealed the nonentity status of the chiefs to their subjects who regarded them as mere puppets and subject to manipulation by the colonial political officers.

The people's dislike and disrespect for their chiefs were also rooted in the fact that there was evidence of the abuse of power by some of the

[16] R. G. Thomas, "Forced Labour in British West Africa: The Case of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast 1906-1927", *African History*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1973, 90.
[17] Ibid.
[18] PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/4/8, Statement by Yagbumwura Mahama, 4th April, 1917.
[19] PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/219, Commissioner, North-Eastern Province, 1st October 1917 to the Chief Commissioner, Northern Territories (CCNT).

chiefs. The British officers adopted various punitive measures to deal with such chiefs when issues came to light. These included: imprisonment, removal from office and the re-appointment of chiefs. One such case occurred in 1915 when Yagbumwura Mahama arbitrarily imposed heavy fines on his subjects.[20] In 1915, he fined the people of Finibutu six cows instead of one when they failed to bring him one of the tusks of a shot elephant. The people complained so much about the Yagbumwura's exploitation that the colonial government set up an enquiry into the allegations. The chief was found guilty and jailed for two months. Some Sissala Chiefs were also found to have used the threat of the Commissioner as a pretext to force their people to work on their farms. Others also kept Mossi retainers whom they employed to intimidate their subjects by taking their cattle with the pretext of using them to pay respect to the white man.[21] The head chief of Lambussie, Kantonbie (another Sissala chief) who was installed in 1915 was removed from office and sentenced to a fine of £25 and four (4) months imprisonment with hard labour by District Commissioner Eyre-Smith. Charges against Kantonbie among other things, included failing to provide porters and to maintain a rest house, and also concealing an outbreak of cattle fever in his division.[22]

Conclusion

The conclusion of the War in 1919 did not end labour recruitment in the Northern Territories. The process of recruiting was characterized by new dynamics, but since that falls outside the scope of this paper, it would be another topic to be handled in a later period. Arguably, labour recruitment in the wartime period brought forth certain revelations.

Among these was the fact that it was the British Colonial Government which introduced chieftainship in certain parts of Northern Ghana, specifically in the north-eastern and north-western parts which are coterminous with the present Upper East and Upper West Regions of Ghana respectively. This does not rule out the fact that chieftaincy as a political institution was not new in the area. At least, it was well established in existing chiefdoms like Gonja, Dagomba and Waala. The argument that the institution was already in existence in the areas in which

[20] PRAAD, Accra ADM 56/1/70, Letter from the Acting District Commissioner, Bole, to the Commissioner of Southern Province, 12th April 1915.
[21] PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/61, Handing Over the Report to Captain Warden and the Half-yearly Report on Navrongo District, January to June, 1911.
[22] C. Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 26.

it was created before the arrival of the British can only be justified by the consideration that the people through other forms of social and religious institutions or organizations managed to govern themselves but cannot be a semblance of chieftainship as a political institution. Supporting this view, Carola Lentz indicates that what the British did was to some extent a formalization and transformation of what was already in existence to chieftaincy.[23] One cannot for instance take the earth priest or *tendaana* to be synonymous with a chief. It is however true that some chiefly lineages may trace their ancestry to a particular *tendaana* or earth priest, in which case some of the first chiefs were selected from the families of such. But it is also true that some of the first chiefs were ordinary people from the community, or that they were strongmen of a kind—a wealthy farmer, a widely travelled merchant or an experienced soldier who had fought in Babatu's armies. Such a person was likely to have more cattle, horses or other valuable possessions and be proficient in several languages. Such a person would therefore be deemed to be one who already had the qualifications necessary for the office of chief. However, while these new chiefs who were males were installed for ease of administration, their female counterparts were not created.

At this juncture, it is worth mentioning that chiefs in the south of the country also recruited some labour for the war, but as contracted agents of recruitment they, to some extent, commanded a relatively higher form of respect than their counterparts in the north. Desertions, relocation or migration to new areas, among others have been noted to be forms of covert resistance to recruitment in both the north and south of the country. In August 1917 for example, a group of 240 recruits from Zuarungu in the North-Eastern Province was reduced to only 112 by the time they reached Ejura (a distance of about 343 miles away) as a result of desertion. Akurang-Parry also notes that the Accra District and the Nsawam sub-district of Accra were unable to supply their quota in 1920, which he believes was the result of the people's resistance to recruitment.[24] While this situation prevailed in both areas, there is yet no evidence that the people in the south visited direct brutalities on their chiefs to the magnitude of the kind recorded in the north. The level of condescension and complete disregard for some of the chiefs was far short of what chiefs in the south experienced. During the war period between 1916 and 1918, the Omanhene of Akyem Abuakwa, Nana Ofori Atta together with his

[23] Ibid.

[24] K.O. Akurang-Parry, "Colonial Forced Labour Policies for Road-building in Southern Ghana and International Anti-forced Labour Pressures, 1900-1940," *African Economic History*, No. 28, 2000, 10.

sub-chiefs, Councillors and Elders passed recruiting bye-laws to protect the interests of recruits for the Volunteer Movement for East Africa.[25] There is no evidence of any northern chief's involvement in such a protective move in the interests of recruits, neither in the war period nor in other critical times. Rather, cases of marital infidelity on the part of wives of migrant labourers were often handled in colonial District Courts in the north and judgement passed in favour of the husbands, some of whom returned home with venereal diseases.[26] It is discernible from this, that the institution was much more respected in the south than in the north. This was partly because it was a novelty in some parts of the north, created by the British, sometimes under circumstances which were not favourable to the people they were supposed to rule. Powerful chiefs like the Asantehene, Ga Mantse, and the Togbe of the Ewe were yet to emerge in the north. Of course the British were careful to select those chiefs who were amenable and would not pose a threat to the British colonial authorities. If such chiefs were not the choice and favourites of their subjects, they could only expect trouble from their people when the British officials were not around.

Whatever reasons the British had for the late extension of indirect rule to the north, it becomes evident from the foregoing that the lack of "powerful and influential" chiefs was a contributory factor. It was therefore only practical and strategic on their part to establish and strengthen the institution before implementing indirect rule in the north. The preparatory period was in the late 1920s and by 1932, indirect rule had successfully taken off in the Northern Territories though with some difficulties.

Finally, an important observation that can be made from this study is that British colonial policy in the Gold Coast was fraught with discrepancies regarding the north and south, and this situation has had a telling effect on northern development. However, with regard to the creation and consolidation of the colonial concept and system of Native Authority (chieftaincy) in non-stateless societies, which was meant to be an auxiliary supporter and facilitator of the colonial regime's administration, the British contributed to the shaping of the political topography and infrastructure of the north of the Gold Coast, albeit with

[25] PRAAD, Accra, ADM 11, Recruiting Bye-laws by the Honourable Nana Ofori Atta.

[26] S. Hawkins, "The Woman in Question: Marriage and Identity in the Colonial Courts of Ghana 1907-1954", in Jean Allman, Susan Geiger, and Nakanyike Musisi, (eds.), *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 116-137.

the involvement of local African agents and some indigenous ideas about the social configuration and political arrangement.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE IMPACT OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR ON AFRICA'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS: THE NIGERIAN RAILWAYS AS A CASE STUDY

TOKUNBO A. AYOOLA

Introduction

At the start of the First World War, most parts of Africa were under the control of European colonial powers and it was in view of this situation that the continent and its people were drawn into the European war by their colonizers. As a result of this forced involvement with this largely foreign war, the continent's resources and infrastructures were mobilized for war. The victorious European nations and colonizers in the war made extensive use of Africa's transportation infrastructure to transport troops, supplies and machinery to some parts of Africa and beyond. Africa became one of the important sources of essential raw materials and mineral resources while the war lasted. In turn, the agricultural products produced by Africans were used to feed European and African troops heading for the war fronts and mineral resources mined in Africa and exported to Europe and America were in turn used to produce war materials.

Thus, as a result of the increased demand for these commodities, Africans came under pressure to produce more of them for export. The war thus stimulated more production and brought about modest economic growth. These were, however, at the expense of the continent's transportation infrastructures, which were used repeatedly and intensely; and without proper maintenance and rebuilding throughout the period of the war. On the other hand, between 1914 and 1918, it became impossible to import essential capital goods, including spare parts and machinery required for repairing and modernizing existing transport infrastructures.

It is against the backdrop of the foregoing discussion, and using the Nigerian Railway (NR) as a case study, that this chapter argues that the

negative impact of the war on these transportation infrastructures was far worse than the benefits derived by Africa and Africans from the conflict-induced economic growth that took place between 1914 and 1918 and beyond. The chapter argues that the war negatively affected Africa's railways not only during the war, but up to the start of the Second World War. The chapter further argues that part of the blame for the poor state of Africa's colonial infrastructures could be traced to the stagnation experienced between 1914 and 1918 and possibly beyond.

The Development of the Nigerian Railway, 1885-1912

The construction and development of the NR started in the late nineteenth century, with the construction of the Lagos-Ibadan Railway, which was completed and opened in March 1901.[1] Four years later, in 1905, the railway line was extended several miles, actually by 62 miles, further north to Oshogbo.[2] From the latter town, the railway was constructed northwards again to Ilorin, and it reached Jebba, a town on the bank of the River Niger, in 1909.[3] The Lagos railway would remain in this state up until 1915 when the Jebba Bridge was opened. This great development had the effect of making it possible for the line to be extended into Northern Nigeria.[4]

In the meantime, in Northern Nigeria, the building and development of a separate and brand new railway system entirely were started at the beginning of the twentieth century. The first phase of the new line, the 34-mile Kano to Baro railway line, was declared opened to the public for its members' usage in 1911.[5] This "Northern" line would subsequently serve as the connecting line not only between major towns in the north such as Kano, Kaduna, Zaria, Minna, and Baro, but also those in Southern Nigeria and the rest of the world.[6] Made up of two north-south single, vertical and parallel lines, it integrated the country with Europe, but was unconnected to the local economy other than the export trade.[7] The evolution into a single NR network began in 1912, when the Lagos and Northern Nigeria

[1] John Stocker, *Nigerian Railway Jubilee, 1901-1951* (Ebute-Metta: Nigerian Railway Printer, 1955).
[2] Ibid., 3.
[3] Ibid., 3-5.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid., 5.
[6] Ibid., 6.
[7] G. Williams, *State and Society in Nigeria* (Idanre, Nigeria: Afrografika Publishers, 1980), 27-28.

Railways, which were built and managed as independent institutions, were amalgamated into one single entity, the Nigerian Railway. This was all in preparation for the amalgamation of the two Nigerian protectorates in 1914.[8]

Coupled with the amalgamation of the railways and protectorates of Nigeria, further developments to the NR's infrastructure were made in 1914. For instance, in that year, there was the construction of the 140-mile Bauchi Light Railway (BLR) from the tin mining area of Bukuru, near Jos, to Zaria. The BLR was specifically built to carry tin from Central Nigeria to the southern ports of Lagos and Port Harcourt.[9] Meanwhile, in the eastern part of Nigeria, the construction of the Port Harcourt line was started in 1913 and proceeded northwards—reaching Enugu in 1916.[10] Immediately after it was opened for use, it began transporting agricultural produce from the region and coal from the mines around the Udi Hills, near Enugu, to the southern ports. Later on, from Enugu, the Eastern Nigerian line was constructed further northwards; in 1924 it reached Makurdi, situated on the bank of Nigeria's second largest river, the River Benue, in 1924.[11]

Meanwhile, shortly after the end of the Great War, the Benue Bridge was built in the Middle Belt area of Nigeria. This significant development had the effect of making it possible for the Eastern rail line to continue its journey, as it were, further north. Subsequently, the line reached Kaduna in 1932.[12] It is fair to argue that by the late 1920s the general outline of the Nigerian Railway's physical outlook and national network had already taken place.[13] Furthermore, by the second decade of the twentieth century, the NR had become one of the greatest pillars of the Nigerian colonial economy. The construction and integration of 1,265 miles of railway lines greatly increased the production and export of both agricultural and mineral resources. This expansion in the volume of exports, which had

[8] A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, *Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria: A Documentary Record* (London: HMSO, 1968), 59-60. Lugard who was the Governor of Nigeria in May 1912 sent a proposal to the Colonial Office in London in which he proposed the amalgamation of not only the railways of the two territories, but also their Marine and Customs departments. See CO583/1 Confidential dispatch Lugard to CO21/9/12.

[9] Stocker, *Nigeria Railway Jubilee*…, 8.

[10] Ibid., 9.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Olasiji Oshin, "Nigerian Railways under Stress 1912-45: A Study in Colonial Transport Planning and Management," *Odu: A Journal of West Africa Studies* (37) (1990), 61.

started at the start of the twentieth century, continued until 1929.[14] In the period of economic boom, the value and volume of agricultural products, which included palm kernels, palm oil, cocoa, groundnuts, cotton, rubber, beniseed and hides and skins multiplied seven and five times respectively.[15] For instance, the volume of palm oil, which in 1925 was 124,716 tons, rose to 255,469 tons in 1929.[16] In the same period, 45,483 tons of cocoa were exported compared with 70 tons at the end of the nineteenth century.

There were serious problems behind this boom, from which the NR profited immensely as the chief transporter of these commodities. As the volume of export commodities expanded, it became clear that the railway infrastructure could not cope with carrying them to the coast. First, the NR could not carry all the freight offered for carriage, nor was it able to provide immediate storage facilities for goods not transported on time, particularly in Lagos—through which passed the largest volume of all exports and imports to and from Europe. Second, there were inadequate supplies of rolling stock, wagons and workshop facilities, which in turn led to the poor maintenance and repair of railway locomotives. In fact, it was not until 1919 that standard railway workshops were provided for the NR. Prior to this, the two small workshops at Ebute-Metta and Offa could not carry out major repairs.[17] Third, on most sections of the railway network, the rails were very light. In some instances, they were as light as 45lb—too light for the heavy traffic that some of the lines were carrying. For example, the Western Railway, the busiest in the colony, was laid by 1918, with 55lb rails instead of 60 or even 80lb rails.[18] Thus, most of the track could not cope with the increasing heavy traffic. The problem of light rails was further complicated by the fact that there were different track-line weights for the different segments of the network and the implication of this was that new and heavier locomotives could not travel smoothly across the entire network.[19]

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[14] B. Onimode, *Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria, the Dialectics of Mass Poverty* (London: Zed Press, 1982), 45.
[15] G. K. Helleiner, *Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth in Nigeria* (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, 1966), 5.
[16] Helleiner, *Peasant Agriculture…*, 5.
[17] Oshin, "Nigerian Railways under Stress 1912-45…," 55.
[18] Eventually, 80 lb rails were used in re-laying the Lagos to Ibadan section in the 1930s.
[19] Oshin, "Nigerian Railways under Stress 1912-45…," 57.

Impact of the First World War on the Nigerian Railway

The two separate railway lines in Nigeria in the first decade of the twentieth century were amalgamated, as stated earlier, in 1912 into the Nigerian Railway**,** in preparation for the subsequent amalgamation of the Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria to form one single political entity. There were many reasons why the two railways were joined together at that time. Firstly, it was to reduce the current financial grants being paid by the British imperial government in London to subsidise the paltry revenue being generated in Northern Nigeria to finance the government's activities and projects. Secondly, it was to aid the British Cotton Growing Association (BCGA), whose branch was based in Nigeria, in effectively, efficiently and profitably transporting cotton from Northern Nigeria to the southern ports, and from there by ships to Europe and America. Thirdly, the rail amalgamation was effected in order to transport the post-1912 increasingly large volume of groundnuts that was coming out of Northern Nigeria and going to Europe as exports.

But such was the increase in the production and exportation of these export commodities—especially of groundnuts—that the existing railway facility could not cope with the transportation of the commodity. Neither were storage facilities adequate for the storage of agricultural commodities that were not transported. It was against the backdrop of the inadequate traffic facilities of the railway that both the Nigerian colonial and British imperial authorities decided to import locomotives and other rolling stock for the Nigerian Railway. Some of these materials were needed to complete the Baro-Kano railway line and the extension of parts of the Lagos railway.[20] However, these needs could not be met immediately because of the inability of the British Steel industry to meet both local and external requirements. As Oshin has pointed out, fifty covered wagons ordered several months before, from the Birmingham Railway Carriage and Wagon Company could not be delivered by December 1912 as the company had promised its customers.[21] Another problem that plagued the British Steel industry in 1912 was the strikes by coal miners, which had the effect of paralysing it.[22]

But rather unfortunately for the Nigerian Railway, it was while the problems discussed in the preceding paragraph were unfolding that the First World War started on 28 June 1914. This development had the effect

[20] National Archives, Kew, England (NA), CO583/1 Special Meeting of the Council with Sir F. Lugard on 21 September 1913.
[21] Olasiji Oshin, "Nigerian Railways under Stress 1912-45…," 52.
[22] Ibid.

of complicating the NR's problems and inadequacies. First, after the amalgamation of the two railways, the new entity did not initially find its financial bearings, as it incurred deficits in its financial accounts in 1912, 1915, and 1916.[23]

On the other hand, as a result of the boom in the production and exportation of agricultural products and mineral resources that was experienced during the war, the NR was able to record comparatively high surpluses than those previously achieved. During this time it transported a greater volume of export commodities to the coast. With an expanded volume of traffic, the NR recorded impressive financial results, but these were at a great cost and at the risk of crippling its infrastructure, as railway equipment and materials could not be brought into Nigeria because of the embargo imposed by the British colonial and imperial authorities on the importation of goods and services from Europe and America. The implication of all this was that it became very difficult to carry out any programme of renewal for the NR. Between 1914 and 1918, apart from 1915/1916 and 1916/1917, when the NR made net losses of £119,643 and £9,677 respectively, it achieved a total surplus of £185,572. Moreover, in 1919, the NR carried a total of 288,660 tons of freight as compared with 223,998 tons in 1918,[24] thus achieving the highest trading surplus of £205,144 since the amalgamation of the railways in 1912 (Table 1 below).

Table 1: Nigerian Railway: Financial Results, 1912-1925 (£ Sterling)

Year	*Gross Receipts*	*Total Working Expenditure*	*Operating Surplus*	*Interest on Capital*	*Renewals*	*Surplus*
1912-13	503,202	354,875	148,327	263,041	-	- 114,714
1913-14	713,628	385,130	328,498	260,106	-	+ 68,392
1914-15	763,913	448,979	314,934	264,791	-	+ 50,143
1915-16	622,469	136,198	186,271	305,915	-	- 119,643
1916-17	786,665	478,893	307,762	317,439	-	- 9,677
1917-18	1,030,711	553,855	476,856	317,439	-	+ 159,417
1918-19	1,252,647	740,682	511,963	406,631	-	+ 105,332

[23] G. Walker, *Traffic and Transportation in Nigeria* (London: HMSO, 1959), 67.
[24] *General Manager's Report on the Nigerian Railway and the Colliery for 1919* (Ebute-Metta: Government Printer, 1919).

1919-20	1466,872	843,767	623,105	418,001	-	+ 205,104
1920-21	1,626,799	1,041,523	585,296	521,487	-	- 63,789
1921-22	1,438,763	1,126,726	312,037	525,130	-	- 213,093
1922-23	1,425,812	978,110	447,702	639,641	-	- 191,939
1923-24	1,653,115	902,048	751,067	689,093	-	+ 61,974
1924-25	2,052,905	948,902	1,104,003	706,908	-	+ 399,237

Sources: *Nigeria Railway Annual Reports* 1912-1925.

Another consequence of the conflict was that some staff of the NR—both local and European—were mobilized to go and fight in the war's theatres not only within Africa, but in Europe and Far East Asia. This had the effect of leaving some of the departments, units, and sections of the NR, particularly the repair workshops, understaffed. Furthermore, crucial construction work on the Lagos Harbour and Wharf and the building of Port Harcourt as an important terminus and Nigeria's second largest port after the Lagos Port, had to be suspended till the end of the war. In addition, the extension of the Easter Railway line upwards and northwards through Markudi and Kafanchan to Kaduna had to be suspended during the conflict. Meanwhile, maintenance work on the NR's installed infrastructure and network could not be carried out all because of a shortage of necessary rolling stocks. This was caused by the fact that manufacturers of these items and others in Britain suspended production. They were also not producing railway equipment as needed in Nigeria and around the world. Such factories were rather now producing the ammunition needed to prosecute and win the war. Moreover, due to the severe curtailment of government expenditure brought about by the war, orders for the importation of important materials needed for the repair and maintenance of machines, infrastructure, and so forth declined and came to a halt.

In addition, the war made it impossible for the NR to construct, maintain and effectively use railway workshops throughout the length and breadth of its network.[25] The construction of some workshops in Kaduna, Northern Nigeria, by the governor of the region, Fredrick Lugard, had to be abandoned as a result of a lack of skilled artisans in Northern Nigeria and unwillingness on the part of artisans from Southern Nigeria to move

[25] National Archives, Kew, England (NA), CO583/74/23397: G. M. Bland to D. C. Cameron, 26 February, 1919.

northwards to take up appointments in the north because of the war. It was only after the Great War that the construction of railway workshops appeared in strategic locations in the colony. Among the first set of workshops constructed in the post-war era were those in Ebute-Metta (Lagos), Zaria, and Enugu. Thus, the organization could not even carry out the smallest of repairs and maintenance on its locomotives, coaches, and wagons.

The period after the war seemed the opportune time for both the government and the management of the NR to solve its problems. However, owing to a lack of finance, little could be achieved apart from the construction of very few branch lines out of the many that were proposed by Fredrick Lugard, including the Zaria-Kaura Namoda line, the Jos-Kafanchan line, and the Kano-Nguru line which were envisaged to link areas of potential agricultural production to the main lines.[26] But even then, these limited renewal programmes were suspended in 1929/1930, at the beginning of the great global Economic Depression, when the prices of all of Nigeria's primary export commodities, the mainstay of the colony's economy, fell drastically. Coupled with this was a reduction in the volume of imported goods.

As a result of these developments, the NR lost a lot of revenue from declining imports and exports, and internal traffic.[27] For example, while the total receipts on passengers and goods rose to a record level of £2,693,000 in 1929/30, a year later they plunged to £1,838,000,[28] just as overall railway traffic fell from a peak of 1,000,000 tons in 1927/28, to just 60,000 tons in 1934.[29] Perhaps the most critical factor in the management of the NR before 1945 was its overall finances. By the end of 1945, most of the railway network was financed with loans from London, and when loan charges are included they amounted to a total of £24,572,402.[30] It is not surprising that soon after the constructed railways were opened to traffic, these loans and charges on them started to mature for repayment. However, the ability of the NR to repay the loans as and

[26] T. Tamuno, "Genesis of the Nigerian Railway—II," *Nigerian Magazine* 84 (March 1965), 41-42.
[27] G. Walker, "Traffic and Transport in Nigeria: The Example of an Underdeveloped Tropical Territory," *Colonial Research Studies* No. 27 (London: HMSO, 1959), 71.
[28] Olasiji Oshin, "Road Transport and the Declining Fortunes of the Nigerian Railway, 1901-1950," *Journal of Transport History* 12 (1) (March 1991), 24.
[29] Stocker, *Nigerian Railway Jubilee, 1901-1951*.
[30] E. A. Ogunjumo, "Transportation Development in Nigeria: A Case of Public Investment Policy, 1884-1975," (PhD Thesis, Cornell University, New York), 208.

when due was increasingly undermined by the equally increasingly high working costs of the organization.[31]

For a railway institution dependent for most of its revenue on the transportation of exported agricultural and mineral resources, the prices of which were subject to the vagaries of international trade, as was the case during the global Economic Depression years,[32] it was difficult to achieve consistent working surpluses. For example, in 1936, while the annual interest charge on loans was £1,048,729 or 53 per cent of gross receipts of £1,945,109, working expenditure was £1,032,582 and overall losses were £421,014.[33] Although, for a few years after the amalgamation of the northern and southern railways, the unified railway organization was able to pay interest charges on the loans; as these fell due, not much money was left for the modernization, renewal and expansion of the railway infrastructure.

The Nigerian Railway was still grappling with these post-war dilemmas when it started to experience very stiff competition from both road and water transportation. Immediately after the war the colonial government, responding to the very urgent necessity of increasing the production and exportation of agricultural and mineral products in British colonies, started in earnest to expand road transportation in southern Nigeria.[34] In the scheme of things, the specific agricultural products required from Nigeria included cotton, groundnuts, hides and skin, palm oil and palm kernels, cocoa, tin, and columbite.[35] With the colonial government's support and encouragement, farmers and miners increased even further the production of these commodities. By the end of the Great War there had emerged many African, Levantine (Syrians and Lebanese) and European road transport firms in Nigeria.[36] These transporters served as bridgeheads between the Nigerian Railway stations and the agricultural and mineral producing areas that were far removed from railway lines and stations. These transport companies included Summers' Transport of Aba, Armels Transport of Benin City, Arab of Jos, and Ojukwu Transport.[37]

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[31] Ibid.
[32] This was a classic case of the "development of underdevelopment."
[33] G. O. Ijewere, "Rail-road problems in Nigeria," *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studie*s, 1, (1959), 19.
[34] National Archives, Kew, England (NA), CO583/72 Boyle to CO (Confidential), 21 January 1919.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Walker, *Traffic and Transport in Nigeria*, 140.
[37] Ibid., 111-113.

Starting from the 1920s onwards, these road transporters gave the NR very firm competition particularly in the western region of Nigeria, which was not very far from Lagos port. Thus by the late 1920s, the NR had started to feel the impact of its stiff competition with road transport, as by now it had started to notice a great reduction in the volume of trade carried on its western line. In reaction to this negative development, it quickly reduced tariffs for its conveyance of cocoa from western railway stations. It would appear that this measure came a little too late to be of any value to the organization's sagging fortunes. But notwithstanding the reduction, the NR's revenue from the transportation of cocoa to Lagos port fell by £12,979 during this period. Also, the volume of palm oil and cotton declined from 1925 to 1928. Whereas the NR transported 5,715 tons of palm oil on its western line from 1925 to 1926, by 1927 to 1928 this had reduced to 4,752 tons.[38] On the other hand, for cotton, the picture was even grimmer. By 1926, it had lost 3,205 tons of ginned cotton, 6,070 tons of cotton seed and 2,587 tons of raw cotton to its competitors, the road transporters. All this amounted to a loss of almost £22,000 in freight revenue.[39]

It is therefore fair to argue that the NR entered into competition with its road counterpart when it was already crippled by many operational problems that included labour matters, the poor management of the rail industry, inadequate rolling stocks, the pilferage of goods meant to be transported for customers, the poor security of goods, the slow speed of the trains, the slow loading and unloading times of freight, and the limited and rigid routes of the railway mode of transport.[40] The origins of these problems can be traced to the period of the First World War and the NR was very slow and tardy in responding to them. Furthermore, these problems came to define the organization for many years into the future, even extending into the post-colonial era. Coupled with these problems was the fact that notwithstanding the generally reduced tariffs of the NR—when compared with those of road transporters—the railway transport organization could not match its rival in terms of revenue. Unable to provide good and effective rail services to its clients, the latter started moving in droves away from the NR and started embracing its road and

[38] Nigerian Railway, *The Nigerian Railway and Colliery Report* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1928).
[39] Ibid; see also Oshin, "Road Transport and the Declining Fortunes of the Nigerian Railway, 1901-1950," 23.
[40] T. A. Ayoola, "Political Economy of Rail Transportation in Nigeria, 1945-1985," (PhD Thesis University of Manchester, UK, 2004), 252-254.

water counterparts. As can be expected, this abandonment reduced its revenue.

It was against this backdrop that the NR encountered the great global Economic Depression of the 1930s, which had a very grave impact on it. So severe was this development that the NR was forced to retrench some of its staff, including Africans, Asians, and Europeans.[41] On the other hand, such was the depth of the staff reduction that when eventually fortune started to smile on the NR in the form of a resumed period of boom in the 1936/1937 financial year, it was ill-prepared to respond to it robustly. This was because it did not have the requisite number of experienced, well-trained and highly-skilled staff that could have helped it to navigate the latest prosperity.[42] The Depression on its own introduced additional problems for the NR. First, it led to the general reduction of the prices of agricultural and mineral resources.[43] This outcome in turn not only forced farmers and miners to reduce production of these commodities, but also led to the reduction in the volume of those made available to the NR for transportation to the coast for onward shipment to Europe and America. Whereas between 1923 and 1929/30 the gross revenue from freight and passengers jumped from £1,653,000 to £2,693,000,[44] it must be noted however that starting from 1931/32 onwards, the NR's gross revenue actually fell to £1,838,000. This dangerous slide, which at that time was partially due to the competition coming from water transport, continued till 1935/36 when the NR started to step into yet another boom period. During this latter time, the net tons of goods carried reached about 900,000 tons and the number of passengers for the same year rose to about 8 and half million. In the following year, 1937/1938, the NR was called upon to carry even more freight and passengers. No wonder then that in the New Year the NR achieved the greatest revenue ever in the history of the transport organization, that is, £2,834, 967, and a locomotive mileage of 5,183,173.[45]

This boom for the railway did not however go unchallenged by other modes of transport: rail and water. During the First World War and in the 1920s, water transportation did not come into its own in terms of earning

[41] Stocker, *Nigerian Railway Jubilee, 1901-1951*…, 14.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Oshin, "Road Transport and the Declining Fortunes of the Nigerian Railway...," 24.
[44] Ibid; see also Stocker, *Nigerian Railway Jubilee...*, 14.
[45] Stocker, *Nigerian Railway Jubilee, 1901-1951*, 14.

great and good revenue from freight.[46] However, by 1928 together with the NR it entered into a period of prosperity on the River Niger. This embracing of water transportation at this time was further boosted when the United African Company (UAC) entered the water transportation business in Nigeria. How do we know this? Freight carried through the inland water port of Baro started to increase in 1928 and reached more than 20,000 tons of imports and 43,000 tons of exports in 1934. Also, the quantity of salt brought into Nigeria by water transport via Baro port and Jebba increased in 1930/1931. The implication of this for the NR was the loss of £18,048 in revenue. Overall, the NR's water-borne traffic dropped from an all-time high of 1,000,000 tons in 1927 to just 60,000 tons in 1934.[47]

In the 1930s, the NR still had to also contend with its old foe, road transport. The main theatre of competition was the first 200 to 300 miles of rail line north of the Lagos port, that is, the stretch of land extending from Lagos to Ibadan/Ilorin.[48] The competition with road transport along this stretch of land had come about as a result of the road construction programme embarked upon by the Nigerian colonial government in the western region of Nigeria.[49] In addition to this, railway feeder and trunk roads were built to parallel the single railway line running through the western region. In time, these roads were being extensively used by the road transporters.[50] This in turn had the effect of undermining the NR, which was forced to compete for virtually the same goods and passengers along the same corridor between Lagos and Ilorin. Thus, Lagos was linked to so many villages and towns in the western region such as Lagos, Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode, Ibadan, Ilorin, Oshogbo, and so forth.[51]

With these developments, farmers and other western Nigerians came to see road transport as the cheapest, fastest, most convenient, and efficient mode of transport that could best meet their transportation needs—freight and passengers. Their perception of the railway seemed not to be out of place with reality. As Oshin has suggested, road transport in colonial Western Nigeria at this time had certain key advantages: speed, direct

[46] Oshin, "Road Transport and the Declining Fortunes of the Nigerian Railway...," 24.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Nigerian Railway, *Railway and Colliery Reports, 1936-38* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1936-38).
[49] Oshin, "Road Transport and the Declining Fortunes of the Nigerian Railway...," 24.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.

delivery of imported goods to customers and picking of primary products directly from producers to European firms and licensed exporters, and the provision of direct access on the part of Africans, Asians, and Europeans to transportation vehicles.[52]

The results of road developments in Western Nigeria were stunning. For example, by 1933 60 per cent of trade transactions in Ijebu-Ode and Ejirin were by road transport and between 1930 and 1931 a large volume of cocoa transported between Ijebu-Ode and Ejirin and from there to the Lagos port was by road transporters.[53] In the same year, the total tonnage of cocoa transported to Lagos was 55,872 tons. Of this, only 18,151 tons or just 34 per cent of the total for the year, were transported to the Lagos port by the NR. This compared unfavourably with the 65 per cent share the NR had in 1929/1930.[54] Meanwhile, in 1933, 210 lorries and about 2,000 passengers were involved in the transportation business between Lagos and Osogbo.[55] And between 1933 and 1935 about 2,800 lorries were registered in Nigeria; out of this number, slightly more than 1,200 or about 50 per cent of the total number were registered in Lagos. With all this going on well with road transportation in southwest Nigeria, especially in Lagos, the NR continued to be wrong-footed, and in 1935 alone it lost about £70,000 to the Lagos to Ilorin road that paralleled the NR's Western line.[56]

As the challenge from road transport continued to undermine its commercial viability, the NR continuously protested to the colonial government and requested that it should be protected from the serious competition emanating from road transporters. However, the government seemed not to be perturbed by all these protestations as it was of the view that road transport had an equally important role to play in the development of colonial Nigeria. Even then the government found itself in a bind: would it continue to accede to continuous requests from the NR for increases to railway tariffs or would it continue to subsidise the operations of the organization? To provide answers to these pertinent questions, the government in August 1933 set up a Committee to look into the loss of revenue by the NR—a loss caused by undue competition from motor

[52] Ibid., 27.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Nigeria, *Report of Committee on Road-railway Competition.* Sessional Paper No 21, 1933 (Lagos: Government Printer, 1933).
[55] Nigerian Railway, *Railway and Colliery Reports, 1930-31* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1931).
[56] Nigerian Railway, *Railway and Colliery, Annual Report, 1935-1936* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1936).

transport on certain roads in Nigeria—and to make appropriate recommendations to salvage the predicament in the transport sector of the country.[57]

The committee, however, did not share the NR's anxiety and concern about motor transportation in southwestern Nigeria. The Committee maintained that road transport had an equally important role to play in the development of colonial Nigeria. It argued that any attempt to remove motor lorries from southern roads would lead to the high cost of transportation of commodities and passengers and this would in turn lead to a massive reduction in the production of primary products, at least in southwestern Nigeria. Secondly, the elimination of road transport would deny the Nigerian economy the varied contributions being made to it by motor transport. Thirdly, the Committee was of the view that the contribution of the competition between road and rail transportation to the deepening crises of the NR was very marginal and that there were other problems undermining the profitability of the organization. On the other hand, the Committee stated that the NR actually deserved some assistance from the colonial government, especially as it continued to transport to the coast primary products from some[58] parts of the colony that road transporters had not been able to get to. Among others, the Committee recommended the following:

(1) that no steps should be taken by the government to prohibit or restrict the use of motor transport on the roads between Lagos and the Western Provinces;
(2) that the railway should consider the possibility of attracting tonnage by introducing a reduced flat rate for traffic in the competitive zone;
(3) that the licences of commercial vehicles competing with the railway should be doubled;
(4) that a vehicle should be considered to be competing with the railway if it carried freight or passengers (a) from the colony into the province of Abeokuta or vice versa; and (b) from any one of the provinces of Abeokuta, Oyo, Ijebu-Ode, or Ilorin into any other of these provinces;
(5) that any deficit on the working of the railway should continue to be borne by the general revenue of Nigeria.[59]

[57] Walker, *Traffic and Transport in Nigeria*, 139.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Nigeria, *Report of Committee on Road-railway Competition.* Sessional Paper No 21, 1933 (Lagos: Government Printer, 1933).

The government accepted the report in total and started implementing it soon after it was submitted. It should therefore not come as a surprise that the report, which was overwhelmingly a pro-road transport document of action, did little to arrest the downward spiral of the NR's revenue profile. It was against this backdrop that in October 1935 the road-rail Committee was reconvened to

> examine the problem of competition between road and rail transport in Southern Nigeria and to make recommendations as to the necessity, expediency and practicability of regulating transport facilities in areas where uneconomic transport conditions may be found to exist.[60]

The body stated that motor transport was conducting its business under uneconomic rates and therefore the profits being received thereby were not the only source of revenue for commercial vehicle owners. This was because, according to the Committee, the Motor Traffic Ordinance was not being applied to control the activities of road transport companies.[61]

Thus, there was speeding and overloading by motor transport operators, who were also accused of putting vehicles that were not roadworthy on the road. But notwithstanding all these negative observations, road transporters were still making profits and meeting all their financial and legal obligations.[62] In any case, by 1935, motor transport had become very popular with European companies, African traders, and farmers. Because of the many advantages it had over the NR and the numerous benefits the colonial government was getting from the industry, the 1935 Committee argued that rather than imposing very stringent measures on road transport in order to keep the NR afloat financially, the government should instead continue to absorb the organization's losses.[63] As for road transport, the Committee simply suggested that the government should ensure that all relevant laws and ordinances relating to the motor transport industry were enforced to the letter.[64]

Whilst the NR was facing all these challenges from road transportation in Southern Nigeria, it predominated in the northern parts of the colony.

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[60] *Interim Report of the Road-rail Competition*, Sessional Paper No 16, 1937.
[61] Oshin, "Road Transport and the Declining Fortunes of the Nigerian Railway...," 27.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Nigerian Railway, *General Manager's Report* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1936).
[64] Oshin, "Road Transport and the Declining Fortunes of the Nigerian Railway...," 28.

This was because there was no viable and vibrant road transport competition with the railway until the late 1930s. But all this changed in 1937 when many private motor transporters, responding to a bumper harvest of cotton in Northern Nigeria, boldly entered into serious competition with the NR in the transportation of goods and passengers.[65] And just as it was in the south, their activities started eroding the revenue of the NR. Again as it did in the south, the NR mounted sustained pressure on the government to control the activities of road transporters—well into 1939—but to no avail. This was the situation for the NR when the Second World War broke out.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the effects of the First World War on Africa and its socio-economic infrastructure, especially in our case study of the NR from 1914-1918 and before the Second World War. It could be seen from the discussion above that the war had both positive and negative impacts on the NR. During the war, the production of primary products in Nigeria and Africa in general increased astronomically as a result of the demand for them in Europe and America. The increased interest in and demand for these primary products profited the NR in its capacity as the main transporter of those commodities from the hinterland to the coasts.

As a result of the restrictions imposed on the colonies during the Great War, however, it became very difficult for the NR to procure the essential rolling stock, locomotives and materials to repair, maintain, and replace aging and dilapidated locomotives, coaches, wagons, and railway lines. Neither could the existing railway network be extended into the rural areas because of a lack of capital. Furthermore, while the war lasted, the NR could not build the railway workshops it badly needed to repair its equipment. In addition, some of its staff were mobilized to go and fight in the First World War in Europe and Asia; thus reducing the already limited number of skilled staff available to the transport organization. Thus, as a result of all these negative consequences of the war on the NR, it was greatly weakened so that it was not able to respond robustly to the post-war competition coming from road transport. Whereas the NR mounted strong pressure on the colonial government to save and protect it from the unrelenting “assaults” from road transporters, succour never came its way. It is fair to conclude that this was so because colonial officials, who were

[65] Nigerian Railway, *Railway Annual Report 1937-1938* (Lagos: Government Printers, 1938).

ever conscious of deploying and using every available resource in the colonies to achieve the maximum exploitation tactfully, rejected the NR's demands to curb the activities of motor transporters. This must have been so because they did not want to be seen to be biased in favour of one government institution against the economic interests and entrepreneurial ingenuity of the colonized. Unfortunately, this was the situation the NR was in when the Second World War broke out.

SECTION III:

WARTIME, SOCIETY AND MOBILITY

CHAPTER EIGHT

DETENTION AND DEPORTATION: A STUDY OF THE "DE-GERMANIZATION" OF TOGOLAND AND THE GOLD COAST DURING WORLD WAR I, 1914-1918

AUGUSTINE D. OSEI

Introduction: Historical Background

Although at the onset of European colonialism in Africa there were occasional clashes between some European powers over territories, it appears that by the end of 1884 European rule had been formalized by the West African Berlin Colonial Conference. Togoland and the Gold Coast remained German and British territories respectively.

German colonization of Togoland began with the business activities of the Bremen firm F. M. Vietor and Sons in Keta in the 1860s. The firm, in collaboration with the Bremen Mission supplied food and other necessities to Keta and other parts of Togoland. Following the development of F. M. Vietor's trade, other North German firms also came to Keta to trade. The activities of the German firms received a great boost when the petty German states were united into the German Empire in 1871. Thus the foundation of the German colonization of Togoland was laid by the Bremen firms and the territory largely remained a German territory officially from 1884 to the onset of World War I in 1914. However, it must be noted that, although the British had left Keta by 1856, the development of the trading activities of the Bremen firms appears to have rekindled British interest in Keta. In 1874, therefore, the British declared their reoccupation of Keta and other places which were under their occupation.[1] Thus, even before World War I, there were some colonial

[1] Hans Debrunner, *A Church Between Colonial Powers: A Study of the Church in Togo* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1965), 100-121. NB: as a result of the activities

struggles between the British and the Germans in Togoland. At the outbreak of the war, places such as Keta, Peki and Anyako were in the firm control of the British, whilst areas such as Ho, Amedzofe, Lome, Agu, Akpafu, Atakpame and Palime remained German territories.[2]

On the other hand, even though the British colonization of the Gold Coast was unofficially begun much earlier, the official declaration of the Gold Coast as a British colony occurred in 1874. In spite of the fact that the 1874 declaration did not cover Asante and a few other areas of the Gold Coast, the British appear to have enjoyed some monopoly over the Gold Coast.

World War I seems to have presented an occasion for the British and German colonial authorities to settle some colonial scores and detention and deportation featured prominently in the tussle between the two colonial powers within Togoland and the Gold Coast during the period. Thus, the pith and kernel of this paper is an examination of detention and deportation as a wartime strategy in the two territories between 1914 and 1918.

Detention as used here is the internment of a person or people solely by dint of executive orders, outside the framework of the judicial process. This phenomenon was a common feature in the political history of the Gold Coast and Ghana in the colonial to post-colonial periods respectively. The phenomenon of detaining people without trial was not peculiar to the Gold Coast which became Ghana in 1957 but had been used by many governments for various reasons in both peace and war time worldwide. In recent times, however, the practice has been given some constitutional character under the name "preventive detention", which is variously purported to promote national security. The National Security Act 1980 of India, the Preservation of Public Security Act of Malawi 1960, The Prevention of Terrorism Act of the United Kingdom 1974, the Internal Security Act of South Africa 1980, the Ireland Emergency Powers Act of 1991 and many more, were all examples of laws that authorized detention without trial in the respective countries. Thus, it would not be an exaggeration to state that detention without trial was not a Third World phenomenon as it is perceived to be. In fact, many erstwhile British colonies in Africa and elsewhere trace their history of detention without

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of the trading firms Keta became a small and flourishing commercial town, which soon increased in size. Christian Rottman was sent out to Keta as its business manager.

[2] Ibid.

trial to the British colonial governments.[3] One thing worth noting about all these laws is that they sought to use public or national security to legitimize detention without trial. Thus, national security became a common feature of all the preventive detention laws, namely that detention is justified on the basis of national security rather than to suppress criticism of those in power or any other ulterior motive.[4]

In Ghana, however, the classic manifestation of detention without trial occurred from 1958 to 1966 and 1966 to 1969 with the introduction of the Preventive Detention Act (PDA) and Protective Custody, under the First Republic and the National Liberation Council regimes respectively.[5] Arguably, under the two regimes, the phenomenon appeared to have been used for national security reasons. It must be noted, however, that detention without trial in Ghana did not begin with the post-colonial governments.

Before independence, detention without trial became a useful tool in the hands of the colonial government and was used effectively particularly against traditional rulers who the government thought were dangerous to the survival of the regime. Such traditional rulers were described by the colonial government as "uncooperative" chiefs, and many of them served an unspecified number of years in detention in other British colonies in Africa.[6] During World War I the practice appears to have been employed by the British government as one of the tactics to deal with persons from enemy countries. This article therefore aims at examining why and how detention and deportation were used during the First World War. Sub-themes examined in the paper include: political/preventive detention, deportation, pre-World War I detentions and World War I detentions.

In trying to achieve the purpose of the article, questions such as the legitimacy or otherwise of detentions during World War I have been deliberately avoided. Although these questions are germane they may not be adequately explored in an article of this kind. Those questions require further enquiry through an inter-disciplinary approach and not just a legal approach.

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[3] A. Harding and J. Hatchard (eds.), *Preventive Detention and Security Law: A Comparative Survey* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1993), 2.
[4] Ibid., 4.
[5] See Augustine Duah Osei, "Political Detention in Ghana, 1850-1972", MPhil Thesis, Department of History, University of Cape Coast, 2010, 3-5.
[6] See Augustine Duah Osei, "Incarceration of Chiefs: A Colonial and Post-colonial Tool for the Destruction of the Sanctity of the Chieftaincy Institution," *Abibisem: Journal of African Culture and Civilization*, Vol. 5, 2013.

What is Preventive Detention?

P. S. Jaswal provides a broad but general explanation which may suffice for this paper. Jaswal defines "detention" as any form of incarceration without trial which does not arise out of the judicial act but by the executive arm of government. The word "preventive", according to Jaswal, is used in contrast to the word "punitive".[4] This simply means that the objective is not to punish somebody for having done something but to intercept him before he does anything and prevent him from doing it.[7] This definition by Jaswal seems to capture all branches of the term "preventive detention". However, the clearest picture of preventive detention can be obtained by drawing contrasts with detention obtained through the criminal justice process, although that may be going more into a legal remit. "Preventive detention" can also be distinguished from "arrest". A person is normally arrested when he/she is "accused of an offence". But in political detention, a person is detained merely on the suspicion in the mind of an executive authority. Thus, political detention is based on suspicion or anticipation and not on proof. In such detentions, past actions are the material for the inference about the future course of probable conduct on the part of the detainee.[8] Be that as it may, there are also instances where people have been detained without trial by the executive arm of government based on proof. And in those circumstances, the person is detained to stop him/her from continuing with the things that the government found undesirable. The major issue in defining political detention is its lack of recourse to the judicial process.

What is Deportation?

Generally, deportation is viewed as the expulsion of an alien or aliens whose presence in a country is deemed as illegal and detrimental to the interests of that country. However, deportation also involves the removal of natives whose activities are deemed as undesirable from their places of settlement to other places. In many parts of colonial Africa, deportation was used by the colonial government to remove "popular" native leaders who were deemed to be threats from their local power bases. In the Gold Coast, (Ghana) before independence, many traditional leaders (chiefs) who were seen as "uncooperative" were mostly deported from their jurisdiction

[7] Harding and Hatchard, *Preventive Detention and Security Law*, 71. Jaswal is a law lecturer at the Department of Law at the Punjab University, India.
[8] Ibid.

to other British colonies. Classic examples were the cases of the deportation of King John Aggrey of Cape Coast to Sierra Leone in 1866, Nana Kobina Gyan was deported to Sierra Leone in 1872, King Kwao Ennimil of Wassa was deported to Lagos in 1877, King Amoako Atta of Akyem Abuakwa was deported to Lagos in 1880, whilst Nana Prempeh, the Asantehene was also deported to Seychelles Island in 1896.[9]

During the heat of the struggle for independence in the Gold Coast, the colonial government, as part of the measures to deal with the situation, introduced the Deportation Act which empowered the government to deport foreign nationals whose activities were deemed to be a threat to the government. Under the law, Nnamdi Azikiwe, a Nigerian and Wallace Johnson, a Sierra Leonean, were deported from Ghana to their respective countries.[10]

It must be added that at independence, the Nkrumah government reintroduced the Deportation Act which was to empower the government to deport from the country anyone declared by the Governor-General to be a person whose presence in Ghana was not conducive to the public good. Under both the colonial and Nkrumah regimes, political expediency appeared to be the driving force behind deportations in the country.[11]

On some occasions, deportees were detained in custody until an opportunity for their deportation occurred. During World War 1, detention and deportation were used extensively by the belligerent nations, particularly Britain, as a shrewd wartime and political strategy to deal with citizens of enemy countries. This paper therefore examines how and why the two phenomena were employed between 1914 and 1918.

Pre-World War I Detention

The genesis of detention without trial in Ghana may be traced back to the colonial period. Beginning from the 1850s, when the colonial government arrested and detained predominantly traditional rulers and some educated elites without trial, the practice continued to be used even after

[9] See Osei, "Political Detention", 25-50

[10] Adu Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Accra: Sankofa Educational Publisher Ltd, 2000), 143-144.

[11] Osei, "Political Detention", 102. Under post-colonial Ghana, the wave of deportations increased under the Second Republic led by K. A. Busia. The Progress Party Government introduced the Aliens Compliance Order, which permitted the Government to deport foreigners who were perceived to be doing business in Ghana without a permit. It must be noted here that economic reasons appear to have been the major motivating factor.

independence. Colonial detention was a response to the reaction of the colonial authority to the reaction of the people of the Gold Coast (now Ghana) to the rising power of the Europeans in the Gold Coast.[12]

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the consolidation of British authority through the establishment of the Legislative and Executive Councils and a Supreme Court in the Gold Coast. The setting up of these institutions may have kindled the suspicion of some conscious traditional leaders for they saw the actions of the colonial authorities as an attempt to abolish their sovereignty. The chiefs who openly challenged the authority of the British were punished with detention and deportation. Many of the victims were first detained in the castles before they were deported to other British colonies. It is obvious that before World War I, detention without trial became a tool in the hands of the colonial government and was used effectively against persons who the government thought were dangerous to the survival of the regime. World War I (1914-1919) provided an occasion for an intensification of the phenomenon in the Gold Coast.[13]

World War I Detentions and Deportations

Prior to 1914, no one had thought of a European war in Africa, and yet so bitter were the feelings between Germany and both France and England that fighting took place in the colonies in Africa. Thus, many African territories were drawn into what began as a European conflict and the war had a lot of ripple effects on those African countries which were theatres of the war. Nowhere were those ripple effects felt more than in West Africa where all three belligerent countries had high colonial interests. In Britain, the war led to the introduction of emergency measures to deal with the situation, both in the home country and in the colonies. One such measure was Reg. 14(B), made under the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) 1914, which was passed on 8 October, 1914.[14] The Act gave the British government the power to arrest and detain without trial during the war. Also the Act gave the British Government the power to requisition buildings or lands needed for the war effort or make regulations creating criminal offences. In Britain, this wartime legislation ushered in authoritarian social control mechanisms such as censorships which said

[12] Osei, "Political Detention", 3-5.
[13] See Osei, *Incarceration of Chiefs*, 117-131.
[14] See Tucker C. Spencer, *Encyclopedia of World War 1: A Political, Social & Military History*, Vol. 2, 341-342.

that "No person shall by word of mouth or in writing spread reports likely to cause disaffection or alarm among any of His Majesty's forces or among the civilian population".[15] The first person to be arrested under DORA was John Maclean, a Marxist and Clydeside revolutionary, for uttering statements deemed prejudicial to recruiting. Subsequently, anti-war activists such as Willie Gallacher, John William Muir and Bertrand Russell were all arrested and imprisoned under the Act.[16]

In the Gold Coast and the Trans-Volta Togoland, the war did not create as many casualties, as much pandemonium and destruction of property as in other theatres of the war. Perhaps this was because in these two theatres of the war, the tussle between the allied forces and the Germans was very short. In the Trans-Volta Togoland for instance, the coast was known to have been abandoned without a blow; along the line of Lome-Atakpame there were two short but bloody actions which saw the vital wireless station for the German fleet blown up and subsequently, on August 26, 1914 the Deputy Governor of the then Togoland, Von Doering, surrendered unconditionally. Thereafter, the allied forces rounded up all the German officials, including soldiers and categorized them as prisoners of war (POW).[17]

"Prisoners of war" in its strictest sense is the internment of persons by a belligerent nation during war and it was applied precisely only to members of regularly organized armed forces but later broadened to include guerrillas—civilians who take up arms against an enemy openly—or non-combatants associated with a military force.[18]

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the issue of prisoners of war was viewed more with morality rather than realism. Following the thoughts of the French political philosopher Montesquieu in his 1748 *De l'esprit des lois* (*The spirit of the laws*) that the only right in war that the captor had over a prisoner was to prevent him from doing harm and that the captive was no longer to be treated as a piece of property to be disposed of at the whim of the victor but was merely to be removed from the fight. Based on this, subsequent writers and analysts in Europe sought to water down the issue

[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Debrunner, *A Church between Colonial Powers*, 144. R. Cornevin in his *Histoire du Togo* commented that: "In fact this campaign in Togo was chivalrous war, led by men in the great military tradition and with high moral principles, with a very distinct idea of Europe's civilizing mission in Africa".
[18] See "Prisoner of War (POW)" *Encyclopedia Britannica*, https://www.britannica.com/topic/prisoner-of-war (Accessed on 16 October, 2016).

of the prisoner of war by declaring that captivity in war should only serve as a kind of quarantine. However, in war, the practice could be seen as a defensive and indispensable war strategy because to a large extent, it disables the enemy both physically and emotionally. In 1899 and again in 1907, therefore, the issue of prisoners of war received recognition in international law at international conferences held at The Hague. At those conferences, the principles and rules of conduct guiding the treatment of prisoners of war were drawn up.[19]

During World War I, however, the British description of persons from enemy countries as prisoners of war leaves much to be desired as the British officials in the Gold Coast and Togoland appear to have sidestepped the international norms regarding prisoners of war.

After the arrest and detention of the German soldiers and officers in Togoland, the Colonial Secretary in Accra subsequently issued a directive for the arrest and detention of all Bremen and Basel missionaries operating in Togoland and other parts of the Gold Coast.[20] Apart from the missionaries, attempts were made by the British to identify and detain German civilians in the Gold Coast and Togoland.

The Bremen missionaries (Northern German Lutheran Mission) from Germany had settled and worked among the Ewe on the eastern side of the Gold Coast, an area which would be designated as Togoland from 1847. For many years, the Bremen missionaries remained almost the only white people in the Volta after the British left Keta in 1856. It must be noted that it was out of the Bremen Mission that emerged the present-day Evangelical Presbyterian Church which has recently been split into "The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana" and "The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana."[21]

In a detailed work on the missionaries in Togo, Hans Debrunner notes that the Bremen Mission was initially much concerned with their efforts at developing what was referred to as the Ewe church. However, following German unification in 1871 and the subsequent victories over France, Germany, under the imperial chancellor, Bismarck, was excited by self-glorification over its new role in world affairs. Subsequently, Bismarck pursued his excitement for colonies and allowed the beginning of the German colonial empire to be laid down in Togo, Cameroon and Tanganyika. In the scheme of affairs, the Bremen Mission was lured to play a key role in German colonialism and German interests in Togoland

[19] Ibid.
[20] Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD), Kumasi, Ghana (hereafter PRAAD, Kumasi), ARG 1/30/22.
[21] Debrunner, *A Church between Colonial Powers*, 65-76.

between 1884 and 1914. Debrunner quotes F. M. Zahn of the Bremen Mission as saying:

> That the acquisition of colonial power stands under God's guidance, that God uses this impulse to create world empires, as all things else, for the praise of his wise rule of the world, this is a theodicy; but it does not justify those who did wrong.[22]

In August 1914, thus, barely one month into the war, the Bremen missionaries together with other German officers in Togoland were all arrested and detained in places that the British designated as detention centres. The missionary prisoners of war were later taken to Dahomey (now Benin) where they were to continue their detention.[23] In 1916, the younger missionaries were also taken to England as prisoners of war, whilst their wives and deaconesses were sent back to Germany. In January 1918, the older German missionaries, Schosser, Schroder and Diehl, were deported from Togoland to Germany.[24] It is significant to note that the leader of the Ewe Church, Ernst Burgi and his wife, both Swiss nationals, were spared and even allowed to remain in Togoland until 1921 when they returned to Europe.[25] This apparent selectivity shows that the British were not against Christianity or missionary work in Togoland *per se*, but they were determined to get rid of Germans and all persons and institutions that were loyal to them. For this reason some native followers of the Bremen mission were also detained by British officials in Togoland. In some cases, detainees were put in chains at their detention centres.[26]

Interestingly, the detention of missionaries was not only restricted to the Bremen missionaries, but in November 1914 the British also detained members of the remaining German Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries, although their period of detention was shorter than that of the Bremen missionaries.[27] After dealing with the Bremen missionaries, the British extended arrest and detention to German teachers who were teaching in mission schools, notably those teaching in the elementary schools in Togoland. The effect of the indiscriminate detention of German missionaries and teachers was that by 1915 many schools stood empty and closed on account of the detention and subsequent deportation of most of

[22] Ibid., 100.
[23] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG 1/30/22.
[24] See also Debrunner, *A Church Between Colonial Powers*, 144.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid., 146.
[27] Ibid., 144.

their teachers. According to Debrunner, the number of pupils in Togoland dropped from 5,250 to 1,366 during the war.[28]

Besides the Bremen Mission, the other missionary group to suffer detention during World War I was the Basel Mission. The Basel Mission was firmly established in the Gold Coast in 1828 after several unsuccessful attempts. Pioneers of the Basel Mission in the Gold Coast were Karl F. Salbad, Gotlieb Holzwarth and Johannes Henke who were all German and Johannes Schmidt who was Swiss. In 1832, three more missionaries namely, Andreas Riss and Peter Jager from Denmark and Christian Friedrich Heinze, a medical doctor from Saxony, arrived in the Gold Coast to reinforce missionary work.[29] Beginning with their first station in Akropong, the Basel missionary activities soon spread to other parts of the modern Eastern Region of Ghana. Although the Basel Mission had a Swiss background, it was noted to work in close collaboration with the Bremen Mission. For this reason, the British always held the Basel Mission in the Gold Coast under suspicion. Consequently, in August 1917, the Colonial Secretary sent a telegram with a directive for the arrest and detention of all Basel missionaries, particularly those in Ashanti.[25] Still on the Basel mission, the British cast their net wider with a further directive in December 1914 which called for the arrest and detention of all Germans connected with the Basel Mission in the Ashanti.[30] Most of the Basel missionaries who were arrested were detained in their own Mission buildings in Kumasi and such buildings were put under military guard. Among the Basel missionaries detained in Kumasi were Adolf Wilhelm Lipps, 40 years old, detained with his wife and two small children; and Friederich Adolf Yost, 46 years old, detained with his wife, Emma Radelfinger, 28 years old, and their two children. Others were Alfred Custer, 24 years old; Rosemann Scherrer, 27 years old; John Bosshart, 40 years old, and Ernest Gison, 51 years old.[31] The missionary detainees were

[28] Ibid., 145.

[29] See P. A. Schweizer, *Survivors of the Gold Coast: The Basel Missionaries in Colonial Ghana* (Accra: Smartline Publishers, 2000), 8-12.

[30] See PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG 1/30/2/22. A directive from the Colonial Secretary in Accra dated 8th December 1917 for the arrest of all Basel Missionaries.

[31] Ibid. Other Basel missionaries detained in Kumasi were Mr. & Mrs. L. Lang, Mr. Oskar Beer & Mrs. Beer, Mr. & Mrs. Laloire, Mr. & Mrs. Cartner, Robert Baselin, Karl Steffen, Eugen Vetter, Emil Fleischer, Mr. & Mrs. Fleischer, Mr. Adolf Meyer & Mrs. Berta Meyer, Mr. Emil Seidal & Mrs. Aug Seidal, Mr. Freidrich Fastlabend & Mrs. Jo Fastlabend, Mr. Paul Lippe & Mrs. Anna Lippe, Mr. Freidrich Gross & Mrs. M. Gross, Alfons Stober, and William Duttmann.

later escorted to Sekondi where they would be deported to England on a prisoner of war transport.

Apart from the missionaries, the British also targeted Germans working in factories in the Gold Coast. Particularly, Germans working for the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation in Obuasi were all rounded up and detained in detention centres that had been established in Kumasi.[32]

The way and the manner in which the Germans were detained appear to show that they were meant to completely undo or wipe out all Germans and even all relics of the Germans in Togoland and the Gold Coast as was being done in other parts of German West Africa, particularly Cameroon. Walter Nkwi has termed a similar British attempt at practically undoing everything the Germans had done in Cameroon as a "de-Germanization" policy.[33] Nkwi notes that in Cameroon, the British "de-Germanization" policy manifested in diverse ways, from arresting and detaining Germans and German loyalists to the changing of the currency from the Deutschmark to the British Pound sterling and abolishing German road policies, to the extent of burning an entire village for still exhibiting loyalty to Germany after their defeat.[34]

In the Gold Coast and Togoland, it is not far-fetched to assert that detention without trial was employed as a tool to ensure a "de-Germanization" by the British. For this reason, all institutions and persons with German connections in the Gold Coast and Togoland, just as it was done in Cameroon, were not spared. On the part of the missionaries, their strong connection with Germany and the German colonization of Togoland made them highly susceptible to British detention and deportation following the defeat of Germany. Following the comments of F. M. Zahn, it is fair to conclude that the Bremen Mission was not against the German colonization of Togoland although later comments by some of the missionaries suggest that they were against the injustices, brutality and cruel treatment that the Germans meted out to the natives.[35] Dorvlo, however, opines that the missionaries were not only in support of German colonization, but Germany's interests and actions in Togoland were based on the reports that the missionaries were sending to Bremen. He continues

[32] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG 1/9/1/33. A telegram dated 23rd June 1915 from the Acting Colonial Secretary in Accra calling for the arrest of Germans working in the Ashanti Goldfields in Obuasi. Those detained spent more time in detention because they had to wait for prisoners of war ships from England.

[33] See Wazi Apoh and Bea Lundt (eds.), *Germany and its West African Colonies* (Zurich: LIT Verlag Gmbh & Co, 2013), 71.

[34] Ibid., 74-91.

[35] Debrunner, 100.

that, it was based on the reports of the missionaries that the authorities in Germany mandated a trading firm, F. M Vietor & Sons, to come to places like Keta around 1857. In fact, Dorvlo's assertion is supported by this fact between 1857 and 1868; there was an arrangement between F. M. Vietor & Sons and the Bremen Mission between 1857 and 1868 for the supply of food and other necessities to Keta and other areas in Togoland. Although the direct connection between the Bremen Mission and F. M. Vietor was abrogated in 1868, it was a result of the activities of this firm with the support of the missionaries that gradually led to the German colonization of Togoland in 1885.[36]

Besides their collaboration with Vietor & Sons, the missionary contribution to German colonization through the provision of a western education cannot be underestimated. In Togoland, as in other German colonies, mission schools provided cheap manpower and the human resource needed for the sustenance of the colonial government. Those leaving the mission schools who had been taught the German language were employed as clerks, administrative assistants, shopkeepers and in some cases interpreters for the German officials. The missionary teachers played a very vital role by teaching pupils the German language. It must be noted that before the arrival of Rev. Schlegel, a missionary and linguist, from Germany to Keta to investigate and study the Ewe language in order to use it for instruction in schools, the German language was the sole medium of instruction in the mission schools.[37] Perhaps this explains why German teachers in the mission schools were all rounded up and detained following the defeat of German forces in Togoland. The conduct of the British subsequently showed that they were very antithetic to the German language, in view of the fact that after the defeat of the German forces in Togoland, the British banned the use of the German language in all schools in Togoland, just as it was being done in Cameroon after the defeat of Germany.

Beyond the physical contribution, the missionaries provided what could be described as a psychological impact which softened the indigenes of Togoland and made them easily malleable. The missionaries taught the people to be good Christians, requiring them to be faithful and obedient towards authority. Resistance to authority was seen as evil. Thus, directly or indirectly, the method of evangelization did not only win souls for Christ, but also won the indigenes for the Germans.[38] The views of two 20th century African anthropologists, Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff

[36] Apoh and Lundt, *Germany and its West African Colonies,* 126-130.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

sum up this colonial-missionary nexus. In studying the 19th century European missions among the Tswana people of Botswana and South Africa, they concluded that evangelization by the missions represented nothing less than a "colonization of the consciousness". Christianity, in their view was the key ingredient of a hegemonic European worldview imposed upon its converts.[39] On this same issue, Edward Andrews provides a succinct and deep explanation that Christianity was "ideological shock troops for colonial invasion…"[40] Nowhere was this psychological tool more exploited than in Togoland. In Togoland, the missionaries urged the natives to work hard on their farms to produce more cheap cash crops to feed industries in Germany.[41] In fact, the architect of German colonization, Otto Von Bismarck recognized the importance of the missionaries in paving the way for German troops when he said, "the missionaries and the traders must precede the soldiers"[42]

The swift manner in which the missionaries were arrested detained and subsequently deported from the Gold Coast and Togoland in August 1914 underscores the links that the British drew between the German home countries and the missionaries (both Bremen and Basel) in the respective territories. In other words, the actions of the British indicated that the missionaries were representing German interests in Togoland and the Gold Coast. The detention and deportation of Germans in the Gold coast and Togoland after the defeat of Germany were to aid the "de-Germanization" of the two territories.

The British "de-Germanization" in Cameroon may not have succeeded for various reasons, but in Togoland and the Gold Coast, "de-Germanization" was largely successful. In these two territories, with the aid of the extensive use of detention without trial, the British succeeded in destroying all German colonial structures. With all German teachers in detention and the forbidding of the use of the German language as a medium of instruction in schools, the British ordered the use of English to teach in all schools. Debrunner notes that this order was not difficult to

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[39] See Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[40] See Andrews Edward, "Christian Missions and Colonial Empires Reconsidered: A Black Evangelist in West Africa, 1766-1816", *Journal of Church and State*, 663-691.

[41] Apoh and Lundt, *Germany and its West African Colonies*, 126-130.

[42] See Joel E. Tishken: "Christianity in Colonial Africa", in Toyin Falola (ed.), *Colonial Africa, 1885-1939*, Vol. 3 (North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press, 2002), 162.

implement because in Keta and Peki, which were controlled by the British, English was the means of communication. In pursuit of the order, the British officials freely provided teaching materials and English school books to all schools.[43] Subsequently, fresh training courses were arranged for teachers to learn English in three months. Further, all schools in the erstwhile German territories were ordered to celebrate Empire Day with examinations, games and the singing of English patriotic songs.[44] It is worthy of note that, in Togoland, in spite of the fact that detention without trial may have largely contributed to the success of "de-Germanization", the role played by the indigenes in the success of the British could not be ignored. The indigenes of Togoland were on record to have accorded the British a very warm reception. The natives saw the German administration as very harsh and oppressive; therefore the period of British occupation brought great relief to the people. The period of the British and French domination of Togoland saw the return of many indigenes that had moved to the Gold Coast in order to flee the oppressive German rule.[45]

Generally, the defeat of Germany in the war may have had dire consequences for its colonial interests in the Gold coast and Togoland and in other parts of West Africa. This is borne out by the fact that by the end of 1914, all German colonial aspirations in Togoland and the Gold Coast had come to an end. However, the detention and subsequent deportation of missionaries were disastrous for missionary work, particularly in Togoland and the Gold Coast. The missionaries' attempt at developing what was referred to as the Ewe church was completely shattered until after the entire war. In analysing the impact of detention and deportation on the missionary work, Inspector Schlunk sums it all up, saying that the situation has "disturbed the training of future missionaries, has put a stop to all foreign travel, and worst of all cuts the mission field off completely from their home management".[46] Andreas Aku also summed up the impact of the war and detention of the missionaries excellently in a lecture he gave in Lome. Aku commented:

> That Europeans, civilized, Christian nations should ever fight against one another in a pagan country, should ever hate, abuse, capture, detain, carry off or kill each other in front of pagans, and that they should induce and encourage pagans to do these things with them. What is the pagan world to

[43] Debrunner, 154.
[44] Ibid., 144.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

> think now of the Christianity of Europe? They feel that this thought alone ought to have restrained a Christian power from such a colonial war. [47]

Obviously speaking with melancholy, Aku continued that:

> The Mission workers both Europeans and natives, have been exposed to the contempt of the pagans and some of them have been persecuted. Many mission schools and congregations have degenerated and even some Christians have suddenly surrendered themselves to idol worship. In many out-stations the children have ceased going to school, even those of Christians. The Mission can no longer keep and maintain the native assistants, because many congregations cannot support their teachers…[48]

Thus, although not directly intended, the detention of the missionaries in Togoland in particular obstructed the commission to preach, baptize and spread the Christian gospel. The situation was no different in the Gold Coast. In Asante, the detention of the Basel missionaries in their own mission stations caused so much fear and panic that their worship centres were deserted by their followers.

The impact of the imprisonment of the Germans and the missionaries was undoubtedly disastrous, but in Togoland, especially in places like Kpando and Buem, this produced some interesting religious developments. For the pagans of these towns, the imprisonment of the Germans in chains brought great excitement and relief and a renewal of faith in their gods. For these pagans, there could not have been a better revenge on the Germans for their oppression and harsh treatment of the indigenes. The imprisonment of indigenes in Togoland without trial was one of the harsh measures that the Germans adopted to whip the indigenes into submission. Evelyn Townsend notes that apart from flogging native servants for minor offences, "disobedient servant[s]" who deserted their work or failed to work properly were sent to prison for two weeks, whilst servants who violated labour contracts were imprisoned for three months. It is worthy of note that in the Gold Coast and Togoland, many of the imprisonments were done by the companies and individual planters.[49] The arrest and detention of some chiefs in Togoland added salt to the wound. Prior to the war, the Germans detained Chief Dagadu and subsequently deported him to Cameroon. The chief was allegedly detained and deported for his anti-German activities in Kpando. This particular action by the Germans

[47] Ibid., 148.
[48] Ibid.
[49] See Mary Evelyn Townsend, *The Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire 1884-1918* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1966), 288.

aroused many bitter feelings among the indigenes, especially the pagans, and they always yearned for revenge.[50] For them, therefore, the detention of the Germans including their missionaries was the work of their gods to pay the Germans in their own coin. On this issue, one native teacher in the service of the Bremen Mission commented that:[51]

> the pagans of Kpando believe and avow that their fate and their fetishes have caused this war, in order to drive away the Germans who ruled over them, so as to make them free. The old chief of the people had been quietly living in his town, but the Germans seized him out of jealousy, took him to Cameroon and put him in irons. Therefore all the Ewe fetishes let them be taken as prisoners to Dahomey, so that if it hurts, it may hurt them too.[52]

The comment clearly confirms that before the war, the Germans also employed detention as a tool to stamp their authority over the indigenes. It was also employed to cow the natives of Togoland into submission. The detention of the Germans was therefore not only seen as sweet revenge for the natives but also as a victory for their gods and the traditional religion. Schreiber captured the mood of the chiefs of Buem in a very short quotation. According to Schreiber, the chiefs of Buem publicly exclaimed: "The German schools must come to an end, no child may go to school any longer; the Germans must leave the country, the German missionaries as well." The exclamation of the chiefs, according to Schreiber, motivated groups of young men in Buem and other parts of Togoland to behave insolently to all Europeans.[53] Debrunner also asserts that the absence of the missionaries within the period paved the way for natives in many towns in Togoland to freely and openly observe their traditional religious rites and practices.[54]

Conclusion

World War I, which was fought between 1914 and 1918 in both Europe and Africa, had a lot of impact on European colonies in Africa. The war ended with the defeat of Germany and the ultimate partition of her

[50] Debrunner, 146.
[51] Ibid., 146. Dagadu was the Chief of Kpandu. In 1886, he applied for British protection although his territory was under German control.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 154. NB: Chief Dagadu was returned by the British after the defeat of the Germans.

territories between Britain and France. In Togoland, Britain came to administer a major part of that territory. No sooner had the British taken over a major part of Togoland than they embarked on detaining and deporting Germans and persons and even indigenes who had links with the Germans. Similar detentions and deportations occurred in the Gold Coast, although not in the same magnitude as in Togoland. This paper contends that the two phenomena were used to "de-Germanize" the two territories. In other words, the British employed detention and deportation, not only to remove all Germans from the two territories, but also to do away with whatever the Germans had put in place, particularly in Togoland. Thus, detention and deportation were used to aid the security of the British colonial regime in the two territories. It must be noted that "de-Germanization" did not occur only in Togoland and the Gold Coast, but in other parts of West Africa, particularly Cameroon where "de-Germanization" was even fiercer. It must also be pointed out that, although "de-Germanization" appeared to be a failure in Cameroon, it was largely successful in the Gold Coast and Togoland. This is because by 1918, whatever links Germany had in Togoland and the Gold Coast, seem to have disappeared. It must also be added that during the Second World War between 1939 and 1945, detention and deportation were employed by the belligerent nations to deal with enemies both in Europe and in Africa. In Britain, the outbreak of the War in 1939 led to a re-introduction of DORA by the British government and many people fell victim to the law both in Britain and the British colonies in other parts of the world.

CHAPTER NINE

CHIEFTAINCY AND INDIRECT RULE: THE NATURE, POLITICS, AND EXPLOITS OF CHIEFS DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN WEST AFRICA (1914-1930)

SAMUEL BEWIADZI AND MARGARET ISMAILA

Introduction

Chieftaincy is a long-established and esteemed institution within indigenous communities and polities in Ghana. According to Boateng, chieftaincy is one of the most highly-cherished traditional institutions. Representing indigenous systems of government, it has evolved through the centuries. It was in existence in various forms in different parts of the country long before the European contact in the 15th century, and it has continued to survive.[1] Being the axis around which the socio-political history of groups is constructed, it provides the basis for political leadership, social stratification and the economic well-being of members of the society.

Before the influx of European imperialism and colonialism in the Gold Coast, chiefs organized their societies to promote communal development. They carried out most of their social development and economic progress goals through communal labour and group endeavour. No wonder, following the imposition of British colonial rule on the people of the Gold Coast that the colonial regime adopted the Indirect Rule system in order to govern the colonized people through the chiefs. Elsewhere in the French colonies, Crowder tells us that chiefs were the agents for the collection of taxes imposed by the French administrators. They were also responsible for raising forced labour for work on roads, railways and even plantations,

[1] E. A. Boateng, *Government and the People: Outlook for Democracy in Ghana* (Accra: Institute of Economic Affairs, 1996), 141.

for providing carriers for the administration and for ensuring the forced cultivation of certain cash crops.[2] The Indirect Rule system was therefore a political strategy in which the European colonialists ruled the local people through the pre-existing local power structures, and chiefs became vehicles through which the colonial authorities ruled the indigenous people.

The Institution of Chieftaincy

Chieftaincy in Ghana is a cherished institution in the country.[3] Boateng points out in *Government and the People: Outlook for Democracy in Ghana* that the traditional bond between chiefs and their people was strong and that during the period of colonial rule the British, in their references to the people of the country as a collective entity, regularly employed the expression "the chiefs and people of the Gold Coast".[4] The political, social, cultural and economic lives of societies in Ghana such as the Akan, Ewe, Dagomba, and Gonja among others were constructed around the institution of chieftaincy. As Addo Dankwa III puts it, the unique nature of chieftaincy is deeply embedded in the fabric of local ethnic societies.[5]

Chieftaincy has many variations in different parts of the country based on ethnic variety and differences in local traditions and experiences. But it also has many common characteristics, the most notable being the fact that the position of chief is an inherited and not an elective office which normally runs through a number of royal families or lineages that take turns to select candidates for presentation to traditionally recognized "kingmakers" for formal approval to the office.[6]

Normally, the chosen leader might be the person who founded or who first occupied the area now populated or he might be a person with sterling leadership qualities or one who, in his own special way, radiated respect and confidence which helped the inhabitants to live in peace and harmony.[7] To make sure that the leadership fulfilled the hopes and aspirations of the community and to enable accountability to be made manifest in everybody's role, some sort of social contract was entered into

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[2] M. Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Publishers Ltd, 1968), 187.
[3] O. Addo-Dankwa, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The Future* (Accra: Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2004), 1.
[4] Boateng, *Government and the People: Outlook for Democracy in Ghana*, 141.
[5] Addo-Dankwa, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana*, 1.
[6] Boateng, *Government and the People*, 142.
[7] Addo-Dankwa, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana*, 1.

by the head of the family concerned on the one hand, and the rest of the community on the other through an oath-taking. A very serious breach of the social contract can result in the event where the community will compel the chief to step down.[8]

In the past the military duty of the chief and the elders was important when there were ethnic wars. They led different sections of the army of their societies.[9] Traditionally, chiefs are the primary political leaders, although in practically all parts of Ghana this function is combined with military and religious ones. In the olden days of inter-ethnic wars, the military role was very important and prominent, as is shown even today by the designation of some of the more prominent chiefs in certain parts of the country in terms of the positions traditionally occupied by them and their followers in battle order during times of war.[10] Today, they are still the military leaders of their polities, albeit ceremonial. In the past, chiefs had many sources of income; royalties from stool lands rich in minerals, timber and other natural resources were paid directly to stool treasuries. Chiefs, in adjudicating cases that were referred to them within their areas of jurisdiction imposed fines, which improved their revenue. Additionally, chiefs had the right to levy taxes of some sort.[11]

However, with the colonization of the country by the British and the general establishment of peace among the various ethnic groups, the military role of chiefs virtually disappeared except in the impressive military titles, which some of them still bear and the retention of the battle order positions of certain political divisions within respective states. Bewiadzi notes such titles and battle orders among the Ho-Asogli as *Avafia* (warlord/war-chief), *Ngorfia* (vanguard chief), *Dusimefia* (right wing chief), *Miamefia* (left wing chief) and *Megbefia* (rearguard chief).[12] Similarly, their political role, which was quite important during the height of British rule, when the idea of political partnership between the colonial power and indigenous local rulers worked under the concept of the "dual mandate" of Lord Lugard, has steadily declined since the Gold Coast achieved independence in 1957. Today, their political and judicial authority

[8] Ibid., 5.
[9] K. A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief in Modern Political Systems of Ashanti* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 13.
[10] Boateng, *Government and the People*, 144.
[11] Addo-Dankwa, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana*, 24.
[12] S. Bewiadzi, *Ho-Asogli: A Socio-political History*, unpublished dissertation presented to the Department of African Studies, University of Cape Coast, 2010, 45.

is almost entirely confined to a few traditional matters.[13] But then, in our view, one important function of the chief which has remained intact is their role as religious and spiritual leaders concerned with the performance of customary rite and duties demanded by the regal office, symbolized by stools or skins of animals, which they occupy. Such responsibility included the performance of festivals, funerals, libation, prayers and animal sacrifices.

In the post-colonial period, the institution of chieftaincy as a political system enforces norms in the society. Today, the chief informs his people about government policies and very importantly, administers land use. He is the symbol of law and order and promotes the welfare and prosperity of his people; he encourages his people to engage in agriculture and in the establishment of industries, where they are needed most within his area. If the government wants to disseminate information on policy or on any issue, the most effective means of reaching the majority of the people is through the chief who uses the town crier's method, namely the beating of a gong as a means of reaching his people.[14] Chiefs therefore assist government in the day-to-day administration of the country at the grass-roots level.

The Nature and Politics of Indirect Rule in British and French Colonies

There were some fundamental differences between the nature and politics of the indirect rule that the British employed in their colonies and the one that the French used in their colonies. Even though both ruled through the indigenous rulers, the administration of the colonies, the respect accorded to the chiefs and the roles assigned to them were very different in the two systems. Crowder points out that both powers (British and French) had little alternative to the use of existing political authorities (chiefs) as a means of governing their vast African empires. He also notes that what is important is the very different way in which these authorities were used. The nature of the position and power of the chief in the two systems was totally different and, as a corollary, so were the relations between the chief and the political officer who was inspired in each case by very different ideals.[15]

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[13] Boateng, *Government and the People*, 144-145.
[14] Addo-Dankwa, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana*, 26-27.
[15] M. Crowder, "Indirect Rule: French and British Style," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute,* Vol. 34, No. 3, 1964, 197-205.

British rule in Northern Nigeria became the model for indirect rule. The British regime believed that it was its task to conserve what was good in indigenous institutions and assist them to develop on their own lines. As a general rule, albeit in theory, the British political officer was mandated to relate to the local chief as an adviser who only in extreme circumstances could interfere with the work of the chief and the native authority under him. However, where chiefs governed small political units, and in particular where the traditional authority was questionable, the political officer found himself interfering in native authority affairs more frequently than was ideal. This was true in many parts of Yoruba land, where the borderline between "advisory" and "supervisory" in the activities of the political officer was not always clear. Though indirect rule reposed primarily on a chief executive, its aim was not to preserve the institution of chieftaincy as such, but to encourage local self-government through indigenous political institutions, whether these were headed by a single executive authority, or by a council of elders.[16]

In Northern Nigeria, a policy of minimal interference with the chiefs and their traditional forms of government was pursued. But Lord Lugard himself had insisted on a reform of the indigenous taxation system and of the administration of native justice when he was the Governor of Northern Nigeria and believed that, while the colonial government should repose on the chiefs, their administration should be progressively modernized.[17] Indeed, in the earliest inter-war period, many emirs and chiefs ruled as "sole native authorities", a position which gave them for practical purposes more power than they had in pre-colonial days, when they were either subject to control by a council or liable to disposition if they became too unpopular. The diagram below explains the position, duties, and authority of the African chief within the British Indirect Rule System.

The African chiefs were permitted to administer traditional justice, which in the case of certain emirs, included trying cases of murder for which the death sentence, subject to confirmation by the colonial Governor, could be passed. They administered political units that corresponded to those they would have administered before the arrival of the colonial power. They were elected to office by traditional methods of selection, and only in the case of the election of a patently unsuitable candidate to office, would the colonial power refuse recognition. There was thus a minimal undermining of the traditional sources of authority. The main change for the Fulani Emirs of Northern Nigeria, for instance,

[16] Ibid., 198.
[17] Ibid.

was that they now owed allegiance to the British Government, rather than to the Sultan of Sokoto, and collected taxes on its behalf, though they retained, in most cases 70 per cent of the amount collected for the administration of their native authority. The African chiefs controlled the native treasury, organized the supply of labour and embarked on community projects. Crowder notes that this system of indirect rule was, with modifications, practised wherever possible in Britain's colonies in West Africa and in most of her other African territories.[18]

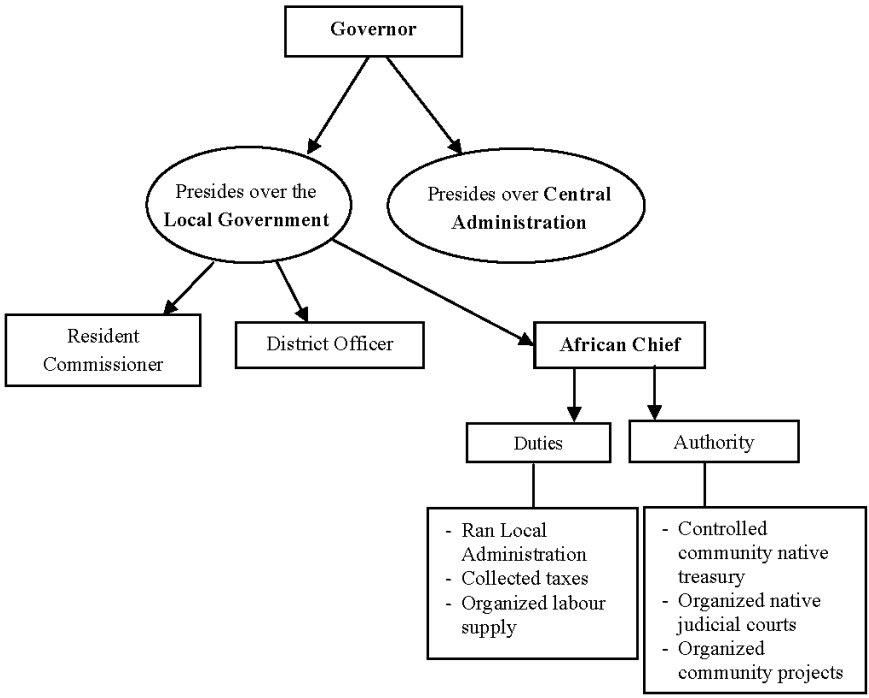

Fig. 1.0: The Nature, Politics of Indirect Rule and the place of the African chief in British West Africa

In the French system, the colonial authorities placed the chiefs in an entirely subordinate role to the political officer. The chief in the French system was a mere agent of the central colonial government, which clearly defined duties and powers. He did not head a local government unit, nor

[18] Ibid., 199.

did the area which he administered on behalf of the government necessarily correspond to a pre-colonial political unit. The French divided the country up administratively into *Cantons* (divisions) which frequently cut across pre-colonial boundaries. Chiefs did not remain chiefs of their old political units but of the new *cantons*, though sometimes the two coincided. In certain cases, the French deliberately broke up the old political units, as in the case of Futa Jallon where their policy was the progressive suppression of the chiefs and the parcelling out of their authority. Most important of all, chiefs were not necessarily those who would have been selected according to customary procedures; more often than not, they were those who had shown loyalty to the French or had obtained some education.[19] The diagram on the next page shows the position of the African Chief in the French system and the roles assigned to him.

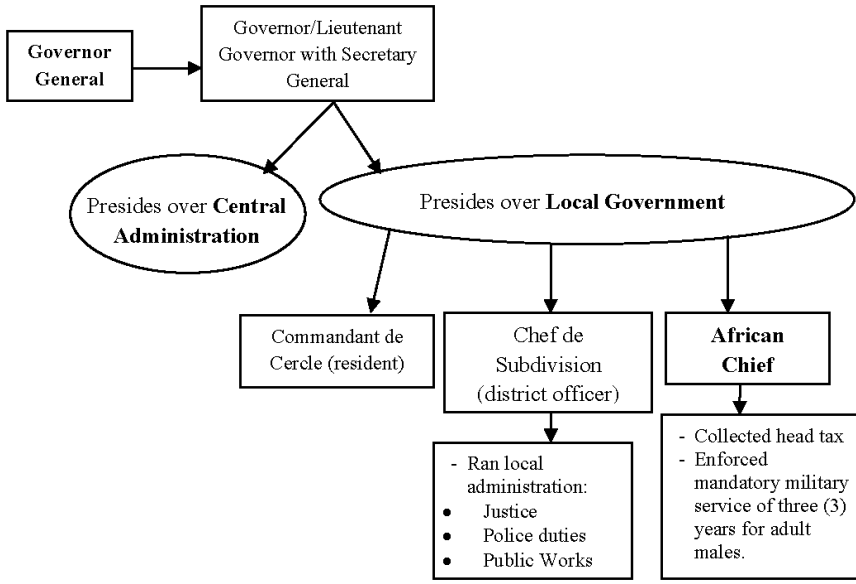

Fig. 1.1: The place of the African Chief within the French Indirect Rule System

[19] Ibid.

It is clear from the diagram (Fig. 1.1) above that the French explicitly changed the very nature and powers of the African chief and that his functions were reduced to that of a mouthpiece for orders emanating from a higher authority. Crowder explains in detail how the *Chefs de Cantons* were recruited. He shows that chiefs were recruited for preference from among the descendants of old families traditionally or customarily destined to command; they were also recruited from among notable Africans, literate if possible, who had rendered services to the French cause and who were fit to fill these functions by their authority or influence in the country. In addition, chiefs were selected from among the *Chefs de Cantons* who had satisfactorily carried out their functions for at least four years; they were also chosen from among old soldiers who had completed more than the normal terms of service and who qualified for special treatment. Finally, the chiefs were selected from among local civil servants (clerks, interpreters, etc.) who had worked satisfactorily for at least four years in public service.[20] These chiefs were assigned to collect taxes and enforce the mandatory three-year military service of male adults in the French army.

Chiefs in the French system were strictly dealt with when they failed to carry out their duties as expected. The following disciplinary measures were applicable to the *Chefs de Cantons*. In the first place, the *Chef de Department* reprimanded the chiefs; their salaries were temporarily withheld; they were temporarily given interdiction; their salaries were reduced and they could be dismissed. Since the chiefs did not, except in rare cases, represent traditional authority and, since they were the agents of colonial power for carrying out its more unpopular measures, such as collecting taxes and recruiting forced labour, they were resented in most parts of French West Africa.[21] Hence, it was not surprising that in 1957, just before the independence of Guinea, when Sekou Toure, the Guinean leader of the independence movement, decided to do away with chiefs, the manoeuvre received little protest from both the indigenous people and the French administration. This is a clear indication that the African chief never had any power and influence under the French administration.

The Concept of Clientage and Indirect Rule

Killingray argues that the colonial state in Africa was a coercive organ, as it commanded extraordinary instruments of force and authority by way of

[20] Ibid., 200.
[21] Ibid.

military and police agencies and judicial institutions.[22] However, the state was constrained in hegemony by some structural weaknesses; it was limited in the space of absolute control, as it lacked resources for sustaining prolonged military engagements, and therefore was unable to dominate rural society.[23] Afeadie holds the view that there was the inherent problem of administering a foreign people, considering the inadequate knowledge of local conditions. As such, indigenous cooperation was essential to the establishment and maintenance of European rule over large parts of the non-European world from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, and British imperial administration was no exception. He further notes that lacking financial resources, manpower, knowledge of local cultures, and communication apparatus, colonial rulers were incapable of direct administration, and therefore sought indigenous hierarchies for the control and loyalty of their subjects.[24]

Indirect rule involved the adoption of the basic hierarchical structure of government prevailing in the dependent states. In the process, the indigenous administration operated largely in colonial interests, under a new hierarchy of over-rule by British officials. Of the imperial rulers, political officers were essential, as they served as envoys, agents and advisors to the local chieftains; and indeed supervised the subordinate administration.[25] Smith has argued that in the recent historiography of colonial governance, clientage has been identified as a suitable model for analysing the structures and dynamics of British imperial administration. Clientage denotes a mutually beneficial relationship and solidarity between individuals or groups of unequal status and influence in society.[26] It is characterized by dependency between a client and a patron, with a

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[22] David Killingray, "The Maintenance of Law and Order in British Colonial Africa," *African Affairs*, Vol. 85, 1986, 411-433; A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, "The Thin White Line: the Size of the British Colonial Service in Africa," *African Affairs*, Vol. 79, 1980, 42.

[23] Benjamin Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn, and Richard L. Roberts, (eds.), *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 7-10.

[24] Philip Afeadie, *Brokering Colonial Rule: Political Agents in Northern Nigeria, 1886-1914* (Saarbrucken: VDM Verlag, 2008), 8-14.

[25] Ibid., 8-14.

[26] M. G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau 1800-1950* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 8; René Lemarchand, "Political Clientelism and Ethnicity in Tropical Africa: Competing Solidarities in Nation-building," in Steffen W. Schmidt, Laura Guasti, Carl H. Lande, and James C. Scott, (eds.), *Friends, Followers, and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 100.

varying command over resources and values. Clientage apparently emerged in the context of kin rivalries associated with competition for office and access to resources in any given polity; protagonists sought control over the politics of lineage competition by the adoption or appointment of non-kin as loyal followers.[27]

This practice of cultivating relations of personal loyalty developed as a principle of political activity in many social formations. Relations between patrons and clients were governed by customary obligations.[28] Clients were required to promote the political interests of their patrons, especially among the common people. Depending on their social status, clients would also provide labour services to their patrons. Then, there was the regular exchange of gifts between client and patron. As well, patrons would provide economic support for their clients; patrons were expected to acquire political positions for interested clients; patrons would protect clients from political abuse, and assist them in any dealings with political authorities. Obviously, a patron's position and prospects were crucial to clientage relations, as clients would seek influential persons for adequate protection; as well, the relatives and offspring of clients could choose their own patrons.[29]

Clientage varied in type and conditions. Yet, it was obtained largely in domestic, occupational and political contexts, often with overlapping features. Of these, political clientage essentially determined political behaviour and government; characteristically, the political structure and organization of many indigenous societies in Africa reflected the pyramiding of clientage relations in which an influential official enjoys the allegiance of less influential persons below him and owes allegiance to a more influential person above.[30] A crucial element in clientage operation is brokerage. As a medium for political interaction, clientage in indigenous hierarchies embodied agency and linkage between ruling elites and

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[27] Colin Newbury, "Patrons, Clients, and Empire: The Subordination of Indigenous Hierarchies in Asia and Africa," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2000, 227-263; Peter K. Tibenderana, "British Administration and the Decline of the Patronage-clientage System in Northwestern Nigeria, 1900-1934," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 32, 1, 1989, 72-73.

[28] S. F. Nadel, *A Black Byzantium: The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 123, 158; Tibenderana, "Decline of the Patronage-clientage System," 73-74; Paul Staudinger (trans. Johanna Moody), *In the Heart of the Hausa States*, Vol. II (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990), 26-27, 33-34.

[29] Smith, *Government in Zazzau*, 8; Nadel, *Black Byzantium*, 124; Tibenderana, "Decline of the Patronage-clientage System," 74.

[30] C. S. Whitaker, *The Politics of Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 374; Newbury, "Patrons, Clients, and Empire", 258.

subjects. Accordingly, clientage involved political mediation, which required brokerage or an intermediary service.[31]

Similarly, clientage in the colonial context involved interaction between the hierarchies of imperial rulers and those of the subordinate indigenous government.[32] In its significance, clientage provided an avenue for political expression in indigenous hierarchies; it constituted a means for political recruitment and affiliation as well as a channel for social and political mobility. As such, clientage provided a convenient framework for exploring political processes of colonial overrule, including modifications and continuity in indigenous hierarchies, political actors, and basic power relations, as well as political integration and community response. Clientage has therefore been used by some scholars to explain the nature and politics of indirect rule, the power relations between the colonialist and the local rulers as well as how these power structures are formed.

During the period of colonial rule, the Colonial Secretary of State was a patron to the colonial governor. He was a superior to the colonial governor and the colonial governor carried out all the instructions of his superior. The colonial governor himself was a patron in his own right. He was a patron to the Resident Commissioner/Commandant de Circle, the District Officer/Chef de Subdivision and the African chief. He gave out orders to his subordinates in the colony. The Resident Commissioners and District Officers were also clients to the colonial governor. At the same time, these officials were patrons to the African chief. By the orders of the Colonial Governor, the Resident Commissioners/District Officers offered protection, advice and supervision over the activities of the African chief. The African chief therefore became a client to these officials. On the orders of the Resident Commissioner and the District Officer, the African chief ran the local administration, collected taxes, supplied labour for constructional works, and embarked on community projects in the British colonies. In the French colonies, the African chief, upon the orders of the Commandant de Circle and the Chef de Subdivision, collected taxes and enforced mandatory military service for male adults. In addition, upon the orders of the Lieutenant Governor, the Chef de Subdivision ran the local administration, justice, police duties, and public works. It is therefore obvious that clientage played a great role in the indirect rule system as there was a master and a servant relationship at every point of the political ladder. This is because, at one stage, an official became a patron and at another stage, he became a client. Interestingly, the African chief was also

[31] Lemarchand, "Political Clientelism and Ethnicity," 105-6; Smith, *Government in Zazzau*, 8.
[32] Newbury, "Patrons, Clients, and Empire," 262.

a patron in his own right in the British Colonies and his subjects became his clients. This enabled him to exercise a wide range of powers over his subjects. However, this phenomenon was absent in the French colonies because these chiefs were not recognized as legitimate rulers.

The Exploits and Activities of Chiefs during the First World War

One cannot doubt the fact that the African chiefs were very instrumental in the war efforts of the European powers. They played key roles in promoting the activities of the European colonialists. They were agents for the collection of taxes imposed by the French and British administrators. These taxes were used to support the financial base of the war efforts. The chiefs were also responsible for raising forced labour for work on roads, railways and even plantations, for providing carriers for the administration and for ensuring the forced cultivation of certain cash crops.[33] In both the Gold Coast and Nigeria, chiefs recruited young men and women to construct roads and railways towards the war efforts. The roads and railways were used to convey cash crops and minerals to the port towns for export to Europe. In the Gold Coast, they exported gold, timber, and cocoa to Britain to support the war effort. In Nigeria, they transported different raw materials including groundnut, rubber, and tin to support the war efforts in Europe. The photograph below (Fig. 1.3) visually provides an idea about how young men and women worked on railway lines to support the war efforts of the colonialists.

The chief in each village was responsible for recruiting men who served as carriers and road builders. If he failed to do this, or even failed to obtain the number of people required, he might be flogged by either the District Commissioner or the Court Clerk. For this reason, chiefs were often anxious to satisfy government demands even if that meant riding rough-shod over local sentiments.[34]

[33] Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule*, 187.
[34] Felix K. Ikechi, *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland, 1857-1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1972), 152.

Fig. 1.3: Men constructing a railway line in Nigeria (forced labour). Source: Getty/Hudson Archive

Indeed, chiefs recruited many men as soldiers for both the French and British forces. The chief served as a propagandist, moving from one village to the other, convincing the people to recruit into the imperialist army. In the Gold Coast, the chiefs moved from one village to another, recruiting men into the colonial army to support the war effort. One important role of the chief in the French colonies was to enforce the mandatory three-year military service for male adults. These male adults had to serve in the French army during the First World War. In Senegal, they were known as *tirailleurs*. The British forces relied on the West African Frontier Force which was made up of Gold Coast, Nigerian, Sierra Leonean and Gambian troops in addition to some civil policemen, and the Senegalese *tirailleurs* stationed in Dahomey.[35] Below is a photograph

[35] *New York Times* report on the Togoland situation on Aug, 6th 1914

(Fig. 1.4) portraying African chiefs assisting British forces to recruit men into the army in Togo.

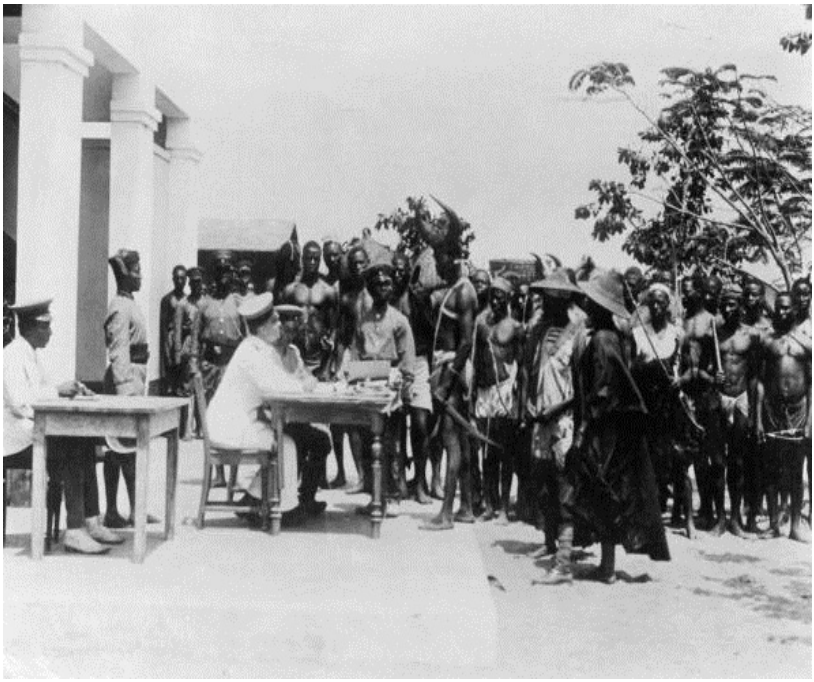

Fig. 1.4: British officers recruiting Togolese men into the "Volunteers Corps" in what was still officially German-controlled Togoland. August, 1914. Source: Getty/Hudson Archive

The Gold Coast Regiment was part of the West African Frontier Force and numbered nearly 10,000 soldiers. They played an important role in the invasion and take-over of the German colonies of Togoland and of the Cameroons, and in the war in East Africa. In total, 25,000 African soldiers served in the West African Frontier Force.[36] The majority of these men were recruited by the chiefs in both the French and the British colonies. France deployed some 250,000 West Africans during the First World War.

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http://www.spiritofremembrance.com/profiles/blogs/lesser-known-british-armed-forces-ww1.

[36] Ibid.

They fought on the Western Front during the First World War and thousands of others fought at Gallipoli and in the Balkans. French West African troops fought and died in all the major battles of the Western Front, from Verdun to the Armistice.[37] One in five West African combat soldiers who fought in the war died compared to less than 17% for the French. Lunn argues that towards the end of World War I, the "black" African soldiers were increasingly being used as shock troops, and were absorbing three times as many casualties as "white" European troops.[38]

According to the French Prime Minister, George Clemenceau, it was better that black Africans were killed than long-suffering white Frenchmen.[39] By this statement, it is clear that the contributions of chiefs towards the supply of men to serve as the "shock troops" of the European powers were tremendous and no wonder in the French colonies that it was a three-year mandatory military service for male adults and that chiefs had to go all out to supply men for the French colonial army. This shows that chiefs played a significant role during the First World War and this contributed to the defeat of Germany.

Warrant Chiefs and Political Instability in South-eastern Nigeria

The introduction of the Indirect Rule system that had been perfected in Northern Nigeria to the Igbo and to their neighbours, who shared similar social organizations and political arrangements with them in Eastern Nigeria, proved impossible. From the beginning of the century, administrative officials had created "warrant chiefs"—men who often had no traditional authority but seemed powerful enough—to act as British agents in recruiting labour.[40] In the absence of a single male political figure in many Igbo mini-states, the government appointed and imposed on the local population the warrant chiefs. The people's opposition to the new system of warrant chiefs and the native authority was due to the enormous problems they caused in the society. Some of the warrant chiefs, court clerks and messengers as well as government agents were unpopular,

[37] Bruce Vandervort, "The Thin Black Line of Heroes," *Journal of Military History,* Vol. 65, No. 4, 2001, 1067-1073.
[38] Joe Lunn, *Memoirs of the Maelstrom: A Senegalese Oral History of the First World War* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1999).
[39] Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2011), 187.
[40] P. C. Lloyd, *Africa in Social Change* (England: Penguin, 1975), 66.

corrupt, exploitative, autocratic, and men of inconsequential backgrounds.[41] The warrant chiefs were men chosen arbitrarily by the District Commissioner for one impression or another, especially that of speaking boldly and courageously with the whites. Most often, these warrant chiefs were not the favourites of the communities. The traditional chiefs themselves had no desire for such posts or intentions to compromise their position, and did not want to mix with such people in likely meetings or calls. Hence, the traditional rulers were neglected and the District Commissioners neither considered nor consulted them in most serious matters. Instead, they made do with the warrant chiefs on whom much trust was reposed. They became therefore the representatives of the clans and villages and served further as Counsellors to the District Commissioners.[42] This imperialist political arrangement downplayed both local politics and governance. As Aligwekwe puts it, the people's rejection of this administrative and judicial system which overturned the people's political structure manifested itself without delay.[43] Kalu argues that the native powers were denied responsibility and active participation and foreign English laws were adopted and administered even in sensitive areas like local marriage, which was the most sacred and revered institution of the Igbo people.[44] Harsh treatment was meted out to the Igbo leaders and spokesmen who represented their people's legitimate interests and their elders who went for negotiations for peace or surrender and were seized as hostages, bound up, and also flogged at times.[45]

This situation consequently engineered the insurrection of the Igbo, especially the Ekumeku which erupted in 1900 as a protest against the loss of authority of the traditional chiefs who knew the people better and could administer justice and equity in the traditional values and according to the traditional social order. Due to the overzealous applications and radical opportunity for both the foreign secular and religious "white" colonialists, the arbitrary divisions or demarcations of both people and land fell on a

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[41] G. Chukwu, *Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria 1900-1960* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 239.

[42] H Nkem & M. V. Chigere, *Foreign Missionary Background and Indigenous Evangelization in Igboland* (Munster: LIT Verlag, 2001).

[43] P. E. Aligwekwe, *Continuity of Traditional Values in the African Society: the Igbo of Nigeria* (Owerri: Totan Publishers, 1991), 253.

[44] Ogbu U. Kalu, "Christianity and Colonial Society," in Ogbu U. Kalu (ed.), *The History of Christianity in West Africa* (London: Longman, 1980), 183.

[45] A. E. Afigbo, "Christian Missions and Secular Authorities in South-eastern Nigeria from Colonial Times," in Ogbu U. Kalu (ed.), *History of Christianity in West Africa* (London: Longman, 1980), 187.

large number of petty unwanted local African officials who were recruited here and there by the government, without social status, badly paid, and insufficiently trained, to cleverly pass on to the people the foreign colonial judicial process. Eventually, they lost their popularity and the Ekumeku venture had justification in people's genuine dissatisfaction and rejection of their witty services of betraying nature. So the first revolt occurred in Igboland against foreign political suppression and exploitation of various levels.[46]

According to Afigbo, the most striking opposition to the unbearable interference of the colonial regime in the history of Africa and of the Igbo in particular, which history never neglects to mention, was the one initiated by women in 1929. The Aba Women Riot (Women's War), as it is called, came also as a result of an arbitrary decision of the so-called Native Courts used by the colonial administrators. People who never knew the custom and did not understand the respect accorded to women on issues of wealth, arbitrarily decided to proclaim taxation for women without consultation. The Aba Riot (Women's War) of 1929 was provoked by the fact that the government had acted against the principle of defending the native traditional values of attempting to enact a law without traditional foundation. Without waiting for the practical demands on them, Igbo women organized themselves and staged a fierce riot. About thirty died, and thirty more were wounded in their opposition to what they deemed a disrespectful, indiscriminate attitude to their role in society.[47] The women's revolt against the British administrator and his agents in 1929 was not only an eye opener to the colonial agents about their lack of understanding of the cultural factors involved in their type of administration, but also showed in practical language that they were a failure.[48] In colonial practice, the British administrator came by way of conquest. He had the language of change through force and impositions. Therefore, when this change began to work adversely on the people, revolt ensued in different sectors.[49]

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[46] V. E. Ndukaihe, *Achievements as Value in the Igbo/African Identity: The Ethics* (Munster: LIT Verlag, 2006).
[47] Afigbo, "Christian Missions and Secular Authorities," 187.
[48] Ndukaihe, "Achievements as Value in the Igbo/African Identity," 277.
[49] O. A. Onwubiko, *African Thought, Religion and Culture* (Enugu: Snap Press, 1991), 119.

Conclusion

It is an undisputable and undeniable fact that the role of the African chief in the war efforts of the colonialists really proved successful. Again, it is important to note that the chief also contributed immensely to the colonial exploitation of the African economies. Chiefs supplied labour for constructional works; they supplied men for both the British and French armies during the war; the African chief upon the orders of the colonialists, collected taxes to support the war efforts. The cultivation of certain cash crops provided economic support to the European imperialist war efforts. In addition, the chiefs ran local administration, justice, police duties, public works and the enforced mandatory military service of adult males in French colonies. All these exploits and activities of cooperation and collaboration of West African chiefs during the Great War helped British and French colonial agents and their countries to emerge victorious over their arch enemy Germany.

CHAPTER TEN

THE INFLUENZA PANDEMIC IN THE GOLD COAST AND ASANTE, 1918 -1919

KWAME O. KWARTENG
AND STEPHEN OSEI-OWUSU

Introduction

Between 1918 and 1919, on the sidelines of World War I, the world experienced what is perhaps considered to be the greatest epidemic ever of an infectious disease in human recorded history.[1] The Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and 1919 wreaked great havoc on individuals and nations alike all around the world, in terms of the devastation and indelible demographic marks that it left in its trail. It is estimated that there was a whopping number of human casualties of about twenty million.[2] Other sources estimate that between twenty and forty million people died as a direct result of the outbreak.[3] The outbreak occurred at a time when the world was gradually coming to terms with the concluding phases of World War I (1914-1919), also popularly referred to as the Great War.

With considerable attention and literature covering the outbreak and its effects in North America and Europe already in print, this essay seeks to add to the emerging documentation and its corresponding analytical discourse of Africa's experience of the global epidemic. The geographical area of focus is the Gold Coast colony in general and her Asante (Ashanti) territories. Emphasis is placed on the period of the outbreak itself, 1918-1919, the possible cause(s), the general course of the pandemic's

[1] David K. Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic of 1918-19 in the Gold Coast," *African History*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1983, 485-502.
[2] Ibid.
[3] "The Influenza Pandemic of 1918," http://virus.stanford.edu/uda/login, 1. Accessed on 20th April, 2016, 5:00 pm.

development, the effects of the outbreak, the colonial government and individual African responses to the outbreak and the societal significance of the entire experience.

The Background: the Term Influenza, and the Outbreak outside the Gold Coast

The Influenza of 1918-1919 was also referred to as the "Spanish Flu"[4] or "La Grippe."[5] This is because, in Spain, as early as May, 1918, the virus had killed an estimated eight million people, thus the christening of the infection as such.[6] According to the Chambers Essential English Dictionary, the term refers basically to "flu, an illness causing a general feeling of weakness, usually with a fever and sometimes with a sore throat and running nose."[7] It is a viral infection which is transmitted from person to person by the respiratory route. It is believed that many deaths arising from influenza are caused by pneumonia, resulting from a secondary bacterial infection of the lungs which may have been weakened by the bout of influenza.[8] Ordinarily, the infection is deemed an opportunistic occurrence that poses no real danger and passes over time.

However, the outbreak of 1918-1919 did not fall within the remit of ordinary flu but rather, was classified as a "sudden creation, by mutation or perhaps by genetic recombination with a swine influenza virus, of [a] particularly virulent strain against which people had no previous exposure, hence no immunity."[9] In fact, some elements within the Allied Forces even thought of it at one point, as a biological tool of warfare deployed by the Germans in the course of the war,[10] since it accounted for some fifty per cent of the overall mortality rate of US troops deployed in Europe.[11] Outside the shores of the Gold Coast therefore, the world was beginning to wake up to the levels of devastation that the outbreak could cause. According to Akyeampong, the interpretation given to the influenza pandemic is that American soldiers from Kansas took the microbe to Europe during the First World War. This was subsequently transferred

[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic of 1918", 3.
[7] *Chambers Essential English Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Chambers Harrap Publishers Limited, 1998), 492.
[8] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic", 485-502.
[9] Ibid., 487.
[10] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic of 1918", 3.
[11] Ibid., 2.

from military camp to military camp as the microbe mutated and accompanied the servicemen returning home from the theatre of war.[12]

Outbreak of Influenza in the Gold Coast, August 1918

It is difficult to ascertain the exact period of the disease's introduction into the Gold Coast. However, based on certain developments within the colony at the time, it could be safely assumed that the outbreak of influenza in the Gold Coast occurred on or from the 31st of August, 1918, with the arrival of the *SS Shonga*, an American Shipping line, in Cape Coast. Before the ship's arrival, there had been an attempt, albeit belatedly, by the Governor of Sierra Leone to warn the Gold Coast local authorities that all ships reaching the Gold Coast from England or Sierra Leone should be considered infected with influenza. When the ship reached Accra three days later, virtually the entire crew was sick, a further confirmation of the unenviable role the ship may have played in the disease's introduction into the Gold Coast.[13] Though all the available literature on the outbreak of the influenza pandemic in the Gold Coast ascribes it to the berthing of the American Ship, *SS Shonga*, it seems that none of the epidemiological historians of Ghana averted his or her mind to another possibility for the outbreak or introduction of the disease into the country. When we consider the fact that the spread of the pandemic globally was associated with the movement of WWI troops, coupled with the fact that the return to the country of batches of the Gold Coast Regiment from East Africa, beginning from September 1918, coincided with the outbreak and spread of the disease in Ashanti and the Northern Territories, it may then be reasonable to conclude that the returning recruits were another possible source of the introduction of the outbreak of the disease in Ashanti and the Northern Territories as was the case in Kenya and Rhodesia.[14] The Gold Coast was totally unprepared for the epidemic, leading to massive casualties and the reasons for this will shortly be explained.

It is however, worthy to note at this juncture that the influenza of 1918 was not the first occasion that the Gold Coast had experienced an outbreak

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[12] Emmanuel K. Akyeampong, "Disease in West African History", in Emmanuel K. Akyeampong (ed.), *Themes in West Africa's History* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 200-201.

[13] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic," 487.

[14] M. Crowder, "The First World War and its Consequences" in A. A. Boahen (ed.), *UNESCO General History of Africa VII: Africa under Colonial Rule Domination 1880-1935* (Berkeley: James Currey, 1990), 283-311.

of this sort. It is worth mentioning that, between 1889 and 1892, the Gold Coast recorded its first cases of the outbreak of influenza. However, its coverage was not as extensive as that presented by the 1918 case. Besides, observations on the disease were only possible along the coast, with no idea of its extent and severity in Ashanti or the Northern Territories,[15] with the possible observation ostensibly hampered by the late penetration of the British administration and presence in these areas before 1900. Apart from a brief mention of it by Governor Griffith in a dispatch to the Secretary of State, Lord Knutsford, the influenza of 1889-1892 did not receive widespread attention and observation[16] and neither could colonial officers present credible figures and statistics covering the subject.

The claim to fame of the outbreak of 1889 may therefore very well lie in the fact that this was the same infection that claimed the life of the famed Reverend Thomas Birch Freeman, of the Methodist Conference of Leeds, who had been sent to the Gold Coast in 1838 as a missionary.[17] So, when the pandemic broke out in 1918, especially in the Gold Coast, it was not a novel outbreak for its administrators and inhabitants. Perhaps what was new and unprecedented to the colony was the magnitude of damage and devastation that the disease would cause within the short period of its outbreak.

Account of the Outbreak in the Southern (the Colony) and Northern territories

As already noted, by the close of August 1918, the disease had been introduced from outside the shores of the Gold Coast by a crew of an American shipping line. More remarkable was the fact that within four months, the disease had invaded every part of the colony and subsided. In general, it ran its course in about four to five weeks in any community.[18] Although the first entry was at Cape Coast on or from the 31st of August, the development of the outbreak into an epidemic is thought to have commenced in the town from the 11th of August, when a mail officer, who had previously carried out some duties on the SS Shonga, and a telegraphist were both diagnosed as having influenza. Once the infection had gained entry into the colony, it is believed that factors such as human

[15] Stephen Addae, *Evolution of Modern Medicine in a Developing Country: Ghana 1800-1960* (Durham: Durham Academic Press Ltd., 1997), 348.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., 16.
[18] Ibid., 349.

contact, the weather pattern, human movement, either by road or rail transport or even walking, combined to ensure the disease's quick spread. On the 5th September, when a boat landed at Sekondi, with a confirmed case on board, an epidemic soon began in the town from the 18th of the same month.[19]

Accra followed suit in about the middle of September, developing a full blown epidemic within a week. The pattern soon continued to the interior, beginning with Koforidua, which recorded a case of an infected person from Accra on the 19th of September. Axim and Winneba both witnessed an introduction on around the 25th September when members of boat crews from Sekondi and Accra respectively came to trade with them.[20] At this stage, it was beginning to look as if it was a coastal problem, with the West African Lighterage and Transport Company, as early as the 15th of September, reporting that several cases had been recorded among dock workers, with about 325 of its stevedores and boatmen infected.[21]

By the first week of October, the epidemic had begun penetrating the interior, extending as far as the Northern Territories. By early October, Yeji had recorded its first cases of the infection. Tamale had been infected in the early part of November. The Northern Territories faced infections from two main entry points: a northerly spread from the south[22] (that is, the Colony and mostly from the Ashanti Territories) and some Northern Territories faced the spread of infections extending southwards from the French territories in what was called the Upper Volta.[23] Salaga had also been affected by the 5th November, with Bole being affected earlier by late October. Wa, Lawra, Tumu and others were all affected sometime in November.

Judging from the peculiar position of the Northern Territories, surrounded by French territories that were themselves under the scourge of the epidemic, the French authorities in both Leo and the northeastern frontier warned the District Commissioner of Lawra to restrict travel. However, this did not hinder the progress of the spread of the infection.[24] Between October and November 1918, the Northern Provincial Commissioner's Office had estimated that, for the territories of Kintampo, Zongo, Nkoranza, Banda and Mo, the death rate was between 300 and

[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., 349-351.
[21] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic", 488.
[22] Addae, *Evolution of Modern Medicine*, 351.
[23] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic", 490.
[24] Ibid.

400.[25] One key observation about the disease's introduction into the Gold Coast at this point was the higher infection and mortality rates in the Northern Territories, with about eighty per cent of the population of the Northwestern Province contracting the infection[26] as compared to the other areas already mentioned and a casualty figure of over thirty thousand people in the Northern Territories alone.[27] It is generally considered that the North bore the brunt of the pandemic more than the other areas due to a number of factors. One already noted factor was the issue of the affected territories in the North facing infection from two entry points,[28] thereby making containment and management quite difficult. Again, the epidemic broke out during the dry season (the harmattan period, most severe in the North of Ghana), which provided the humid conditions that are favourable for the spread of infection and make respiratory diseases most dangerous.[29]

Account of the Outbreak in the Ashanti Territory

The Ashanti Territory also had its fair share of the epidemic, with a number of its principal towns and villages also suffering infections. Kumasi, the capital of the territory, was attacked on 23rd September. This was followed by a mass infection of the nurses and attendants at the Native Hospital, causing a crisis in patient care. The disease quickly spread throughout the territory. Obuasi recorded its first case on 1st October, with Wenchi, and Sunyani reporting mass cases of infection by the 26th of the same month.[30] In fact, with Obuasi, the rate of infection was so rapid that by the middle of October, two-thirds of the town's population had been attacked. This included the town's Senior Inspector of Mines and his wife, Mr. & Mrs. Holmes, who were both hospitalized. As a result, deaths were recorded in Fomena and Bekwai, with equally heavy mortality rates being recorded in all divisions of the province. Overall, about 5% of the town's

[25] Public Records, Archives and Administrative Department (PRAAD), Kumasi, ARG/1/14/2/6: A letter from the Chief Commissioner's Office, Coomassie, Ashanti, 20th March, 1919, 1.
[26] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic", 491.
[27] Ibid., 496.
[28] See: Stephen Addae, *Evolution of Modern Medicine*, 351; Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic", 490.
[29] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic", 497.
[30] Ibid., 490.

entire population perished.[31] Between some selected towns in Ashanti such as Juaben, Kumawu, Bompata, Obogu and Juaso, the mortality rate covering just two months of the disease's outbreak was some four hundred and twenty one (421).

The table below illustrates a list of 21 towns in Ashanti that were affected by the infection. The mortality rates, by December 1918, have also been displayed.[32]

Name of Town/Village	**Mortality Rate by December 1918**
Tekiman (Techiman)	210
Berekum	45
Wam (Dormaa Ahenkro)	142
Tekementia (Techiman Tia)	59
Drobo	83
Nkwanta	71
Mim	22
Saikwa (Seikwa)	21
Wenchi Town & Zongo	144
Bechim (Bechem)	38
Sunyani	43
Odomase	53
Chirrah (Chiraa)	10
Jemo	30
Wireme	29
Boma near Tepa	13
Kukuom Town & villages	75
Akwesiase (Akwasiase) & Villages	15
Sabronum (Bechim)	23
Dema	15
Noberko & Villages	100
TOTAL	**1,241**

[31] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/14/2/6: A Report on the Epidemic of Influenza in the Southern Province of Ashanti during the months of October, November and December, 1918.
[32] Ibid.

Combating the Epidemic

The assault on the epidemic was primarily waged from the direction and coordinated efforts of the local colonial government. However, one thing that was not lacking was the efforts of the individual members of the society affected as they tried to curb the epidemic through their own initiatives. All of these measures were implemented with varying degrees of success and failure.

Colonial Government Response

As intimated earlier, there is not the slightest indication that the Gold Coast was prepared for a major medical task such as the combating of the outbreak of an infectious disease of epidemic proportions. The lack of preparedness, which as shown above, in some cases resulted in some avoidable casualties, was due to a number of factors. In the ensuing analysis, focus is first placed on some of the culpable factors which accounted for the unpreparedness of both the colonial government and the citizens. This is followed by some of the measures that were instituted to combat the epidemic.

Poor State of Medical Infrastructure in the Colony

In the period leading up to the outbreak of the Influenza Pandemic, the state of the medical facilities and medical care in general in the Gold Cost could be described, at best, as existing on an *ad hoc* basis and at worst, as non-existent. This was characterized by the long years of neglect of the medical needs of the majority of the population: the Africans. As a result of the concentration on European health, between 1878 and 1915, Europeans had about a 300-times greater chance of admission to a hospital bed than an African. Moreover, while one hospital bed was available to some 70 Europeans, one bed was available to over 22,000 Africans. Furthermore, some 15% of the European population received a hospital admission while less than 0.1% of the Africans did.

This situation did not see much improvement even as late as the post-epidemic years up to the mid-1900s. Even by then, nearly 40% of the European population in the Gold Coast and less than 1% of Africans were accorded medical attention annually.[33] In fact, the very first civil colonial

[33] Patterson, 30.

hospital in the Gold Coast was not built until 1880.[34] Judging from the period of time it took the colonial authorities to erect the first colonial civil hospital, it presumably would take quite a while before progressively adding to this facility and the few military ones that existed to ensure a wider coverage of the majority of the African population.

Inadequate Medical Personnel

The few medical facilities in existence notwithstanding, the few medical staff that manned these service delivery centres was ordinarily expected to be called upon to assist during the time of the epidemic. However, this was not the case as the numbers of medical personnel were woefully inadequate.

One unfortunate development that did not help in addressing the issue of too few medical personnel was that influenza broke out during the course of World War I, albeit at its later stages. Accordingly, a lot of medical personnel in most countries had been called upon to assist on the battlefields in taking care of the protagonists of the war: the soldiers. During the war, Gold Coast medical officers, all European, were seconded to the Royal Medical Corps which served in the then German Togo, the Cameroons and East Africa. One effect of this arrangement was that it caused a severe depletion of medical staff and severely dented any efforts aimed at managing the epidemic.[35]

In fact, by early 1919, there were only forty-three government physicians, five of whom were administrators. Ten budgeted positions were actually vacant.[36] Perhaps the situation faced by the residents of Obuasi best captures the huge odds that were stuck against the Africans in the course of the epidemic. "The [medical post] was without medical assistance throughout the epidemic and for the greater part of the time it was without drugs"[37] Clearly therefore, when the pandemic broke out in 1918, the state of medical preparedness was virtually non-existent and the prevailing conditions added to the worsening of the problem rather than helped in mitigating it.

In the existing situation therefore, most Africans seem to have decided to be in charge of their own destinies by deciding on their own preferred course of treatment, mostly locally made.

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[34] Ibid., 8.
[35] Ibid., 109.
[36] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic", 487.
[37] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/14/2/6: A Report on the Epidemic of Influenza.

African Responses

By the outbreak of the disease in 1918, the situation described above had resulted in victims entrusting their lives to the herbal medical practitioners, preparing their own local concoctions to treat the infection or just displaying a general feeling of apathy towards the patronage of the few existing colonial medical facilities. The African response to the double challenge of facing up to the difficulties narrated above and confronting the pandemic took the following pattern.

In the first place, in addition to displaying apathy to European medical care, other Africans decided against offering their services to the colonial government's medical facilities, ostensibly as a response to the long years of neglect and ill-treatment. Some cited family and business commitments, while others openly alluded to the possibility of making a fortune out of the situation if they operated on their own.[38] Ridiculously, in fear of suffering death when asleep some infected people with their high fevers decided against lying down and rather preferred to roam around in the sun all day. Other unscrupulous elements also took advantage of the situation and offered all manner of overnight concoctions and potions advertised as cures for the sickness. Some potions were a mixture of a native castor oil and some pain killers made from sarsaparilla root, camphor and schnapps. Another local entrepreneur marketed a curative powder which was meant to be taken with liquor. The efficacy of all of these was not proven and their intake potentially rather worsened the plight of the sufferers.[39]

Despite the known scientific basis and convictions of the outbreak, others chose to believe the epidemic was God's way of communicating to the people. Such adherents resorted to holding open air prayer meetings. It is reported that one such meeting, held in October 1918, the year of the outbreak, was very well attended. Unfortunately, in another case concerning a demented sufferer, the only end in sight to his suffering was to commit suicide by drowning himself in the sea.[40]

In the end, it was often unavoidable that there were higher casualty rates among the African population. The situation was also not helped by the complicit nature of the unhygienic settlements particularly around the coasts. The government was forced to admit that slum conditions did contribute to the death toll.[41] This development led to the lay press attacking the government and blaming the Medical Department for its

[38] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic", 493.
[39] Ibid., 494.
[40] Ibid., 489.
[41] Ibid., 494.

unpreparedness and the tardiness of its response to the disaster. The government was accused of callousness and was denounced for the shortage of doctors and its apparent lack of interest in the African population.[42]

Measures Adopted by the Colonial Government to Tackle the Issue

In October 1918, the Legislative Council unanimously passed a motion of sorrow and sympathy, following it up with an emergency appropriation vote of £2,500 to tackle the threat. The government explored the option of quarantining infected persons but soon abandoned the idea when it became more apparent within government circles that quarantine measures were useless and needlessly disruptive and so should be discontinued.[43] Although the low number of medical officers available was criticized by some, it must in truth, be pointed out that there was little they could have done since much-vaunted modern medicine had little to offer. The cause of the disease was unknown, there was no known cure and it was not known all around the world how to stop the epidemic. Doctors' advice consisted of telling people to avoid influenza victims, and to stay in their homes, keep quiet and warm and take cough medications. [44]

The Influenza Pandemic of 1918 was in fact, a nightmare for the population. For the Africans in particular, matters were also not helped when, in the midst of the common suffering, the colonial government decided to enforce the compulsory segregation of the European non-immune population in every large town. This was an old colonial government practice which was first implemented during the period of a yellow fever outbreak in 1916. According to the policy, it was permitted for the Europeans, for the purposes of carrying on their businesses, to live in the midst of the native population during the day but they were expected to return to the segregation area before 6 pm and remain there till 6 am the following day.[45] This policy, did not most likely score any political points for the colonial government, neither did it win it any favours from the African population. Rather, it served to further alienate the Africans from the colonial government.

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[42] Addae, *Evolution of Modern Medicine*, 352.
[43] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic", 492.
[44] Addae, *Evolution of Modern Medicine*, 352-353.
[45] PRAAD, Accra, ADM 1/222/117: A letter from the Provincial Medical Officer, Coomassie, Ashanti, 30th November, 1916, 2.

For the Ashanti territory, even before the spread of the infection, the Provincial Medical Officer had recommended a number of drastic measures to pre-empt the effects of its possible spread. These included a ban on any form of public congregation till further notice, an instruction to the Police Magistrate to issue no passes for indigenous functions and to severely restrict unfettered access to government institutions such as court houses. This affected virtually all of everyday life in the territories.[46]

Effects of the Epidemic and the Measures Adopted by the Government

The effects of the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic were widespread and severely felt by the affected parts of the colony. The effects were largely political, economic and social.

The Political Effects

On the political front, the outbreak served as a rallying point around which the indigenous population challenged the colonial government on matters of state policy. The point has already been made that prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, the African medical staff within the Gold Coast fared no better, in fact, being placed on the lower rung of the medical professional ladder. Even though the sector was faced with inadequate personnel, the authorities still shied away from embarking on a recruitment drive of at least qualified African personnel. This contributed to a pseudo-nationalist war, albeit of a medical nature, against the unfair practices of the colonial government. This was perhaps the reason behind the actions of the health personnel when at the height of the epidemic, they opted against offering their services to the public medical establishment, rather opting to go solo or declining the offer altogether. It must be pointed out that this happened at a time when there were no government doctors available for the Eastern Province and the Colonial Medical Officer was trying to recruit indigenous practitioners for temporary appointments there.[47]

Moreover, through the outbreak of the pandemic, the colonial government, at least at the level of the Legislative Council, was pushed to make a public admission, on the floor of the House, of some of the

[46] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/14//6: A letter from the Provincial Medical Officer, Ashanti, to the Chief Commissioner's Office, Coomassie, Ashanti, 23rd September, 1918.
[47] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic", 493.

government's obvious policy failures. On 28th October 1918, J. E. Casely Hayford, an African member of the Legislative Council compelled the Principal Medical Officer for the Gold Coast Colony, Dr. T. E. Rice, to admit to the failure of the British colonial government's policy on the sanitation of the African settlements. This, he argued, was one of the principal reasons for the high infection and mortality rate during the epidemic. The Medical Officer also admitted to the disproportionately smaller size of the medical department.[48] Fuelled partly by these minimal but forceful African opinions, the colonial government began adopting a slightly better approach to handling the health needs of the black population.

By 1919, there had been an improvement in the situation. There were now twenty-eight dispensaries and sixty-four nurses in the major hospitals of the colony. Gradually, the colonial government was beginning to accept full responsibility for the people it ruled.[49]

Economic Effects of the Outbreak

The outbreak brought strain to economic activities within the Gold Coast. As quarantine was one of the initial forms of response explored, it goes without saying that the outbreak of the disease had a severe impact on trade and commercial activities. With virtually entire crews of ships either arriving infected or becoming infected on arrival, the colonial government adopted a similar quarantine measure on all such affected ships.[50] This measure posed restrictions on the mobility of either the crew of the ship or the ship itself.

The Gold Coast was a colony noted for its brisk trading and commercial activities during the transatlantic trade. Trade and commercial activities were therefore severely affected, as people were themselves advised to stay indoors as much as possible to avoid possible infection. Fisher folks, who became primarily the first carriers and transporters of the infection to other parts of the colony, were also severely affected.

With the medical officers of the colony strenuously encouraging people to remain indoors or minimise contact with the outside world, economic activities virtually came to a standstill. Exports of cocoa suffered greatly as its shipment was delayed and ships by-passed Accra.[51]

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[48] Ibid., 494.
[49] Addae, *Evolution of Modern Medicine*, 32.
[50] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic", 487.
[51] Ibid., 488.

> Within a week to ten days of the first case being reported, a town or village presented a changed appearance: funeral processions were endless; hardly any household escaped bereavement. Shops were closed, markets, normally the hub of African activity, emptied and remained empty till the epidemic was over. Streets were deserted and towns presented a ghostly appearance.[52]

It may be difficult to estimate in monetary terms the value of trade and commercial activity that was lost. Nonetheless, the negative impact and the effect of the pandemic on the economy are not far-fetched.

The Social Effects of the Epidemic

Perhaps the most indelible mark left by the pandemic was the high mortality rates in the various territories that came under colonial rule. Tens of thousands died. All economic activities ceased just to make way for the caring of the sick and the burial of the dead. In Accra, at the height of the epidemic, against African opposition, several people sometimes had to be buried in a single grave. This was very depressing especially for a community that normally reported only three to four deaths a day. In the midst of this, in places such as Zuarungu in the Northern Territories, funeral customs were suspended; no crying was allowed; communication between compounds ceased and markets were poorly patronized.[53]

In fact, it appears that the Northern Territories were the most affected in the epidemic; at least as far as mortality figures were concerned. Deaths in the Northern Territories alone exceeded thirty thousand. It is also believed that about sixty thousand people lost their lives in the Colony and Ashanti alone. The overall mortality for the entire colony was assumed to be about ninety thousand or even more, about 4% of the entire nation's population.[54]

In view of the exceedingly high number of deaths in the few months following the disease's outbreak, the Provincial Medical Officer of Ashanti outlined the following measures: an outright closure of all the schools in Kumasi, including both those under the local Muslim mallams and the ones under European instruction; that all churches and possibly mosques were to be closed for services; that the various courts were to be either held in the open air or no members of the public would be admitted

[52] Addae, *Evolution of Modern Medicine*, 352.
[53] Patterson, "The Influenza Pandemic", 491.
[54] Ibid., 496.

and finally, all manner of celebrations, including bands, playing in the moonlight or balls were to be banned.[55]

The Significance of the Influenza Pandemic, 1918-1919

The 1918 outbreak is significant in the nation's history and development due to the following reasons. The era of the pandemic has become a major historical landmark in determining the ages of the illiterate population of the Gold Coast. It thereby became an accepted item of dating significance, particularly to the very elderly in Ghanaian society. Due to the absence of calendars at the time, coupled with the low literacy levels among the Gold Coast population of the early twentieth-century as well as the tendency of forgetfulness of the human mind on issues bordering on specific dating, the safest method of remembering an event in the remote past was to align it to a memorable event for easy periodizing. The outbreak of the influenza pandemic therefore became a necessary reference point for remembering the time of the occurrence of another notable event, such as the birth of a child, the naming ceremony of an individual, the date of marriage of an individual, etc.

Again, though the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic was not the very first occurrence of the outbreak of that disease in the colony, the colossal damage and higher mortality rates as witnessed during the early twentieth-century occurrence could not be matched by the one recorded during the late nineteenth century. As such, the very first outbreak of the disease in the Gold Coast may well have disappeared from the daily vocabulary of the indigenous population because of its comparatively minimal impact. However, the 1918 pandemic and the fact that the disease was still relatively unknown to the larger sections of the Gold Coast populace, especially in the interior, caused the term to become part of the household vocabulary and also part of the lexicon structure of the inhabitants of the Gold Coast, since it possibly may have formed a staple topic for discussion at all levels of society. The disease was referred to in the local parlance as "mfruensa," especially by the unlettered members of society.

Moreover, the outbreak in 1918 accentuated the thinking within socio-economic and political thought that the Gold Coast, and by extension the rest of colonial Africa had indeed, become part of an emerging cosmopolitan world environment, where what affected the fortunes of a

[55] PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG/1/14/2/6: A letter from the Acting Provincial Medical Officer, Ashanti, to the Chief Commissioner's Office, Coomassie, Ashanti, 23rd September, 1918.

country miles away could potentially soon affect the fortunes of another. This was more evident in the nature and mode of transmission, with the outbreak occurring through infections introduced into the colony by the crew of a foreign ship. Soon, a seemingly innocuous opportunistic infection suffered by foreign nationals going about their routine commercial interests in a far-away colony had given way to a pandemic of epic proportions. The Gold Coast was indeed part of an irreversible emergent cosmopolitan world.

Conclusion

In 1914, the world was engrossed in a global conflict. Africa, over time, had been drafted into the fray of the war and had played various significant roles to shape its eventual course. By 1918, the war was at its closing stages and various belligerent nations were at the beginning of the process of counting their losses, both in human and material terms. Out of the blue and on the sidelines of the war, the Influenza Pandemic broke out. It hit so hard that by the time it subsided sometime in 1919, the respective losses of the nations affected were huge. The Gold Coast, then a British colony, was affected by human losses of about a hundred thousand. On its outbreak, the infection spread like wild fire and soon engulfed the entire country, so much so that the effects of the disease were felt from the north to the south.

The colonial government took some blame for most of the measures it put in place to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. However, these measures, coming against the backdrop of a country that never seemed adequately prepared, with the poorest of medical infrastructure, coupled with the fact that the viral infection seemed to even confound the advanced scientific methods and medical systems of the developed nations, appeared incapable of addressing the needs of the affected population. It seemed that the collective destiny of the inhabitants of the colony was therefore up for grabs by the force of inexplicable nature. With a population loss running into the thousands, the crisscrossing effect of the pandemic was felt in the political sphere of the governance of the colony as well as in the social-economic lives of the people. The losses were sharply felt.

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SECTION IV:

MEMORY, REMEMBRANCE AND REPRESENTATIONS

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ITALY'S "PARALLEL WAR" IN LIBYA: A FORGOTTEN FRONT OF WORLD WAR I (1914-1922)

STEFANO MARCUZZI

Introduction

Italy was an important, if often overlooked, practitioner of imperial warfare in Africa. In September 1911 the "Third Italy," as intellectuals of the newly-born country called it, attacked Ottoman Tripoli in Libya with little reason other than a desire for an empire. It can be seen as the first step towards the escalation of violence that led to the First World War, an argument recently stressed by Richard Bosworth and Giuseppe Finaldi.[1] This is to say that the Libyan war was not just a prequel to the Balkan Wars and the Great War but was part of a longer and wider conflict. The fighting in North Africa did not end with the 1918 Armistice, and was not restricted to Libya.

After the proclamation of *jihad* by the Ottoman Sultan against the Entente powers in autumn 1914, Islamic revolts promoted by the religious confraternity of Senussi—a Muslim political-religious Sufi order founded in 1837 by the Grand Senussi Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Senussi—spread from Libya into Sudan and Egypt during both the Great War and in the years that followed.

A study of the First World War in North Africa necessitates a comparative and transnational analysis, and a temporal approach that breaks the conventional chronological divisions of the Libyan War, the Great War and the post-war crisis. In such a context, the Libyan conflict played a major role, and it heavily influenced not only the Italian, but also the British strategy in North Africa and the Middle East during and after

[1] R. Bosworth and G. Finaldi, *The Italian Empire*, in R. Gerwarth and E. Manela (eds.) *Empires at War, 1911-1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 35-44.

the First World War. Yet, the Libyan front is badly overlooked by both the British and Italian historiographies.

Anglo-Saxon scholarship almost completely ignores Libya. Just very recently Christopher Clark and William Mulligan conceded that it had a huge impact in bringing about the European crisis of 1914.[2] Angelo Del Boca, the pre-eminent historian of Italian colonialism, wrote the most complete history of the Libyan War in 1986, but it essentially has an Italian perspective.[3] More recently, Nicola Labanca described the Libyan War as a single conflict lasting for twenty years between 1911 and 1931—that is, until Mussolini recaptured the territory lost to the Libyan rebels during and after the First World War.[4] But he briefly touched on the international dimension of the Libyan conflict during the First World War. More generally, Italian scholars focused on the Fascist campaign to recapture much of the colony, which was marked by extreme brutality. It was perceived to be less uncomfortable to consider the mass-violence pursued by the Italians in Libya as a purely Fascist legacy. Yet in colonial affairs, the distinction between Liberal Italy and Fascist Italy is much less clear-cut than Italians often like to think. This is clear when considering the Italian campaign in Libya before October 1922.

It is not possible to trace a new history of the Italian occupation of Libya. I will therefore limit myself to analysing the Libyan conflict fought by Liberal Italy, which had its peak during the First World War, when that conflict became another front of the world war.

This essay therefore aims to answer the following questions: why did Liberal Italy fail to pacify its new colony and find itself involved in a "parallel war" during World War I? How did such a war influence the Great War as a whole? How did Liberal Italy's experience and strategy in Libya differ from that of Fascist Italy after 1922? And what was the legacy of the Libyan conflict during the post-war crisis?

In order to answer these questions I will need to briefly consider Italy's approach to the Libyan campaign in 1911 and Italy's policy and colonial administration from the "official" end of the war in 1912 to the outbreak of the First World War. I will further analyse the Libyan front of World War I within the wider context of the conflict. The military and political

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[2] See: C. Clark, *The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2012); W. M. Mulligan, *The Great War for Peace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

[3] A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*. Vol. 1: *Tripoli bel suol d'Amore* (Bari: Laterza, 1986); *Gli italiani in Libia*. Vol. 2: *Dal fascismo a Gheddafi* (Bari: Laterza, 1986).

[4] N. Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia, 1911-1931* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2012), 11.

issues of the post-war crisis will later be considered in order to understand if and where Liberal Italy's answers to such issues were different from those given by Mussolini in the years that followed.

Italy's "Fourth Shore"

The Italian invasion of Libya in 1911 was preceded by a long diplomatic preparation and accompanied by a great mobilization of Italian public opinion[5] but not by an equally intense interest in the territories and peoples that Italy was going to subject.

What Italians called Libya, taking the name of the former Roman province, was actually a territory divided into three quite different regions: Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan. The whole region was 1,759,540 square km and, according to the latest Turkish census of 3 July 1911, hosted 150,000 semi-nomadic and 500,000 sedentary people. Ethnically, it was not a homogeneous country: it included 280,000 Arabs, 135,000 Berbers, 270,000 Arab-Berbers, 20,000 Jews and other minorities.[6] This produced strong internal tensions, especially between the Turks and Libyans. Some measures imposed by the Ottomans, including compulsory military service and heavy taxes, were particularly disliked by the Libyans.

Italy prepared for the occupation of Libya with economic initiatives and sought the support of local war lords, for instance Ahmed Dhyà, who did offer their help "to occupy Tripoli."[7] The local population remained passive before the Italian landing at Tobruk (4 October 1911) and Tripoli (5 October), while the Turks retreated inland.

The Italians concluded that the occupation of Libya was primarily a political, economic and diplomatic matter with its military aspect being secondary. This was evident in the proclamation on 13 October 1911 by General Carlo Caneva, commander of the Italian expeditionary force. He made an appeal to the indigenes to establish a fruitful collaboration and to free themselves from the Turkish yoke. In return, he promised justice and

[5] G. Rochat, *Le guerre italiane 1935-1943. Dall'impero d'Etiopia alla disfatta* (Torino: Einaudi, 2005), 5.
[6] See: Comando del Corpo di occupazione della Libia, Ufficio Politico-Militare, *Censimento della Tripolitania del 3 luglio 1911*, Tripoli, 1912.
[7] Archivio Storico del Ministero dell'Africa Italiana, Ministero degli Affari Esteri (ASMAI) 150/3, 1919.

wealth, in accordance with the will of God "who has decreed that Italy should occupy Libya."[8]

The appeal, which mirrored that of Napoleon in Egypt in 1798, aimed at reducing the role of Islam as an anti-colonialist bonding agent. The Italian commander believed he had achieved his goal: "The Turkish soldiers, having retreated inland, will try to instigate the Arabs to counter us. […] However, such danger is not even worth mentioning. Because the Arabs do not have anti-Italian feelings."[9]

In reality, most of the Libyan population held a common opinion about the invasion from the beginning: they needed to defend their faith and their own territory, even at the cost of collaborating with their old masters, the Turks. On the other hand, after numerous fights with the Turks, the Libyans had been able to win some important rights: they were no longer subjects but citizens of the Ottoman Empire, with their own deputies in Constantinople and the freedom of press and assembly. These rights were revoked by the Italians,[10] and the Libyans suddenly found themselves the subjects of a Christian power.

The Italian illusions of an almost peaceful occupation were crushed at the Battle of Sciara Sicat on 23 October 1911, when the Libyan population *en masse* joined the Turkish soldiers, counter-attacking the invaders and inflicting on them heavy losses. This general insurrection, which the Italians had never seriously considered, would not be completely stifled until fascism suppressed it in 1931.

The Italians saw it as a "betrayal" by the Libyan populations and reacted harshly, often with brutal reprisals. The number of soldiers in the Italian corps was quickly raised to 100,000 men, almost half of the peacekeeping force of the army. But it was made of conscripted troops unsuited to moving in the semi-desert territory.[11] After a year of war, the Italians succeeded in pushing Constantinople to peace, largely thanks to the attack launched by their fleet in the Aegean, which led to the occupation of the Dodecanese islands. However, Libya remained a not entirely pacified colony.

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[8] Habib Wadaa Al-Hesnawi, "Nota sulla politica coloniale italiana verso gli arabi libici (1911-1943)" in A. Del Boca (ed.), *Le guerre coloniali del Fascismo* (Bari: Laterza, 1991), 34.
[9] Ibid., 32.
[10] Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*. Vol. 1, *Tripoli*…, 89.
[11] Labanca, *La guerra italiana*…, 73.

Weakness of the Italian Occupation

On 12 October 1912, Italy and Turkey signed the Treaty of Ouchy: Giolitti's government obtained dominion over Libya from Constantinople. For Italy, the war ended with the loss of 3,431 men—1,483 in battle and 4,220 wounded—and the remaining due to diseases,[12] and an official cost of 512 million lira.[13] The Italian contingent in the colony was reduced steadily, from 97,000 men in summer 1913, to 71,000 in January 1914 and then to 50,000 in July of the same year.[14] In reality, the hardest part of the Libyan adventure was about to begin.

Although it had formally renounced Libya, the Turkish government nourished dreams of revenge. Captain Mayer, a German informer of the Italian ambassador in Berlin Alberto Pansa, communicated to the Italian allies the proposal, made in Berlin by the Turkish ambassador, for a German-Turkish pact aimed at conveying weapons and ammunition to the rebels in Libya.[15] At the same time, Italian intelligence learned from Libyan informers that Nesciat Bey, the Turkish military commander in Libya during the war, had promised the Arab leaders of Tripolitania indirect Turkish support to continue the fight against the Italians:

> The peace treaty has been signed, the Turkish government cannot help you in an official way, but there are those who can do it: the Union and Progress Committee. I can provide you with the supplies that you have already ordered and 20,000 Turkish liras. […] I cannot give you the munitions, I'll let you take them, together with the rifles, and I'll say you seized them.[16]

The Italian government realised that Constantinople had not cast aside its hopes of recovering Libya—and that Italy's European allies did not look with favour on a strengthening of the Italian position in the central Mediterranean and the Aegean.

The Libyan rebellion was a more urgent issue. The resistance movement was not united—some leaders opted for collaboration with Rome—but it remained a thorn in Italy's side. Anti-Italian resistance was

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[12] It is impossible to calculate the losses of the Libyans and the Turks.

[13] Sidney Sonnino, future Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that the real amount was at least double. See: Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, I, *Tripoli…*, *op. cit.*, 196.

[14] Labanca, *La guerra italiana…*, 121.

[15] Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), Carte Giolitti, b. 22, f.54. tel. 210.

[16] Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (ASMAE), Libia, b. 150/14, f. 55, Rapporto del Governatore Ragni al Ministero delle Colonie: Questione del Gebel. The political situation.

particularly strong in Cyrenaica, where the influence of Senussi's Islamic brotherhood, based in Kufra, was widespread.

The Italians tried to involve the Libyans in the pacification of the new colony by recruiting as mercenaries some war lords such as Kherbisc, Khalifa Zawi and Akef Amsek al-Gariani, together with their bands. The expansion of the Italian occupation in Libya, however, encouraged conciliation between the Libyan collaborationists and the resistance. During a meeting held in 'Aziziya in November 1912, the leaders of the two factions met to decide upon a common course of action towards the Italians after Turkey's exit from the war. The group that preached armed resistance, until victory or martyrdom, prevailed. From the military point of view, the outcome was obvious in the battles of Gianduba, Sidi Karim al-Qarbaa and Qardabya, where some collaborationist notables withdrew their support to the Italians and joined the rebels.[17]

The Italians tried to pacify the colony through the classic *divide et impera* of the colonial powers. They believed that they could gradually establish themselves throughout the region by fuelling the tribal and ethnic divisions within the social structure of the Libyan populations—for example, pushing the sedentary peoples against the nomadic, the Arabs against the Berbers, and the Arab notables against the Jewish ones. But this approach showed at least two errors in its formulation. In the first place, the ethnic distinctions were not as sharp as the Italians thought: the Berbers often did not recognize themselves in that definition, so much so that the Italians learned to call some of the tribes Arab-Berber. Secondly, the main Libyan social structure, the *qabila* (plural *qaba'il*), which the Italians translated as "tribe" or "confederation", was a non-crystallized structure in constant evolution. It included different ethnic components—sedentary people, nomads, Arabs and Berbers—united by the common Islamic faith, and they would feel they were part of a single community.[18] The major tensions that broke out later were between ambitious and competing leaders, not between the components of the *qaba'il*; by the time the Italians realized, it was too late.

The land policy adopted by Rome further antagonized the Libyan populations against the new masters. Three months after the Treaty of Ouchy, on 26 January 1913, the Italian authorities issued their decree n. 48, under which all uncultivated land in Libya that could be acquired privately or collectively passed into the hands of the Italian state as "State-

[17] Habib Wadaa Al-Hesnawi, "Nota sulla politica coloniale italiana…," 39-40.
[18] Labanca, *La guerra italiana*, *op. cit.*, 43.

owned property."[19] It was no other than a confiscation of the few fertile lands, which increased the poverty of the indigenes and their hatred towards the invaders.

The Great Arab Revolt

In July 1914 the Italian expansion in Libya was in full swing. General Vincenzo Garioni had occupied Tripolitania, and General Giovanni Ameglio had fought off the Senussi from the coast of Cyrenaica and Jebel Akhdar. However, the structure of the Italian occupation was fragile. Even before the outbreak of the Great War, hotbeds of revolt flared up in the regions of Fezzan, Et Ghibla and Surtica.

At the outbreak of war in Europe, Italy found itself in an ambiguous situation. The Sultan of Constantinople proclaimed a holy war against the western infidels of the Entente powers. Italy, being neutral at that time, was theoretically excluded from the *jihad*, in order to avoid pushing it into the arms of Russia, France and Great Britain. But in reality Constantinople had no interest in protecting the Italian colonies, and also Vienna and Berlin, although still allied with Rome, gradually lost all their reasons for urging Constantinople into doing so.[20]

Consequentially, the *jihad* involved Libya before Italy entered the Great War. On 28 November 1914, Libyan rebel bands commanded by Ahmed esh-Sherìf attacked and looted a column of Italian supplies marching from Nalùt to Yefren. As a precaution, Colonel Antonio Miani decided to evacuate Fezzan, which was immediately occupied by the Senussi under the command of Mohammed el-Abed. By January 1915, the Italian retreat had been completed, despite many hit-and-run attacks on the marching columns by Arab bands.

In early February, Giulio Cesare Tassoni, the eighth Italian governor in four years, arrived in Tripoli. He judged the retreat required by Miani towards Tripolitania as premature and condemned "the tendency to exaggerate the strength of the rebels" and "the unjustified withdrawal from posts and villages." He released a circular to the Italian commanders in the field demanding that their positions be held "at any cost". These orders, however, contrasted with those of the Italian Commander-in-Chief Luigi

[19] S. Acquaviva, "Gli Ordinamenti della Libia dopo la morte del Trattato di Losanna", in *Rivista Coloniale*, X (1915), 569-587.
[20] S. Sonnino, *Diario 1914-1916*. Vol. II, (Bari: Laterza, 1972), 29-30.

Cadorna who, in view of the potential entry of Italy in the European war, wished to limit the defence of the colony to the major cities on the coast.[21]

Tassoni interpreted the order to defend the cities in a pro-active and not only a reactive way. He planned to respond to the Libyan guerrilla with a counter-guerrilla, made of raids and hit-and-run attacks to the enemy camps. On paper it was a brilliant strategy. In reality it proved unfeasible for the Italian forces because of the heavy structure of their columns. The lack of vehicles and effective radio communications made it difficult to intercept the rebels. The Italians attempted to remedy these impediments by once again relying on irregular mercenary bands. However, when put to the test they proved to be ill-disciplined and often treacherous. A symptomatic episode was the battle of Uàdi Tuil Marsit, where Colonel Gianinazzi's column, consisting of 2,000 men including 700 whites, was attacked by the rebels of Ahmed as-Sunni. The Libyan mercenaries under Italian colours dispersed at the first rifle shots and some sided with the rebels. The Italians retreated in disorder, with the loss of 323 men, 3 guns and almost all of their supplies.[22]

Despite this bloody set-back, Tassoni authorized a larger operation headed by Colonel Miani to rid the Surtica region of the rebels. Miani, who was one of the more experienced Italian officers, gathered 3,200 men, including many Libyan mercenaries whose morale, as well as their loyalty, were rather questionable.[23]

On 29 April 1915, Miani's column came within sight of the Gasr Bu Hadi oasis, 20 km from Surt, where about 1,500 *mujahedeen* under the orders of Ramadan esc-Scèuti had been reported. The Italians tried to outflank the enemy, but their slow column was attacked by the rebels on horseback, who were weaker in numbers but more mobile. Miani ordered his men to take up defensive positions on a hill, but once again the irregular bands abandoned their masters and in some cases attacked them from behind, spreading chaos. Miani ordered the retreat to Surt which soon turned into a rout. At the end of the day Italian casualties, including whites and indigenes, amounted to half of the contingent: the heaviest loss suffered by Italy in one battle in Libya since 1911.[24]

Thanks to censorship, nothing leaked in Italy about the *débâcle*. But there was consternation in the offices of the government and the Ministry of the Colonies: "One more disaster, it is the fourth in a month or so," said

[21] L. Cadorna, *Lettere famigliari* (Milan: Mondadori, 1967), 67.
[22] Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*. Vol. 1, *Tripoli…*, *op. cit.*, 275.
[23] Ibid., 277.
[24] A. Del Boca, *La disfatta di Gasr bu Hàdi. 1915: il colonnello Miani e il più grande disastro dell'Italia coloniale* (Milan: Mondadori, 2004), 90-93.

Minister Ferdinando Martini. "But this is the most serious of all. One of the worst disasters in living memory in the history of the colony."[25] The defeat brought with it the surrender of many other garrisons that had remained isolated because of Tassoni's order to defend every outpost: besieged, they had to surrender one by one after the attempts to rescue them resulted in more Italian failures.

On 24 May 1915, Italy entered the Great War. The first Italian operations on the Carso front against Austria-Hungary saw modest but encouraging success. Libya, however, continued to worry the government. "We win on the Carso, but every garrison of Tripolitania costs many victims: painful retreats were made even more painful by the stubborn inability of the Governor," commented Martini.[26]

On 4 July, Prime Minister Antonio Salandra, the War Minister Vittorio Zuppelli and Martini met to address the Libyan problem. They opted for a general retreat on the Tripolitanian coast, even abandoning Surt and Zliten.[27] By 15 July, all inner garrisons had been evacuated. The Italians were concentrated in four main centres: Tripoli, Homs, Zuara and Misrata Marina. Similar retreats were made in Cyrenaica, although in Cyrenaica, the Italians managed to keep control of part of the plateau, as well as the coast.[28]

It was time to take stock of the Libyan campaign. From the outbreak of the anti-Italian revolt, Italian losses amounted to 5,000 men and about 2,000 prisoners. Material losses were not less severe: 37 guns, 37 trucks, 20 machine guns, 10,000 rifles, 28,000 rounds of ammunition and more than 6 million cartridges had fallen into the rebels' hands; as a consequence, they were able to arm an even larger number of *mujahedeen*: almost 10,000 units in Tripolitania and 8/10,000 more in Cyrenaica.[29]

The government needed a scapegoat for such a disaster and found it in governor Tassoni, who was replaced on 15 July by Ameglio. The newcomer immediately asked Cadorna for reinforcements, but the latter refused.[30] Ameglio could only order new painful retreats, abandoning Zuara and Misrata Marina: the Italian possessions in Tripolitania were now limited to Tripoli and Homs. In the fortifications along the coast, 35,000 men were

[25] F. Martini, *Lettere (1860-1928)* (Milan: Mondadori, 1934), 452.
[26] Ibid., 479.
[27] Ibid.
[28] A. Gaibi, *Storia delle colonie* (Torino: Schioppo, 1934), 294.
[29] ASMAE, Libia, b. 122/9, f. 74. Tel. 4724, 26 November 1915. See also: Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito (AUSSME), b. 218, f. 19.
[30] Ibid., Libia, b. 122/6, f. 55. Tel. 121, 25 July 1915.

crammed with 133 guns: too many for the rebels to conquer the cities, but too few for Ameglio to dare to attempt any counter-offensive in the desert. The campaign became a huge siege, exhausting for both sides.

The Italians retaliated harshly for the defeats suffered against the populations still under their rule. Their Eritrean Askaris, of the Coptic Christian faith, gave vent to their hatred of Muslims on the Arab population of Tripolitania. The acts of violence committed by the Italians and the Askaris, which included countless death sentences following summary proceedings, provoked a fierce polemic between Ameglio and the Minister of the Colonies, who urged the governor to put an end to what he defined as a "reign of terror."[31]Ameglio rejected the accusations: he sent to Rome a report signed by Colonel Ferrari, in which the latter refuted almost all of the allegations against his men, or justified them in the light of acts of rebellion.[32] The dispute continued between the governor and the new Colonial Minister, Gaspare Colosimo, who replaced Martini in June 1916. Colosimo insisted that those responsible for the worst atrocities had to be identified through an official inquiry, and punished.[33] The new Minister of War, Paolo Morrone, intervened in the quarrel advising Colosimo against an inquiry at that time, but demanded further efforts from Ameglio to avoid excesses of violence from that moment on.[34]

A report of 29 July, *Spirit of Officers and Troops* by Colonel Pàntano, revealed that the atmosphere of mutual racial hatred that had developed in the colony was causing the soldiers to lose their nerve. The Italians were psychologically tired and frustrated to the point that many, even among the officers, preached the systematic extermination of the Arabs. The looting of villages added to the summary executions, "thus making the best propaganda in favour of the Senussi."[35] On 31 August 1916, Ameglio issued a circular recalling the civilian and military personnel of the colony to "civilised behaviour", declaring that "every transgression will be inexorably punished."[36]

In reality, the conflict in Libya worsened in the following months, involving the major belligerent powers of the world war. Italy's difficulties grew and with them grew the repressions, often ordered by Ameglio himself.

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[31] Ibid., Libia, b. 127/1, f. 1., Martini to Zuppelli., n. 344, 29 November 1915.
[32] Ibid., attachment 2, n. 350.
[33] Ibid., Libia, b. 127/1, n. 6596, 28 August 1916.
[34] Ibid., n. 14357; and n. 20720.
[35] Ibid., b. 122/6, f. 50, n. 224.
[36] Ibid., b. 113/1, f. 14, n. 14.

The International Context

With Italy's entry into the European war, on 23 May 1915, the Libyan conflict became a new front in the Great War. At that point, Italy became a legitimate target for the *jihad*. Turkey was immediately at the forefront in supporting the rebels, supplying them with equipment and funds, and providing them with military instructors. Germany's role was more important and strategic. Although Italy and Germany were not at war with each other until the end of August 1916, Germany acted unscrupulously in the central Mediterranean from May 1915, in order to pose a threat to the naval routes connecting Egypt, Libya and Europe. On the one hand, the Germans torpedoed Italian convoys with their submarines sailing under the Austro-Hungarian flag;[37] on the other hand, they resupplied and co-ordinated the *mujahedeen* with the purpose of breaking off British power in Egypt.

The German plan to damage the British and the French in Africa in the event of a European war had been drafted in 1913. A secret report on 19 March provided for a three-stage strategy: 1) a German-Turkish offensive would be launched against Egypt from Palestine; 2) the Turks, with Senussi support, would promote widespread uprisings of the Muslim populations in North Africa; and 3) German and Turkish agents would instigate further anti-British revolts in East Africa.

Enver Bey, the Pasha and Ottoman Minister of War in 1914, came up with a similar plan in August 1914, three months before Turkey entered the war on the side of the Central Powers: he aimed at using the Senussi to threaten British interests in Egypt. He then agreed with the German general Liman von Sanders upon a common plan of action.[38] They organized an expeditionary force of 16,000 men that was to leave Syria and head for the Suez Canal, crossing the desert for more than a thousand kilometres. In the autumn of 1914 they gained the support of the Grand Senussi, Ahmed esh-Sherif, although his actual contribution to the enterprise was modest. In February 1915 the expedition, led by Djemal Pasha and Colonel Kress von Kressenstein, left for the canal. The vanguard of the Turkish 8th army corps came within sight of Ismaelia and two of its companies managed to cross the Suez Canal, but British's reaction wrecked the plan.[39]

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[37] P. Halpern, *A Naval History of World War I* (London: UCL Press, 1994), 145.
[38] A. Melrose, *The Dardanelles. Their Story and their Significance in the Great War* (London, 1915), 79-97.
[39] S. Hadaway, *Pyramids and Fleshpots. The Egyptian, Senussi and Eastern Mediterranean Campaigns, 1914-1916* (Straud: Spellmout, 2014), 53-64.

This failure did not discourage Enver Pasha. He decided to try his venture again by attacking Egypt not only from the Sinai, but also from Cyrenaica and Sudan. For this more ambitious plan, he again needed the support of Ahmed esh-Sherif from Cyrenaica, but also that of Ali Dinar, sultan of Darfur, for the attack from the south. Initially the Grand Senussi was sceptical. His opinion was that they should focus on the Italians in Libya, rather than on the British in Egypt, especially since the latter seemed to still tolerate the Senussi. But Germany and Turkey insisted that Egypt should remain the priority.[40]

The strategic issue here is for us to determine whether such an operation was intended to be a co-ordinated offensive act or just a series of attacks from three sides. It would be necessary to scan Turkish and German documents to find a final answer to the question. Nevertheless, the debate between the Turkish and German military authorities, and Ahmed esh-Sherif over the general strategy for the campaign, in my view, suggests that Enver Pasha did in fact see it as a co-ordinated offensive act.

While the Senussi discussed the best strategy with the Turkish and German allies, disagreement also reigned in the Entente's field. Italy was putting pressure on Great Britain for them to break with the Senussi. The Italian diplomats realized with annoyance that His Majesty's government believed that "in the Senussi matter," its interests did not coincide with the Italian.[41] The pressure on Britain became stronger after the Italian defeats in Libya in the summer of 1915. Yet, once again, the Italian ambassador in London, Guglielmo Imperiali, informed Rome that Britain did not seem keen on collaborating with Italy on that front.[42] On 5 July, Salandra wrote to Imperiali that the Italian failures in the colony were a direct consequence of the failed British support:

> The behaviour of England has validly contributed to the creation of this situation; it [England] allowed the Senussi rebellion against us to be fed in every way, even after we formally became allies, to pull its danger away from Egypt.[43]

Britain was also unwilling to co-operate with Italy for other reasons, namely the Italian reluctance to declare war on the Ottoman Empire and Germany. Italy's war was formulated as the "fourth war of independence" for the liberation of the "unredeemed lands" still under Hapsburg rule, and

[40] ASMAE, Libia, b. 122/6, f. 47.
[41] R. Astuto, "Ferdinando Martini e l'Inghilterra", *Rivista delle Colonie*, n. 4, Aprile 1943, 287.
[42] Documenti Diplomatici Italiani (DDI), V Serie, IV, doc. 100.
[43] Ibid., doc. 342.

its strategic priorities were significantly different from Britain's. For Italy, the main enemy was Austria-Hungary, whereas for Britain (and France) it was Germany. Pushing Italy to go beyond the national dimension of its war and involve it in the wider war of the Entente had been a primary objective of Britain since Italy entered the conflict. London, even more than Paris and Petrograd, had a global vision of the war, in which Italy's role was crucial, especially in completing the blockade against the Central Powers in the Mediterranean. Britain decided not to co-operate with Italy on colonial issues until it fell into line with the Entente's policy regarding Turkey and, above all, Germany.[44] Italy's declaration of war on Turkey on 21 August 1915 marked the beginning of Anglo-Italian co-operation in North Africa, although it was initially limited to the defence of the supply routes.[45]

In the meantime, the Turks and the Germans had been defining the details of their new offensive act against Egypt. Enver Pasha managed to convince the Senussi to participate by promising that, at the end of the war, a Libyan kingdom would be created under Senussi sovereignty. In mid-August rumours arrived in Egypt about a mobilization of the Senussi: thousands of Arabs and Berbers were being armed and trained by about a hundred Turkish and German officers.[46]

Just before embarking on the Egyptian adventure, the Grand Senussi proposed to Italy an exchange of prisoners. This move was unexpected for the Italians, and they interpreted it as a diplomatic opening. Governor Ameglio was happy to accept it. He wished to limit the fighting in Cyrenaica, since he deemed the rebels in Tripolitania a more immediate danger. They were rapidly increasing in numbers: according to Italian estimates, they had gone from 13,650 with 13 guns on 29 July 1915 to 17,750 with 15 cannons on 18 August.[47] They posed such a threat that many, in Italian colonial circles, proposed to form a Libyan kingdom ruled by the Senussi under an Italian protectorate, that is, to "make of Libya what Britain has made of Egypt."[48]

In September, however, it became clear that the purpose of the Senussi was only to distract the Italians while they concentrated their forces against the British. Their surprise attack on the Egyptian oases of Siwa, El Bahariya, Farafra and Mogara caused serious concern among the British. However, the rebels were unable to exploit the momentum due to their

[44] Ibid., doc. 384, Sonnino to Salandra, 10 July 1915.
[45] Halpern, *A Naval History*…, 386-7.
[46] DDI, V Serie, IV, doc. 601, 15 August 1915.
[47] ASMAE, Libia, b. 122/6, ff. 52 and 54.
[48] S. Acquaviva, "Gli Ordinamenti della Libia…", *op. cit.*, 104.

own internal conflicts that opposed the commander of the Senussi Libyan forces, Nuri Bey, to that of the Senussi of Darfur, Ali Dinar. Furthermore, Libyans, Sudanese, Turks and Germans did not trust each other.[49]

In spite of this, on 12 November Nuri Bey occupied the Egyptian port of Sollum while another revolt led by Ulad Ali broke out in Egypt. Nuri Bey marched on Sidi el-Barrani, where he was provided with fresh supplies from German submarines. In mid-December he reached Mersa Matruh, but a few days later he was intercepted by General John Maxwell with 10,000 British soldiers, and was badly defeated at the battle of el-Hzalin. On 24 March 1916, the British reoccupied Sollum. Between March and November 1916, under the command of General Wingate, they also outperformed Ali Dinar, who fell in battle. Nuri Bey and Ahmed esh-Sherif fled to inland Marmarica and to the oasis of Jaghbub, respectively.[50] The Turkish-German invasion of Egypt failed with the defeat of the Senussi.

In light of these events, on 13 March 1916, an Anglo-Italian agreement proposed by Sonnino was finally signed. It provided for Britain to treat the Grand Senussi as a rebel and resist any temptation to negotiate with him.[51] Thanks to the British collaboration, Ameglio was able to develop a new strategy. He aimed at isolating the Senussi and "exacerbate, as much as it is in our power, the already existing disagreements" between the Libyan factions, deepening the contrasts between the independent leaders and the Senussi.[52]

Turkey also changed its strategy in Libya. Until then it had supported indistinctly all factions opposed to Italy: from the beginning of 1916 Constantinople decided to support only those more loyal to Turkey, to take back into its own hands the leadership of the fight and, in future, of the colony. Turkish support shifted from the Senussi to independent warlords who were hostile to him. In many cases, these were the same ones that Ameglio was trying to cajole. Once again, the Libyans proved to be more sensitive to Turkish promises than Italian, and Ameglio's attempt to gain allies among the independent tribes turned out to be largely a failure.[53]

Ameglio retaliated with a "scorched earth" policy on a large scale. In April, he had 1,270 kilograms of incendiary liquid and 3,600 kilos of

[49] DDI, V Serie, IV, doc. 515, Imperiali to Sonnino, 2 August 1915.
[50] Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*. Vol. 1, *Tripoli…*, *op. cit.*, 317; Hadaway, *Pyramids and Fleshpots…*, *op. cit.*, 98-106.
[51] DDI, V Serie, V, doc. 441, 320.
[52] ASMAE, Libia, b. 122/9, f. 76, n. 2286.
[53] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (London: Clarendon Press, 1949), 125-127.

explosives dropped on the barley fields of Zanzur and Zavia. Between May and August 1916 the Italian air force in Tripolitania carried out about a hundred raids on the rebel-held farmlands. In August, 21 raids were carried out, dropping about a ton of bombs.[54] However, far from wearing down resistance, this strengthened it.

But the Grand Senussi too was in serious difficulties. He was under attack by the Italians and the British, and was challenged by an increasing number of followers, some of whom wanted to entrust the leadership of the Senussi order to Mohammed Idris, a direct heir of the Mahdi. This prompted Ahmed esh-Sherif, in the winter of 1916-17, to seek a real agreement with the Italians.

In 1917, Italy faced the most difficult period of its war. The great sacrifices made by the country until then had not led to decisive results but had been consuming the physical and moral energies of the nation. The constant need for soldiers to be used in the European theatre pushed Cadorna to repatriate numerous contingents from Tripolitania. This caused even more difficulties to the Italians left there, who continued to be kept under siege in their fortified towns along the coast.[55] The activity of German submarines also aroused great apprehension. In 1917 they had become the main threat to the supply routes to the colony: Italian aircraft spotted the U-Boats only three times throughout the year, without any concrete results. The German submarines continued to ensure supplies to the Libyan rebels, especially those engaged in the siege of Italian strongholds in Tripolitania.[56] Therefore, the armistice proposed by the Senussi came at a time when the Italians were more willing to compromise than two years before.

Italian and Senussite positions were far apart. For Rome, the priorities remained: 1) full Italian sovereignty over Libya; 2) the dissolution and disarmament of the Senussite forces; and 3) the release of prisoners still held by the Senussi. For the Senussites, on the other hand, the priorities were: 1) the creation of a State of Cyrenaica; 2) the preservation of the armed forces of the order; and 3) the right to coin money.[57] In addition, the

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[54] A. Curami and G. Balestra, "L'aeronautica italiana nelle campagne coloniali libiche," in Del Boca, (ed.), *Le guerre coloniali…*, 200.
[55] Labanca, *La guerra italiana*…, 129.
[56] Particularly remarkable was the action of U.92, which in May 1917 shipped to Bengasi Turkish officers and ammunition supplies. It also opened fire on the city and captured the Greek steamer *Agragas* in the harbour, before sailing back to the sea unharmed. See: Ufficio Storico della R. Marina, *La marina italiana nella grande guerra*, Vol. VI, 215.
[57] Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, I, *Tripoli*…, 337.

two sides were fragmented: some factions, on both sides, were in favour of dialogue, whilst others preached a hard line.

Nevertheless, in April 1917, the two sides signed the Acroma pact, which provided for the cessation of hostilities in Cyrenaica, the return of all prisoners and the delivery to the Italians of all Turkish officers still in the Senussi territory. The end of hostilities in Cyrenaica revived the exhausted population of the region. As noted by Evans-Pritchard, however, it was an armistice rather than a peace treaty.[58] Neither Italy nor the Senussi gave up sovereignty over the region.

The Acroma Pact was a strategic success for Italy as it eliminated a war front, but a political success for the Senussi who reorganized themselves under a stronger leadership: just a year later, in mid-August 1918, Ahmed esh-Sherif was to abandon Libya forever on a German submarine. His place was taken by Mohammed Idris. Some scholars have argued that it was Italy's conciliatory attitude that saved the Senussi from full defeat, now that the British were sided against them.[59] Behind this partial Anglo-Italian collaboration in North Africa lay, once again, the primarily national character of the Italian war.

The War after the War

The Caporetto disaster in October 1917, and the ensuing crisis of the Italian army in the winter of 1917-18, increased Italy's weakness in the colonial theatre. Rome tried to find a *modus vivendi* with the Libyan rebels in Tripolitania, so as to despatch more units to Italy for the defence of the motherland. But the Tripolitanian leaders, particularly Suleiman al-Baruni, refused to come to terms with the Italians at that time. A few months later, in November 1918, they proclaimed a Tripolitanian, Arab and Islamic republic.[60]

By now, the Great War had come to an end, and Rome was able to respond by sending massive reinforcements to the colony: 3 new divisions, 200 guns, 1,000 machine guns, 40 aircraft, 700 trucks, and tear gas. By March 1919 there were about 80,000 men in Libya. These troops, said General Pàntano, commander of one of the three new divisions, were aggressive, made up of battle-hardened veterans of the war in Europe, and

[58] Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi…*, 145-146.
[59] Labanca, *La guerra italiana…*, 130.
[60] Ibid.

constituted such an instrument of war as had never yet been seen in the colony.[61]

However, political considerations prompted Orlando's government not to throw itself into an armed re-conquest, but to try to regain control of the colony peacefully. First, the agreement with the Senussi was working, and it had brought back peace to Cyrenaica: the new governor of Tripoli, Garioni, committed himself to doing the same in Tripolitania. Secondly, the Italians expected that the war, although victorious in the end thanks to their overwhelming superiority in men and equipment, would not be easy or short. Finally, it was not clear how long the reinforcements would remain in Libya, as by then a general demobilization was underway in Italy.[62] Italian politicians were also influenced by the ideas of US President Woodrow Wilson, who preached the self-determination of peoples. The Tripolitanian leaders, for their part, impressed by the deployment of Italian forces, accepted the negotiation that they had rejected during the final year of the war in Europe.

On 21 April 1919, Italians and Arabs signed the Statute of the Colony. Colonial subjection was abolished and the Libyans were granted "Italian citizenship of Tripolitania," which included, at least on paper, the right to free profession in Italy too. Compulsory military service was replaced with a voluntary one. A Libyan Parliament was established, composed of elected representatives of the subdued populations. The Arabic language was on the same level with Italian, also in official documents. Compulsory primary education for the Arabs was given in Arabic. Freedom of the press and freedom of assembly were recognized. The direct revenue contribution, if not approved by the Libyan parliament was eliminated. The Libyans were also allowed to be part of the Governing Council of Tripoli, presided over by the governor—it was made up of two members appointed by the governor himself, and eight elected by the Libyan parliament.[63] In return, the Libyans undertook to return all Italian prisoners, hand over the looted equipment, and begin the gradual disarmament of the armed bands. Although not an entirely democratic statute—all native representatives still remained under the control of the Italian authorities—it was one of the most liberal colonial experiments offered by Europeans in Africa. The Tripolitanians welcomed the agreement with particular enthusiasm. Some Arab leaders sent generous

[61] G. Pàntano, *Ventitrè anni di vita africana* (Torino: SATET, 1943), 313.
[62] Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, I, *Tripoli*…, 361.
[63] G. Ambrosini, "La condizione giuridica dei libici dall'occupazione all'avvento del fascismo", *Rivista delle Colonie*, January 1939, 76-90.

gifts to "our King" and celebrated "our army's" European victory, as if it was a common victory of Arabs and Italians.[64]

New pacts were made by Italy with the Senussi in er-Regima and Bu Mariam in October 1920 and the first Cyrenaican Parliament opened on 30 April 1921. Sovereignty over the coast and the plateau of Cyrenaica passed to Italy, while the inland oases and desert region were attributed to the "independent administration" of Mohammed Idris. Italy guaranteed him the title of "Highness," that could be handed down to his heirs, maintenance for a guard of 1,000 men, a monthly allowance of 63,000 lira in addition to 2,600,000 lira for the "peaceful development" of his lands. In return, the Grand Senussi undertook to disarm his armed bands, not to impose taxes over the territory under his jurisdiction, and to agree with the Italian governor upon the land policy.[65] With these agreements the entire colony seemed pacified.

But already in November, after only six months of peace, the contrasts between the Arab and Berber leaders rekindled, particularly between Ramadàn esc-Scèteui and Adb en-Nebi Belcher, for the partition of the Turkish-German treasure, which had served to finance the anti-Italian guerrillas and was still in Libyan hands. The growing influence of Ramadan esc-Scèteui, who was more and more popular with the Italians, generated jealousies in many of the others, which translated into a real coalition opposed to him, led by Ahmed el-Mràied. The risk of an imminent civil war grew rapidly. The new Italian governor, Guido Menzinger, instead of acting as a mediator, lost his nerve and relied on force, arresting some leaders of both factions. In retaliation, on 21 May 1921, Ramadan esc-Scèteui's men stopped an Italian convoy and plundered it, taking the drivers prisoner. On 8 June they captured the garrison of Gharyan: 70 men under the command of Major Mario Van Den Heuvel. Then, through the Libyan press, Ramadan esc-Scèteui invoked the replacement of Menzinger.[66]

On 15 June, Menzinger was indeed replaced by Luigi Mercatelli who was more diplomatic. However, it was too late and the civil war in Libya was ongoing. The Italian government sent Eritrean reinforcements to the colony. Mercatelli declared the statute lapsed, marking the end of the Italian-Libyan agreement in Tripolitania. More than a year before fascism swept away all hopes of Libyan autonomy and collaboration between the

[64] A. Vacca-Maggiolini, "La situazione in Tripolitania", "Rivista Militare Italiana", January 1922, 60.
[65] Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, I, *Tripoli*…, 426.
[66] Ibid., 377.

two races, Liberal Italy had decided in favour of the armed subjugation of the Libyans.[67]

Italy's frustration with the outcome of the Peace of Paris that had almost extinguished the colonial ambitions of Rome, contributed to this result, along with the pressure from many in military circles, who had never accepted the agreements with the Libyans.[68] Finally, we should not fail to mention that many Italians openly accused the Libyans of ingratitude. The concessions made by Italy were considered by Italian public opinion as very generous, and even undeserved by a population that had always been hostile. This view was influenced by the fact that, unlike other colonial powers, Italy had not employed indigenous troops in the European theatre of war. In the summer of 1915, 5,000 Libyan Askaris had embarked towards Syracuse to be trained as a legion destined for the Carso. But the idea was eventually cast aside—Cadorna did not want to share a potential victory with the Libyans and had no trust in them—and the following year they were taken back to Cyrenaica.[69] In Italy, the "moral" obligation to the natives and their sacrifices for their European masters which, in the case of other colonial powers, favoured the reform of colonial policies, were missing. This helps to explain the hardships of the Italian re-conquest.[70]

Italy's new strategy in Libya was defined by the Minister of the Colonies Giuseppe Giardini. He believed that the colony would never achieve stability and peace while it remained, even in part, in the hands of the natives. The colonies, Giardini used to say, should be either abandoned or controlled *de facto*, and not only *de jure*. Therefore, it was necessary to regain direct control over Libya and to put an end to all experiments of autonomy, both in Tripolitania and, later, in Cyrenaica.

To carry through his programme, Giardini relied on Giuseppe Volpi as the new governor of the colony. In the following months, the situation degenerated. Fights continued between Arabs and Berbers as well as between Arabs and Italians. Many Italian garrisons, isolated and without specific orders, were forced to surrender. Even in Italy the political situation was in turmoil, with the rising tide of fascism that threatened the liberal state. On 26 February 1922, Bonomi's government was replaced by Luigi Facta's, which appointed Giovanni Amendola at the Ministry of the Colonies. A convinced liberal and later an active anti-fascist, Amendola agreed with Giardini upon the colonial policy. In April 1922, the Italians

[67] Ibid., 390.
[68] Labanca, *La guerra italiana*…, 140.
[69] Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, I, *Tripoli*…, 301.
[70] Labanca, *La guerra italiana*…, 129.

had reorganized themselves and were ready to begin the armed re-conquest of the whole colony, wiping out all opposition, whether Arab or Berber.

On 29 April, a mobile column, led by Colonel Rodolfo Graziani, defeated the *mujahedeen* of Ahmed el-Arab Mràied. In the following twenty days the Italians advanced to the Jebel Akhdar, inflicting 740 casualties on the Libyans.[71] Graziani opposed the "retrograde and static theories" of the old colonial officers, and developed a strategy aimed more at striking the opponent dead than at occupying its territory. To put it into practice, he made extensive use of technology: radio, air force, and motor vehicles allowed him to spot and intercept the enemy. Moreover, he exploited regular indigenous forces, Libyan and Eritrean, which were more accustomed to desert warfare.

It was in this context that, for the first time, the Tripolitanian and Cyrenaican resistances joined, creating an embryo of national Libyan resistance.[72] Five days after the rise of fascism to power in Italy, on 27 October 1922, Mohammed Idris accepted the offer made to him by his followers of the Brotherhood, for the Emirate over the whole of Libya: it inevitably involved breaking the pacts with Italy in Cyrenaica.[73] The reasons for this sudden choice are not clear, but it is likely that the Senussi were influenced by the progress of the Italian re-conquest in Tripolitania. With the breaking of the agreements in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica the war broke out again throughout the colony. It would take another decade, until 1931, to definitively conclude Italy's war for Libya.

Conclusion

Liberal Italy's adventure in Libya was a *chiaroscuro*. On the one hand, the Italians managed to largely expand their colonial dominions with the capture of Libya in 1911-12, thus overcoming their "Adowa complex" after the Abyssinian fiasco of 1896. During the First World War, despite generally poor co-ordination with the British ally, they managed to defend at least some key-points in the colony against a skilled, highly motivated enemy: the Arab *mujahedeen* equipped, financed and trained by the Turks and the Germans. The Italians belittled them as "rebels." In reality, they put up a fierce resistance that escalated into a war in all respects: it was

[71] Ibid., 403.
[72] Labanca, *La guerra italiana*…, 136.
[73] ASMAI, Libia, b. 122/29, f. 264, Ahmed el-Mràied to Mohammed Idris, 2 November 1922.

fought by many tens of thousands of men, both white and indigenous people and it included long and complex operations, as the Libyan soil passed from hand to hand. The Italians eventually regained it at a high price.

From the outbreak of the war in 1911 to the ratification of the Treaty of Ouchy in 1912, Italy had spent in Libya 801.6 million lira. The colonial military spending during the First World War amounted to 581 million and it can be easily assumed that this was spent mostly in Libya.[74] Many of these funds were squandered in donations to the indigenes to buy their loyalty, but with rather disappointing results: "Almost all of the natives took the money and betrayed us."[75] There was no lack of cases of embezzlement and corruption.

At the root of this situation was the disorder that prevailed in the Italian colonial administration. It answered to the Ministry of War for military matters and the Ministry of the Colonies for all others. This encouraged the shifting of responsibility and disorganization. The conflict between military and civil authorities never ceased. The latter were never really able to establish themselves over the former, not least because governors changed so often: sixteen of them were replaced from 1911 to 1922, making consistent administrative planning impossible.[76]

In Giolitti's opinion, Libya had made Italy richer, stronger and more respected. But of the 1,580,000 Italians who left the country between 1912 and 1913 because of unemployment, only a fraction of them headed for Libya. The balance of the colonial adventure traced by Francesco Saverio Nitti was bleaker:

> Libya is a huge sandbox, that [...] costs Italy many billions, including the war and the occupation expenses. […] With the same billions [...] Italy would have fixed and exploited its immense hydraulic patrimony and would now be for the most part indifferent to the problem of fossil fuels, which makes up a real servitude for it. The real national policy would have been to become economically independent, and not to gain the rule over a huge sterile area.[77]

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[74] G. Maione, "I costi delle imprese coloniali", in Del Boca, (ed.), *Le guerre coloniali…*, *op. cit.*, 410.

[75] Commissione d'Inchiesta sulle spese di guerra. La guerra nelle colonie libiche, in Atti Parlamentari, Legislatura XXVII, Sessione 1921-1923 (Roma: Poligrafo dello Stato, 1923), 535.

[76] Ibid., 540-550.

[77] F. S. Nitti, *Scritti Politici*, Vol. I (Bari: Laterza, 1959), 73-74.

High military casualties and material losses must be added to the financial costs, although it is impossible to calculate them accurately. The prediction made by the military leaders and the nationalists that the colonial war would be a "training ground for courage" for the troops, preparing the army for potential European wars, also proved to be a myth. Compared with the Turks and Libyans, the Italians always had an overwhelming superiority in terms of men and equipment. They often outnumbered their enemies 2 to 1 and yet found they failed to organize an effective counter insurgency strategy and spent eight years on the defensive under the protection of naval guns. The long and exhausting campaign in Libya did not toughen the Italian soldiers. Despite many acts of courage and bravery, they always showed a low morale, as in almost all colonial wars.[78]

The Italian war machine in Libya slowly evolved: from a large, white expeditionary force, it became a colonial, closed force, with a strong native component. A new generation of officers was at its head in the 1920s: they had made their careers leading light columns, having command over whites, Eritreans and Libyans and co-ordinating their movements with the support of radio and the air force. The governors who carried out the re-conquest enjoyed a much more effective military machine.[79]

Along with technological and tactical development, the brutality of the Italians also increased, despite the myth of the "good Italian." Mussolini abandoned the policy aimed at the "Libyan leaders," undertaking a policy aimed at the population, according to Volpi's motto: "Not with the leaders, nor against the leaders, but without the leaders."[80] Fascism accelerated the re-conquest and increased its brutality, but the decision to subdue the entire region by force had already been taken by Liberal Italy, and the military campaign had already begun when the Blackshirts took power in Rome. Not surprisingly, the bard of Italian interventionism of World War I, Gabriele D'Annunzio, described the Arabs as dogs, not as human beings, and the economist Maffeo Pantaleoni saw genocide as the final solution to the Libyan problem.[81] The protagonists of the early stages of the re-conquest also represent the continuity between liberal and fascist colonialism: Giuseppe Volpi, a convinced fascist and governor of Tripolitania from 1921 to 1925, collaborated fruitfully with Giovanni Amendola,

[78] Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, I, *Tripoli*…, 455.
[79] Rochat, *Le guerre italiane*…, 5-7.
[80] Habib Wadaa Al-Hesnawi, "Nota sulla politica coloniale…", 43.
[81] Both quoted in Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, I, *Tripoli*…, 455.

Minister of the Colonies from February 1922, an anti-fascist and later a victim of the regime's killers in 1925.

The Libyan question had important and durable repercussions at the international level. For Britain, for example, it remained a crucial issue for years in the balance of power in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. Italian territorial claims to join the Entente in 1915, approved by the Allies, included colonial compensations in the case of the breaking up of the Ottoman and German empires. But much of what had been promised in 1915 was denied at Paris in 1919. In a series of conferences stretching from Versailles to Locarno in 1925, Britain attempted to address the problems caused by Italian frustration,[82] which had already generated the myth of the "mutilated victory" in Italy—a crucial factor in Mussolini's rise to power.

Britain had its own troubles in North Africa. In 1919, London faced major civil unrest in Egypt. The British Empire employed extreme and widespread violence to quell revolts, including the massacre of civilians and aerial bombardment.[83] Sir William Tyrrell, assistant under-secretary at the Foreign Office between 1925 and 1928, saw the situation in North Africa as one which had remained unresolved since the end of the war.[84] Austen Chamberlain, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs between 1924 and 1929, was also much concerned with the issue of the Mediterranean balance of power. He warned the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) in December 1924 that the dominant sentiment in Europe was that another war was inevitable unless Britain could give Europe a sense of security.[85]

Britain's policy towards Italy was therefore guided by basic security precautions: if North Africa and the Middle East were properly in equilibrium any threat to Britain would be much reduced.[86] The result was a long and difficult negotiation with Italy over the fate of the Dodecanese islands and the Libyan-Egyptian border. Italy managed to be granted the possession of the islands in 1923, and was given the oasis of Jarabub in 1925. But London was adamant in denying Rome Sollum and any territory

[82] M. Dockrill and B. McKercher (eds.), *Diplomacy and World Power. Studies in British Foreign Policy, 1890-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 135.
[83] R. Bosworth and G. Finaldi, *The Italian Empire*, *op. cit.*, 40.
[84] FO 371/11066/W6497/9/98, Minute by Tyrrell, 18 March 1925.
[85] CAB 2/4/CID 192, meeting of 16 December 1924, Cabinet Papers, PRO.
[86] M. Dockrill and B. McKercher, (eds.), *Diplomacy and World Power*, *op. cit.*, 124.

belonging to the British Somaliland. It also refused to make concessions over Abyssinia, the "real" objective of Italian colonialists.

Italy felt unsatisfied with the compensations gained, and this caused long-lasting resentment towards Britain.[87] Mussolini's unilateral invasion of Abyssinia in 1935 marked a turning point in Anglo-Italian relations, and paved the way for their deterioration from friendship to war in 1940.

[87] See: A. Giannini, *L'ultima fase della questione orientale* (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1933), 334-359; and C. Rossetti, *Come l'Inghilterra ci portò via Sollum*, «Nuova Antologia», ottobre 1940, 238-246.

CHAPTER TWELVE

HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS: APPRECIATING THE IMPACT OF THE AFRICAN PAST ON ITS PRESENT AND FUTURE THROUGH THE "3 CS" OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

ADJEI ADJEPONG

Introduction

> One would say that the past has no influence or does not play any role in the present and the future, but I beg to differ. The past is the foundation on which the present and the future are built. This is not to say that the past necessarily determines the present and the future, but it is to say that the past influences the present and the future in so many ways.[1]

Some people among the contemporary generation maintain that African history, understood as the African past, a subject of study, or an academic discipline, is archaic and dead and, therefore, irrelevant to the African present and its future. No evidence for this impression could be cited other than the several efforts that some people have made to show the superfluous character of African history in an age of science and technology.

[1] Telephone interview with Vanessa Amenenyowo Agbelorm, aged 22 years, a Learning and Development Specialist at Talentsmann Limited, Tema, October 19, 2015. Another interviewee also observed that there is a connection between the past, the present and the future because people act now in the present based on lessons leant from the past. She also stressed that the conditions of the future are better understood when one looks into the past. She, however, maintained that this relationship does not mean that the past necessarily always *causes* the present and future, but a better understanding of the past could help shape the present and the future. Telephone interview with Esther Enyonam Diaba, aged 33 years, Community Development Officer, National Board of Small-Scale Industries/Business Advisory Centre, Ejisu-Juaben Municipal Assembly, Ejisu, October 13, 2015.

There are also the various reductive interpretations that have been offered according to which belief in the contemporary usefulness of African history is a purely fanatical or nostalgic attachment to the African past by Africans who believe that their worth in the present world could be measured solely in terms of African past glories or references to the African past. This devaluation of African history has gone to the extent where some people have made concerted efforts to deny African history of any contemporary significance on the grounds that present and future issues in Africa can never be evaluated in terms of African past experiences. However, a critical evaluation of the role and uses of African history in our everyday lives, coupled with the issue of causation in African history or causal relationships between historical events, suggest that there are both direct and indirect connections between the African past, its present and its future. In a sense, these relationships highlight the concept of *historical connections*,[2] and, thus, show that present and future events in Africa are either products of or related to past phenomena in Africa. The fact is that the African present contains its past in the sense that there are consequences or traces of the African past in its present. However, since the present is ever disappearing into the past, and the future is becoming the present, past events in Africa are often seen in the light of the new connections into which their consequences enter with the African present and its future.[3]

Several historical events[4] could be used to illustrate this common and recurring historical trend. To say this is to imply that the reality of the

[2] In this study, the terms *historical connections* and *historical relationships* have been used interchangeably.

[3] Morris R. Cohen and Ernest Nagel, *An Introduction to the Logic and Scientific Method* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1934), 344.

[4] When asked to mention any historical events, apart from the First World War, that could be used to illustrate the concept of historical connections, Matthew Nana Amoasi specifically referred to the European colonization of Africa and its effects on Africa's contemporary development, and the atomic bomb which the USA dropped on Japan in 1945 and its future biological implications on the people of Japan. Interview with Mathew Nana Amoasi, aged 28 years, third-year (Level 300) student of African Studies (History Major), University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, September 17, 2015. In 1964, Margery Perham noted that "Britain today is very different as regards her external power from the Britain of 1939 or even the Britain of 1945." However, in saying that "… anti-colonialism … condemns our past record; it weakens our present influence; it also threatens to harm our future relations with many of our former subjects and with other coloured peoples", she was using a single historical event to link up the three disparate parts—the past, the

concept of historical connections is not doubted and that it is common to, or could be identified with, several historical phenomena.[5] The First World War is also a very significant historical fact which is well-appreciated and preserved in our memories, books, artifacts, audio-visual materials, monuments, etc. In spite of this, some critical issues still remain to be addressed. One is that although several scholars have drawn our attention to the notion of causation and, for that matter, historical connections, it appears that no serious attention has yet been devoted particularly to a critical analysis and expatiation of the concept of historical connections. Again, no work has ever focused its attention on a reconciliation of this concept and the First World War for an analytical production of scientific historical knowledge: the use of the war to illustrate the concept to help establish connections between the events that occurred and the generations that lived in Africa before (the origins or causes—the past), during (the course—the present), and after (the consequences—the future) the First World War and, thus, show the influence of the African past on its present and future.[6]

In view of the problems at hand, this paper first seeks to briefly appraise the concept of historical connections through a careful examination of the relationship between the past (yesterday), the present (today), and the future (tomorrow). Second, it attempts to use the factors that are generally accepted to have constituted the causes of the First World War, certain developments that took place in the course of the conflict, and some direct and indirect consequences of the war to illustrate and substantiate the authenticity and superiority of the concept of historical connections and, accordingly, demonstrate the influence of the African past on its present and future. In view of the existing connections between historical events and present and future developments, the paper maintains that in some cases, the African present and its future could be better

present and the future—of the life of Britain. See Margery Perham, *The Colonial Reckoning* (London and Glasgow: Collins Clear-type Press, 1964), 13.

[5] This study does not claim in any way to be the first to put forward the notion of *historical connections*. We should recall Descartes' observation, "There is nothing so absurd or incredible that it has not been asserted by one philosopher or another", and its application throughout the realm of human thought and enterprise (Descartes is cited in Karl R. Popper, "What is Dialectic", in E. von Goldammer (ed.), *Vordenker*, Summer Edition (2004), 1, accessed on March 25, 2014, from www.vordenker.de.). Indeed, several scholars, including Vico, Benedetto Croce, Hegel, R. G. Collingwood, Raymond Aron, E. H. Carr, etc., have observed, emphasized and re-emphasized the concept in one way or another.

[6] It is largely in these contexts that the justification for the study and its contributions to knowledge should be measured.

understood in the context of the African past. The work then concludes that it is crucial for the contemporary generation of Africa to pay more attention to the systematic study and reconstruction of the African past in order to understand the present and the future of Africa in their appropriate perspectives.

Methodology and Data Sources

The problem and the objective of a study often determine the material to be selected in interpreting the facts, weaving the arguments, and establishing the conclusions of the work. Basically, the study sets out to use the causes, course, and consequences of the First World War to establish connections between the past, the present, and the future and to also show the implications of these connections on African life and history. As a result, the concepts of *historical connections* had to be clarified. The causes, course and consequences of the First World War also had to be briefly examined and established. In view of this, two groups of literature had to be consulted: works that treat the causes, course, and consequences of the First World War, and those that examine the concept of historical connections, and highlight the *historical connections* between the past (the causes), the present (the course) and the future (the consequences).

The researcher also conducted interviews (face-to-face and by telephone) with some lecturers, researchers, teachers, graduates and students (postgraduate and undergraduate) in the field of history who had adequate knowledge about the concept of time and its division into the past, the present and the future, to find out their views about the concept of historical connections and the extent to which the causes, course and consequences of the First World War could be used to illustrate the concept. In all, the researcher interviewed 35 people who were considered appropriate for the study because, although they were engaged in activities in different fields of human endeavour at the time of the study, each of them pursued history during their undergraduate studies. However, due to the similarities in their responses, not every interviewee had their response cited in the study.[7] These interviews were organized not only with the view of getting empirical evidence to support the evidence gathered from the available literature, and to help establish the arguments and conclusions of the paper on a more concrete basis, but also to find out the

[7] The author duly apologises to those whose names did not appear in the final list of the interviewees.

extent to which historians and students of history among the present generation understood concepts in history and how they applied them in their everyday lives. The evidence gathered from both the secondary works and primary accounts was analyzed and utilized to put the paper in its proper perspective, by way of providing the raw materials upon which the arguments, interpretations, and conclusions of the paper were based. The researcher was very much aware of the limitations of historical documents, as with all documents in all fields of study. He envisaged the likelihood of distortions of facts, exaggerations, understatements and other limitations normally associated with historical accounts. He, thus, deemed it necessary to carefully scrutinize and internally and externally critique all the data collected from the available documents in order to present only the accurate and reliable facts.

Change in Continuity: Chronological Dialectics and Historical Connections

Different scholars and schools of thought have assigned different definitions or interpretations to history, mainly as a result of the nature of the problems they investigate and, in effect, the objectives of their studies, their present needs, their understanding of the concept, etc. This is why Lynn Thorndike has argued that history has been defined severally as literature, as a body of facts, as delving in archives, as interpretations of the sources, as an art or a scientific subject of study, as an explanation of the present, or as a revelation and a realization of the past.[8] Generally, however, history is preferably defined as the science, art and practice of studying, interpreting and giving meaning to significant past human activities and events, through time and space, which help in our understanding of the present and give us a perspective of the future.[9] This definition is premised on the fact that history is the continuous flow of time and growth of human civilisation, in the sense that developments of the past impact on present events, and these effects, which the present drags along with it, together with those of present occurrences, also impact on the future by means of inheritance. In this context, we could also define

[8] Lynn Thorndike is cited in Jacques Barzun and Henry E. Graff, *The Modern Researcher*, Third Edition (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1977), 44.
[9] For a detailed analysis of the different definitions or meanings or interpretations of history, see Adjei Adjepong, "What is History?: Searching for an Appropriate Definition for the Science of the Past", in Prince Adjei Kuffour, *Concise Notes on African and Ghanaian History*, Revised Edition (Kumasi: K4 Series Investment Ventures, 2014), 1-16.

history as the scientific examination of human society, where *society* is understood as the timeless continuity of generations which connects together those of the community now dead with the living and the still unborn generations.

The above definitions of history offer a basic understanding of the notion of historical connections. Indeed, the concept of historical connections is firmly founded on the concept of time, and its division into the past, the present, and the future, and the relationships between them. To be able to clearly explain this concept and establish the arguments of this paper on a sound foundation first requires a clarification of the relationship between the three dimensions of time—the past (yesterday), the present (today), and the future (tomorrow). This relationship could best be described or explained in the context of what we may call chronological dialectics. The term *dialectics* comes from the Greek word *dialego*, meaning to discourse, to debate. In ancient times, dialectics was the art of arriving at the truth by disclosing the contradictions in the argument of an opponent and overcoming these contradictions.[10] In Hegelian philosophy, dialectics is broadly defined either as the logical subjective development in thought from *thesis* through *antithesis* to *synthesis*, or the logical objective development in history by the continuous reconciliation or unification of parts or opposites.[11] In other words, dialectics can be understood as the theory of the union of opposites consisting of a thesis, an antithesis and a synthesis. Accordingly, the dialectical method involves the notion that movement, or process, or progress, is the result of the conflict of opposites. The thesis, then, might be an idea or a historical movement which contains within itself incompleteness that gives rise to opposition, or an antithesis, a conflicting idea or movement. As a result of the conflict, a third point of view, a synthesis, arises to overcome the conflict by reconciling at a higher level the truth contained in both the thesis and antithesis and avoiding their limitations.[12] This synthesis becomes a new thesis that generates another antithesis and gives rise to a new synthesis, and in such a fashion, the process of intellectual or historical development is continually generated.

Clearly, the thesis, antithesis, and synthesis are all parts of the same process, evolving or emerging only at different times in a changing but continuous process. In the same way, the past, the present and the future

[10] William Gorman (ed.), *The Great Ideas: A Syntopicon of Great Books of the Western World*, Volume I (Chicago et al.: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), 345-352.
[11] Popper, "What is Dialectic", 2.
[12] Ibid.

are different but continuous parts of the same river of time. All peoples and societies have recognized the passage of time. However, our different cultures and perceptions have influenced our understanding of the concept of time. Also in science, the various specialists and their disciplines have different perceptions about the concept of time. Generally, however, there are two main concepts of time, cyclical and linear, which are usually applied in different situations and for different purposes.[13] In both senses, some means are required to keep track of time. Aware of this, some authorities use the concept of time in a holistic sense to refer to, among other things, the quantity of measurement using a clock; a particular moment of the day, measured on a clock; a period; a period in history; a period in someone's life; an occasion; an experience; a moment; a particular point when something happens; a particular moment that is suitable or not suitable for something; and for saying how often something happens.[14] With specific regard to the linear concept of time, while some scholars maintain that time is a non-spatial continuum in which events occur in apparently irreversible succession from the past through the present to the future,[15] others consider time as the continued progress of existence and events in the past, present and future regarded as one.[16] Thus, in history, *time*, serving both as the agent of continuity and as the medium of real change, is apparently divided into three: *yesterday* or *the past*, *today* or *the present*, and *tomorrow* or *the future*.

The *past* has been variously explained as "the time before the present, and everything that happened then"; "the things that someone has done or the things that have happened to someone or something during the time before now", or as "an earlier part of someone's life."[17] *Yesterday* is also

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[13] In measuring time, some societies focus on the periodic repetition of nature. Here, time is measured in terms of the alternation of day and night or the passing of the seasons through their annual progression. In this case, we have *cyclical time*, where a sequence of stages is seen as repeating forever. Other societies measure time in terms of the sequence of days, one following another throughout time in a long line. In this case, we have *linear time*, where time passes inexorably forward with no repetition or cycles. In practice, however, most people and societies apply both cyclical and linear concepts of time, often using them for special purposes. They apply linear time concepts in their use of numbered years and apply cyclical concepts in the repetition of days and months or seasons within a year.

[14] Rebecca Adae et al. (eds.), *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, International Student Edition (London: Macmillan, 2009).

[15] Google, "Time", accessed July 29, 2013, from www.google.com.gh.

[16] The Free Dictionary, "Time", accessed July 29, 2013, from www.thefreedictionary.com/time.

[17] Adae et al., *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*.

understood as "the day before today" or "a time in the past." In a simple sense, the past is the totality of all that has happened and gone, comprising all actions, all thoughts, and all products of all human beings who have ever lived.[18] Both the *present* and *today* are also defined as "the period of time that is happening now". And whereas the *future* is defined as "expected to exist or happen during the time following the present time", *tomorrow* is explained as "the day after today" or "the future". These definitions show that the *past* is only the already-gone part, or the initiation or starting point, of time, the *present* is the still or the *now* part, while the *future* is also only the expected part, or the yet-to-come aspect of time.

Aristotle argues that, time divided into the past, the present and the future, forms a continuous whole, and to maintain this continuity, the present, though it seems to separate the past and future, must be seen as the end of the past and the beginning of the future.[19] Also considering the three divisions as a continuous process, St. Augustine has observed that time comes from the future, passes through the present, and goes into the past.[20] On his part, George Gaylord Simpson maintains that the present is only a random point in the long flow of time, because life is one and continuous in space and time.[21] Essentially, the present is a connection or a link between the past and the future. This view, coupled with the argument that there are enduring patterns and relationships in the succession of generations, emphasizes that people and patterns live on in new generations, which makes it difficult to talk of major changes in history. Perceived in this way, time is simply a composition of events which have occurred, those which are taking place now, and those which are to occur. Hence, the three *siblings* of time are the natural chronological divisions of the same trend, and without one, the others cannot constitute the totality of time.[22] It is maintained that the concept of time has its root in the time-order of the experiences of the individual, and that this order must be

[18] Arthur Marwick, *The Nature of History*, Third Edition, (Hampshire and London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1989), 7.
[19] William Gorman (ed.), *The Great Ideas: A Syntopicon of Great Books of the Western World*, Volume II (Chicago et al.: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), 897.
[20] Ibid., 898.
[21] George Gaylord Simpson, *The Meaning of Evolution*, A Special Revised and Abridged Edition (New York: The New American Library, 1955), 13.
[22] Interview with Mr. Isaac Indome, aged 27 years, Teaching Assistant in the Department of History, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, September 9, 2015.

accepted as something that is primarily given.[23] This implies that the order of the past, the present and the future is natural, and humans have no control over it. It is maintained that historians also establish causal links between events in the exact order in which they occurred.[24]

Having identified the respective positions of the past, the present, and the future on the ladder of time, it is equally essential to appraise the nature of the relationship between them in order to appreciate how they are connected to one another. To be able to do this first requires an explanation of what scientists mean by an *event* and how they measure the relation between events. To some philosophers of science, an *event* is either anything that is earlier or later than something else, or something that precedes, follows or overlaps something.[25] As our definition of history shows, historians study historical events in the contexts of space and time. The concept of space-time concerns the relation between two events. Formerly, there were two—distance in space and lapse of time—but now there is only one, which is called the *interval*.[26] It is because there is only this one relation of interval, instead of distance in space and lapse of time, that we have the concept of space-time in place of the two concepts of space and time. But although scientists can no longer separate space and time, there are still two kinds of interval: one space-like and the other time-like. According to Russell, the interval is space-like if a light signal, sent out by the body (or place) on which one event occurs, reaches the body on which the other event occurs after this other event has taken place. Conversely, it is time-like if a light signal sent out from one event reaches the body on which the other event occurs before this other event has taken place. An event is said to be time-like when one event may have an effect upon the other or upon something in the same space-time region as the other; when this is not possible, the interval is space-like.[27]

Since we are concerned with time-like events, which have past-causes, present-courses, and future-consequences, an analogy with a grandmother (A), a mother (B), and a daughter (C) and the process of procreation would help to make the relationship clearer. In this relationship, there is one grandparent (A), two mothers (A and B), two children (B and C), and one

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[23] Albert Einstein, "Space-Time", in Clifton Fadiman (ed.), *The Treasury of the Encyclopedia Britannica* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1992), 381.
[24] G. J. Renier, *History: Its Purpose and Method* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1950), 180.
[25] Bertrand Russell, *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits*, First Paperback Printing (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1962), 270 and 275.
[26] Ibid., 288.
[27] Ibid., 288-289.

grandchild (C).[28] When the grandchild becomes an adult, she will also give birth to a child and, hence, becomes a mother. When the new child also grows up and produces a child, she also becomes a mother so that *the daughter* or *grandchild* in the original relationship now becomes a grandparent, and the process continues on and on. Obviously, the grandparent (grandmother) represents the past, the parent (mother) represents the present, and the daughter (grandchild) represents the future. According to the dictates of chronology, time and life constantly travel from the past to the present, which serves as a transit point, and continue the journey into the future. As this happens, the future becomes the present (or the future-present), the present becomes part of the past (and for that matter could be described as the present-past or immediate past), while the past (in the form of both the immediate and remote) enlarges its confines by absorbing and adding more and more immediate pasts onto what it has already accumulated. In this sense, the past is the *mother* and *grandmother* of the present and future respectively. The present is also the mother of the future. When the future becomes the present, it gives birth to a new future, while the existing present now becomes the past or a grandparent. The process continues like procreation.

However, as we perceive the three dimensions of time and the three personalities on the scale of life, there is no doubt that there is a direct relationship between the grandparent—the past, and the parent—the present (the two mothers) and another direct one between the parent—the present, and the daughter—the future (the two daughters). We cannot say, however, that there is a similar direct connection between the grandparent, or the past, and the grandchild, or the future, since the parent—the present—impedes such a relationship. Indeed, it has been maintained that the present is not really so much a region of time as it is a *dividing line* between the past and the future.[29] Nevertheless, the same parent, or present, serves as an intermediary or an agent of connection between the grandparent—the past, and the grandchild—the future. This relationship is an indirect one; but irrespective of its nature, it still gives us evidence to believe that there is a connection between the past and the future. In fact, it

[28] A is the grandmother; the two mothers are A and B—the grandmother (A) is a mother to the mother (B) of the grandchild (C); the two children are B and C—the mother (B) is a daughter of the grandmother (A) and the grandchild (C) is a daughter of the mother (B), and the only grandchild is C—the daughter.

[29] E. H. Carr, *What Is History?* Second Edition, edited by R. W. Davies (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1987), 102; "Interlude I: Past, Present, Future, and Elsewhere", Accessed on October 9, 2015, from https://web.phys.ksu.edu/fascination/Interlude1.pdf.

is argued that the degree of the inseparability of the three reflects in the fact that the grandparent (the past or the cause) serves as the medium for the materialization of the mother (the event or the course) which, in turn, produces the child (the consequence or the future).[30] Even when we consider that often some grandchildren come to meet their grandparents and learn some habits and aspects of culture from them, and, accordingly, could be said to be contemporaries, we should understand that there are things that the grandchild could learn directly from the grandmother without necessarily copying from the mother. It should, consequently, not be difficult for us to accept the tenability of the view that in most cases, the future, in its real sense, is the past modified.[31] Whether we agree with this view or not, Carr helps us to understand that since the past and the future are part of the same time-span, the past and the future are interconnected.[32]

Eventually, we are able to identify a connection between the past, the present and the future. In view of this, the past is the root of everything that exists today, and the root-of-the-root of everything that would survive into the future. Of course, if we place causes of events (causes), the events themselves (events) and the effects of these events (effects) in a parallel position against the past, the present and the future, the relationship that would be established would be one of past-causes, present-events and future-effects. In other words, we would have a parallel equation of past-causes—present-course—future-consequences. As historical events produce effects, the events, in turn become causes of the effects they produce when the present becomes the past and the future becomes the present. This seems to make some, but not all, future events fruits of the tree of the present whose seeds were sown in the past and, therefore, have historical roots. Meanwhile, another dialectical relationship could be established, so that, the effects also become causes of other events, when the future, which now becomes the present, is also rolled down into the past for a new present and a new future to appear, enabling the dialectical course to continue indefinitely. This relationship gives credence to the view that, causal chains are infinitely long. This is the reason why J. B. Bury insists

[30] Interviews with Oliver Kofi Tasin, aged 26 years, Postgraduate Student in the Department of History, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, September 22, 2015; Thomas Acquah, aged 27 years, National Service Personnel at Institute of Chartered Accountants, Cape Coast, September 22, 2015.

[31] "Jiddu Krishnamurti on Hope for the Future". Retrieved on July 29, 2012, from http://www.messagefrommasters.
com/Mystic_Musings/Jiddu%20krishnamurthy/krishnamurti_on_hope.htm.

[32] Carr, *What Is History?* 102.

that, the conception of human history as a continuous, genetic, causal process means that the present condition of the human race is simply and strictly the result of a causal series, or a set of causal series, or a continuous succession of changes, where each state arises causally out of the preceding state.[33]

Based on their observations, some scholars have described this relationship as one of determinism, where the past determines the present, and the future is determined by the present and the surviving elements of the past in the present, thereby giving rise to the theory or concept of historical determinism.[34] The central thesis of determinism is the existence of causality, that is, a relationship of phenomena or events such that one phenomenon, *the cause*, necessarily gives rise to or produces, under definite conditions, a second phenomenon, *the effect*, so that the nature of an event is determined entirely by the nature of its cause or causes.[35] Hence, every event is the inevitable result of antecedent causes, or past events, which were themselves similarly determined by historical events. Historical determinism, thus, insists that historical, and by extension present and future, events, including human thoughts and actions, unfold according to predetermined sequences. In other words, past, present and future events are all determined exclusively by their antecedents. In its extreme sense, it assumes that given the same circumstances, people always behave in the same way.[36] In essence, human events generally occur under determinate and determining conditions, or given historical occurrences are the inevitable effects of antecedent events beyond human control.

While not condemning historical determinism altogether, we are of the view that the doctrine is untenable in some respects because it is not in all cases that past events determine present and future developments. If the past determines the present and the future, then the outlook of the present and the future and the nature of the events that occur in them should not be far different from those of the past and its phenomena. However, it is believed that the past is significantly different from the present, and so the two could never be the same. Carr, for example, argues that "Nothing in

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[33] Cited in A. L. Rowse, *The Use of History* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Limited, 1946), 119.

[34] This theory is otherwise known as *Hegel's Wickedness*. See Carr, *What Is History?* 85-92.

[35] Ibid., 87.

[36] The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, "Determinism" (2013), accessed on April 29, 2015, from www.cc. columbia.edu/cu/cup/.

history is inevitable …",[37] while John K. Roth strongly maintains that the present and the future are not contained in the past. He stresses that the future is open-ended, and our present actions are not exclusively determined by the past. He opines that we have autonomy and power in the present moment, and our use of this freedom is a vital factor in shaping the nature and quality of our lives and our world.[38] In fact, from historical investigations, we identify variations in human culture over time. We realize there has always been a transition from the past to the present and from the present to the future. The mere identification of the past, the present and the future helps to accentuate the phenomenon of change in human life. This implies that, although some significant historical events can determine, and have determined, certain developments in the present and in the future, history is denied absolute deterministic power over the course of historical events.

What is not doubted, however, is the fact that there is a strong connection between the past, the present and the future. This idea of the continuity of history necessarily entails the fact that "… the past is of logical necessity the past-of-the-present, and the present is the-past-of a-future-living present."[39] Those who subscribe to this view usually do so, on the basis that most of our actions today are motivated by past events, and there is the likelihood that some of the actions of future generations would also be influenced by past and present developments.[40] Nagel, for example, argues that the falsity of the concept of historical determinism in whatever respect does not negate the fact that there are causal connections in history.[41] It is a fact that one cannot study history without observing and studying changes. Historians analyse major changes in the human experience over time. They explain why change occurs and what impact it has. They, however, do not stop there; they also examine the ways in which those changes link the past to the present and the future. Ernst

[37] Carr, *What Is History?* 90.

[38] John K. Roth, "Introduction", in William James, *The Moral Equivalent of War and Other Essays*, edited by John K. Roth, First Torchbook Edition (New York et al.: Harper & Row, Publishers Inc., 1971), xxxiv.

[39] John Dewey, "Historical Judgements", in Hans Meyerhoff (ed.), *The Philosophy of History in Our Time*, Anchor Books Edition (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959), 170.

[40] Interview with Mr. Abdul Kuba, aged 25 years, Postgraduate Student (MPhil History) in the Department of History, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, September 22, 2015.

[41] Ernest Nagel, "Determinism in History", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Volume XX, No. 3 (March, 1960), 298. See also Carr, *What Is History?* 80-102; Renier, *History*, 180-185.

Breisach maintains forcefully, that if history were a record of changes alone that would have denied the true nature of human life in which the experience of change is counterbalanced by that of continuity.[42] He stresses that individuals and groups have long since discovered that even in the aftermath of the most radical revolutions, the *new age* still carries many marks of the past. Alfred Grosser also maintains that complete breaks with the past are rare in history because even great political upheavals do not annihilate social and economic conditions or bring about a complete change in the ideas and beliefs of individuals.[43] Edmund Burke asserts that society is indeed a contract, and it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born.[44]

All these observations help establish that the past, the present and the future are connected in several ways. They show that there has never been, and there could never be, a complete discontinuity between the three parts into which time and life have been divided. In view of this, there are connections between the causes, course and consequences of the First World War which, thus, establish links between the generations that lived before, during and after the war. Since any theory of scientific history must arise from the nature of the material in order to be satisfactory, it is essential to interrogate the three component parts of the war to ascertain how connected they are.

The "3 Cs" of the First World War: Evidence of Historical Connections

As has been stated, the First World War, like any other historical event, had three parts to it: the causes—the past, the course—the present, and the consequences—the future.[45] While the duration of the course or the event itself is clearly known, the duration of the causes and the consequences is not so clear. As a result, different scholars trace the origins of the war to

[42] Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval & Modern*, Second Edition (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 3.
[43] Alfred Grosser, *Germany in Our Time: A Political History of the Postwar Years*, translated by Paul Stephenson (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1971), 1.
[44] Edmund Burke is cited in Anthony Jay (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Political Quotations*, Third Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 63.
[45] This is not a study of the First World War itself. The war is only being used here as an illustration of historical connections. Hence, readers will not get the details of the causes, trends and effects of the conflict from this study. Readers can, however, refer to the works cited on the conflict for the specific details they require.

different periods in European history, with some going as far back as the year 1815, as a result of the flaws associated with the 1815 Vienna Settlement and the problems they generated later. Hence, we would take the period from 1815 to July 28, 1914 as that of the past-causes of the war; from July 28, 1914 to November 11, 1918 as the era of the present-course of the war; and from November 11, 1918 and beyond as the age of the future-consequences of the conflict.[46] Generally, it is agreed that the causes of the First World War included the European system of alliances, colonial and economic rivalry, Anglo-German naval competition, militarism, rivalry in the Balkans, nationalism and the assassination of the Austrian Archduke, Franz Ferdinand, and his wife, Sophie, at Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, on June 28, 1914, and the failure of diplomacy to resolve the crises that followed the assassination of the royal couple. In the course of the war, some of these factors continued, such as alliances, territorial clashes, nationalism, and killing, and even took on new forms that aggravated the already bad situation. The effects of the conflict were also numerous. They included the loss of over 16 million soldiers and civilians; over 21 million injured people; food shortages; outbreaks of diseases; economic destruction and financial challenges; the collapse of old empires and the emergence of new nations; the redrawing of the map of Europe; the spread of democracy and nationalism; the spread of internationalism and the birth of the League of Nations; the rise of dictatorship and the outbreak of the Second World War.[47]

As stated above, there have always been causal relationships between the causes, the course and the consequences of events. Accordingly, direct connections could be established between the individual causes, the course and the individual consequences of the war to support the arguments of this study.[48] For example, it would only be logical to say that the spirit of

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[46] July 28, 1914 was the date on which Austria declared war on Serbia, and November 11, 1918 was when Germany signed the armistice with the Allies. See Gordon A. Craig, *Europe since 1815* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), 486 and 523; Peter Gay and R. K. Webb, *Modern Europe* (New York et al.: Harper & Row Publishers, 1973), 939; William Kelleher Storey, *The First World War: A Concise Global History*, First Paperback Edition (Lanham et al.: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 29.

[47] Craig, *Europe since 1815*, 523-552.

[48] Because of our purpose, we have decided to discuss the specific causes of the war with their associated developments during the course of the conflict and their consequences in order to establish the chains we hope to identify. Meanwhile, space constraints would not permit us to discuss the manner in which all these causes, course and consequences were connected. Accordingly, we have decided to

militarism, war preparedness and the arms race, generated by the mutual spite and fear of aggression of the various powers, led to the manufacture of more deadly weapons, before and during the war that killed millions of soldiers and civilians in the conflict. Probably conscious of the fact that peace in military mouths today is a synonym for war expected,[49] the countries soon started rearming after the conclusion of peace, even though the various peace treaties signed after the war imposed limitations on the military might of the European powers, especially Germany. The resurgence of militarism after the war was reflected in the programme of rearmament which Hitler and the generals and admirals of Germany secretly carried on. To demonstrate his resolve to rearm Germany, Hitler recalled the German delegation from the 1933 Geneva Disarmament Conference and withdrew Germany from the League of Nations in October 1933.[50] The result was that the other powers also started serious rearmament programmes. Japan enlarged her naval force, especially from 1936, in order to achieve parity with Britain and the USA. Between 1937 and 1939, Britain also speeded up its rearmament, the USA increased the size and quality of its armed forces many times, while Italy and Russia also increased their land armaments.[51] Thus, the inter-war years witnessed a general atmosphere of military imperialism on the part of the world powers for the purposes of destroying their enemies and for the exercise of despotic power over their own citizens.[52]

Since conventional wisdom has always presupposed a link between rapid military build-ups and war,[53] it should be understood that this atmosphere of militarism and war feeling during the inter-war period contributed directly and significantly to the outbreak of the Second World War, which was longer in duration, wider in scope, and more disastrous in

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identify the major causes and consequences of the war and select some of them for emphasis.

[49] William James, *The Moral Equivalent of War and Other Essays*, edited by John K. Roth, First Torchbook Edition (New York et al.: Harper & Row, Publishers Inc., 1971), 6.

[50] Keith Eubank, "Introduction", in Keith Eubank (ed.), *World War II: Roots and Causes* (Lexington, Toronto and London: D. C. Heath and Company, 1975), x.

[51] Norman Lowe, *Modern World History*, Third Edition (New York: Palgrave, 1997), 79; John Richard Alden, *Rise of the American Republic* (New York, Evanston and London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963), 801-802.

[52] Paul Johnson, *Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Nineties*, Revised Edition (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992), 14-18.

[53] Paul Diehl, "Arms Races and Escalation: A Closer Look", in Joseph Fahey and Richard Armstrong (eds.), *A Peace Reader: Essential Readings on War, Justice, Non-violence and World Order* (New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987), 31.

its consequences than the First because of the use of far more lethal weapons, notably the atomic bomb. As is well known, it was from the Second World War that the Cold War of 1946-1991 also evolved. And since World War II, the world has had two major power centres, the United States and Russia, who have become particularly militaristic since 1945, and each now possesses sufficient nuclear weapons to destroy all of civilization. In fact, as a result of the increasing level of human bellicosity, violence around the world continued, and even increased in some cases, after the Cold War. At present, and as we look into the future, the threat of nuclear war remains because of tensions between several countries, the inability of the world's nuclear powers to control their vast supplies of nuclear materials, and the high desire on the part of many countries to possess more nuclear weapons in order to have an edge over others in the arms competition. Apart from nuclear weapons, there are also numerous and widely available non-nuclear weapons—some biological and others chemical—that are, in some cases, more lethal than ever. These are some of the weapons used by terrorist groups in their inimical operations today which have made the present and the future highly unsafe for human survival. Considering the level of the desire on the part of the world's leading powers to possess more weapons in order to keep up the arms race, the view that a well-armed country can deter potential aggressors, and the attempts to fight against terrorist groups, the demand for weapons would certainly be higher in the future than ever before, and so violence would also certainly escalate.

Of course, in saying all this, we are not arguing that the spirit of militarism that led to the outbreak of the First World War *determined* the same phenomenon in the 1930s and led to World War II. Nor are we implying that it was the pre-1914 feeling of militarism that *determined* the same sentiments after World War II and led to the Cold War and the numerous violent clashes between countries and the upsurge of terrorist attacks in the twenty-first century. Our position is only that there were, and still are, connections, either directly or indirectly, between this series of feelings and their concomitant violence and instability. At any rate, after observing the outbreaks of violence almost everywhere after the formal fighting had ended, the historian Fritz Stern has remarked that the First World War ushered in a period of unprecedented violence, with 1919 signifying the continuation of war by different means.[54] This shows that when we do a critical study of international relations from the second half of the nineteenth century to the present, we would find a continuity

[54] Fritz Stern is cited in Johnson, *Modern Times*, 37-38.

extending through the thinking of the European and world powers, and, in fact, many people, that amounts to an ideology of militarism and war feelings that are too deeply grounded.

William James has maintained that modern humans have inherited all the inborn belligerence and all the love for glory of their ancestors to the extent that the details of the irrationality and horrors of war do not even have any effect on their thinking.[55] Michael Howard has also observed that throughout history, war has been a normal way of conducting disputes between rival political groups because humans are inherently pugnacious.[56] These views, and the fact that wars in general did not begin with the Great War, seem to stress that the penchant for war is natural in humans and so humans can wage wars or engage in violent acts at any time. If this is so, then it would be wrong to make any connections between the First World War and later violent conflicts and argue that the former influenced the latter. However, the lines of connections drawn here are legitimate in the sense that World War I was the first great modern and industrial war. The Industrial Revolution gave Western and Central European countries tremendous power to produce goods, and in the course of the nineteenth century and during the war, the factories of the belligerent countries churned out vast quantities of repeating rifles, machine guns, artillery, ammunition, uniforms, trucks, food for the troops, poison gas, tanks, submarines, and fighting aircraft. Thus, it was from the time of the First World War that war increasingly became a matter of competing technologies and developed to assume the dominant position it occupies in international power politics today.[57]

Another cause of the war which could be tied directly to some developments that occurred during and after the war was the system of alliances. European politics and diplomacy towards the beginning of the twentieth century were characterized by the formation of secret and hostile alliances. These alliances, initiated by the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, created a favourable situation for war in the sense that by the beginning of the war, the alliances had divided Europe into two opposing camps—the Triple Alliance consisting of Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary; and the Triple Entente, comprising France, Russia and Britain. This is to say that the Central Powers fought on one side against the Allied Powers because of the influence of historical developments during the pre-

[55] James, *The Moral Equivalent of War and Other Essays*, 4.
[56] Michael Howard, "The Causes of War", in Joseph Fahey and Richard Armstrong (eds.), *A Peace Reader: Essential Readings on War, Justice, Non-violence and World Order* (New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987), 4.
[57] Ibid., 11.

war years. Since 1873, Austria-Hungary and Germany had been allies, being members of the First Three Emperors' League (1873), the Dual Alliance (1879), the Second Three Emperors' League (1881), and the Triple Alliance (1882).[58] The cordial relations or friendship between the two powers were maintained and even became stronger in the first decade of the twentieth century so that by the outbreak of the war in 1914, the two powers had historically been allies for over four decades. Turkey and Bulgaria joined the Central Powers in November 1914 and October 1915 respectively because of the intimacy between them during the immediate pre-war years.[59] In effect, the decisions of Germany and Austria-Hungary to fight on one side, and of Turkey and Bulgaria to join them, were influenced predominantly by developments that occurred during the *past-causes* period of the war.

In the same way the Allies or Triple Entente Powers, originally made up of France, Russia and Britain, and later joined by Serbia and Belgium, also fought on one side against the Central Powers as a result of important historical considerations. France was defeated and humiliated in 1871 by Prussia (Germany) and lost her provinces of Alsace and Lorraine to the Germans. Thus, from 1871, the French and the Germans remained enemies. Russia was a member of the First and Second Three Emperors' League, and the Reinsurance Treaty of 1887, the latter being made up of only Germany and Russia. In 1890, when Bismarck left office, the new German government refused to renew the Reinsurance Treaty, and this development paved the way for France and Russia to form an alliance, the Franco-Russian Alliance, in 1894. In April, 1904, Britain and France negotiated the Anglo-French Entente, otherwise known as the Dual Entente or the Entente Cordiale. Britain, France and Russia came together in 1907 and concluded the Triple Entente. By the outbreak of the war in 1914, therefore, the three powers had been allies for at least a decade.[60] Also, when Austria declared war on Serbia, Russia ordered a general mobilization on July 30, 1914 in support of Serbia and against Austria because for a long time, Russia and Serbia had enjoyed cordial relations, whereas the policies or interests of Russia and Austria in the Balkans had always clashed and created enmity between them.

In the case of Britain, she joined the war because France and Russia had been her allies since 1904 and 1907 respectively. It must be noted again that in going to the aid of France, Britain was, in another sense, continuing a policy she had been pursuing since the formation of the

[58] Craig, *Europe since 1815*, 505; Lowe, *Modern World History*, 4.
[59] Craig, *Europe since 1815*, 505.
[60] Lowe, *Modern World History*, 4.

Anglo-French Entente in 1904. In the 1911 Agadir Crisis between France and Germany, for example, Britain quickly went to the aid of France, her ally.[61] The British support for France in 1914, therefore, should be regarded as nothing new but a continuation of a policy she was already pursuing. There was yet another historical factor for which Britain entered the war against Germany. In their attempts to enter France, the German troops demanded a free passage through Belgium whose neutrality had been guaranteed by the powers as far back as 1839. When the Belgians refused the German demand, Germany invaded Belgium. The violation of Belgian neutrality made Britain send warnings to Germany to respect Belgian territory. Meanwhile, Germany was already in Belgium and had invaded it. On the refusal of Germany to comply with the British demand, Britain declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914.[62] Hence, it was not only historical alliances that motivated Britain to fight Germany in the war; she was also influenced by an agreement that had been concluded way back in 1839.

When we consider alliances alone, we observe that there were connections between the thoughts and deeds of the belligerents in 1914 and certain developments that occurred long before the beginning of the twentieth century. Also in the course of the war, Britain, France and Russia signed a series of secret treaties among themselves and induced other powers to join.[63] Moreover, the warring coalitions made serious efforts to win new allies. Interestingly, these new allies were also largely influenced by historical considerations in their decisions to join the warring camps. Japan declared war on Germany in August 1914 and, thus, joined the Allied Powers because of the military alliance she had formed with Britain way back in 1902. Italy was originally a member of the Triple Alliance of 1882 and so was supposed to ally with Germany and Austria-Hungary. However, at the start of the war, she remained neutral and eventually joined the camp of the Allies in May 1915 also as a result of historical factors. First, she was not on good terms with Austria even before the conclusion of the Triple Alliance in 1882. She had attempted, but failed, on several occasions to wrestle from Austria the territories of Tyrol, Trieste, Trentino and Istria, all of which were controlled by Austria. Secondly, liberal idealists and republican Italians who clung to the principles of historical figures like Mazzini and Garibaldi, the architects of the Italian unification, felt that the cause of Britain and France was the cause of civilisation and that Italy must not be absent from the ranks of the

[61] Ibid., 8.
[62] Ibid., 10.
[63] Johnson, *Modern Times*, 21.

defenders of a good cause.[64] In the situation of Romania, she joined the Allies in August 1916 because, historically, she had had poor relations with Austria and Germany.

The rigid alliance system also dragged the USA into the war in April 1917. In fact, by early 1917, President Woodrow Wilson had arrived at the conclusion that America would have a bigger influence on the post-war settlement as a belligerent than as a neutral.[65] As a result, American interests, especially her position in post-war world politics, played a vital role in the American entry into the war. It must, however, be appreciated that the American entry into the conflagration on the side of the Allies was influenced more by historical developments than any other considerations. There had been commercial relations between the USA and the European powers long before the war started. These relations continued while the war was raging. The Americans, however, observed a slump in their trade with the Central Powers from $169,289,000 in 1914 to $1,159,000 in 1916 and a growth with the four great Allied countries of Britain, Russia, France and Italy, from $824,860,000 to $3,214,480,000 in the same period.[66] Then came German unrestricted submarine warfare which sank several Allied war and merchant ships as well as vessels belonging to neutral countries, including the USA, and killed many people including several Americans. The withdrawal of Czarist Russia from the war, and the coded message the German Foreign Secretary, Arthur Zimmermann, sent to Mexico proposing that if war came between the USA and Germany, Mexico and Germany should form an alliance and persuade Japan to also join, influenced the American entry into the First World War.[67]

Considering that all these developments occurred before the USA entered the war, we should understand that the American decision to enter the war was influenced, in its entirety, by past developments. America entered the war in April 1917, but the trend of trade imbalance spanned the 1914-1916 period, while the unrestricted submarine warfare was announced on February 4, 1915 and started to destroy ships and kill people from March 28, 1915 with the sinking of the British steamer *Falaba*; on May 1, 1915 the American tanker *Gulflight*; on May 7, 1915 the British Cunard Liner *Lusitania*; and then the British ship *Arabic*, to the French

[64] Craig, *Europe since 1815*, 506.
[65] Johnson, *Modern Times*, 22.
[66] Alden, *Rise of the American Republic*, 677-678.
[67] Ibid., 677-683.

ship *Sussex* on March 24, 1916.[68] Russia pulled out of the war in February, 1917, whereas the Zimmermann telegram was also intercepted in February 1917 and released to the American press on March 1, 1917. Here, even the Revisionist historians who argue that America entered the war as a result of the pressure that the big banks and businessmen mounted on the authorities would agree that these pressures and influences were mounted before America entered the conflict so if they really played any role, then they did so as past events which influenced present thoughts and deeds.

Even more historical were the factors of heritage and old alliances. It has been established, that out of the 92 million Americans in 1910, more than 32 million were *hyphenated Americans*, that is, they were first- or second-generation immigrants who retained ties with their old countries.[69] Among the more than 13 million Americans from the countries at war, by far the largest group was 8 million German-Americans. Four million were Irish-Americans who harboured a deep-rooted enmity against Britain. This hatred was further heightened by the British suppression of the Irish Easter Rebellion of 1916 which was geared towards the attainment of independence from the British. These groups instinctively leaned towards the Central Powers.[70] On the other hand, there were old-line Americans, largely of British origin, whose sympathies lay with the British and the Allied Powers. Some of these Americans even kept memories of the help France rendered to them during their struggle for independence from the British, and so wished that the Allies would defeat the Central Powers. Ultimately, it was past events that motivated the American entry into World War I on the side of the Allied Powers.

At this point we realize that the alliance systems which started in 1873 and contributed to the outbreak of the war continued in the course of the war. In the deeper sense, the formation of military alliances should even be regarded as one of the key developments of the inter-war period, if not one of the products of the war itself. Genuinely, the first of President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points discouraged secret alliances and rather encouraged open covenants of peace openly arrived at.[71] But no attempt was made to prohibit the formation of alliances altogether.

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[68] Alden, *Rise of the American Republic*, 678-680; John M. Murrin et al., *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People*, Volume II: Since 1863 (Fort Worth et al.: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1996), 725-726.

[69] George Brown Tindall, *America: A Narrative History*, Second Edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988), 89.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Edward Conrad Smith and Arnold John Zurcher (eds.), *Dictionary of American Politics* (New York: Barnes & Noble Inc., 1955), 163.

Countries continued to relate to one another as friends and foes and, in some cases, signed secret treaties. France, for example, tried to increase its security by building a network of alliances, known as the *Little Entente*, first with Poland in 1921, and later with Czechoslovakia in 1924, Romania in 1926 and Yugoslavia in 1927.[72] The USA and Russia resumed diplomatic relations, though without cordiality. The American Congress also passed the Trade Agreements Act in 1934 and entered into economic agreements. By 1941, America had signed such agreements with 26 nations.[73] As a result, by the beginning of the Second World War, not only the European powers but the world powers in general had once again been divided into warring factions by these military alliances.

It may be argued that there was a change or a break in continuity because Italy and Japan left their Allies in the First World War to join Germany in the Second World War. It must be noted, however, that although the alliance system changed, the pattern remained the same; it was only the countries that switched camps, but the alliances remained and resulted in another catastrophic war just as the earlier ones had done in bringing about World War I. These alliances remained during the Cold War, although at this time, too, there were changes in the position of the countries and not really in the militaristic nature of the alliances themselves. Even the nature of alliances or relations among the world powers today could, in a certain sense, be traced to those which started the First World War. This long chain of alliances establishes a connection between the causes, course and consequences of the war and, for that matter, between the generations that lived before, during and after the war.

In much the same way, similar threads of relationships could be established between all the other causes of the war and developments during and after the war. Sharp commercial and colonial rivalries among the various European powers were among the causes of the war since they created acute tension in relations between the European powers. The French and the British clashed at Fashoda in the Sudan. In 1898, the British and the French clashed in the Northern Territories in Ghana over Wa, and in the same year, the British and the Germans clashed over Togoland.[74] Again, rivalry over Egypt and West Africa strained relations between Britain and France. There was also acute tension between Britain and Germany and Britain and Russia in Central Asia. These rivalries

[72] Lowe, *Modern World History*, 61.
[73] Alden, *Rise of the American Republic*, 678-680.
[74] A. Adu Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Second Edition, Reprinted (Accra: Sankofa Educational Publishers Limited, 2000), 71-74.

increased tension in European relations, but, on the whole, Britain and France, who had already established colonies in various parts of Asia and Africa, considered Germany to be their rival. Canada, Australia and New Zealand assured Britain of their support even before the war was declared because of the historical connections between these self-governing dominions and Britain.[75] The colonies of Britain, France and Belgium in Africa were also automatically at war with the Central Powers because of the same colonial-historical connections.[76] By the time of the war, only Ethiopia and Liberia remained sovereign and independent states in Africa. All the rest were under European colonial domination which had been imposed long before the start of the war. Colonial ties, founded on history, were, thus, responsible for Africa's involvement in World War I. All this shows that in the course of the war, colonial rivalries were still shaping relations between the European powers and their colonial territories. Interestingly, while the war itself led to the destruction of the German, Russian, Turkish and Austrian empires, the colonial rivalries specifically culminated in the seizure of German colonial territories in Africa and Asia by the Allied Powers.

Nationalism also played a major role in the outbreak of World War I in the sense that since 1815, it had caused dissatisfaction among some nationalities and, thus, created tension in Europe. At the Vienna Congress of 1815, the issue of nationalism was totally disregarded in the interest of the preservation of peace. The statesmen brought unwilling people together while separating those who wished to remain united. As a result, some *nations*, including Germany and Italy, were left divided. Consequently, potent nationalistic movements were launched everywhere in Europe with the view to unifying the divided nations.[77] The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, which ended in the unification of Germany, also resulted in France's loss of the province of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany, and the French looked forward to regaining their lands. In addition, Austria-Hungary controlled many territories, particularly in the Balkans, which their neighbours felt belonged to them. Serbia, for example, wanted Bosnia and Herzegovina; Italy wanted the regions of Trentino, Trieste, Tyrol and Istria, while the Czechs and Slovaks wanted independence from Austria-Hungary. Russia also contained several nationalities within its

[75] David Thomson, *Europe since Napoleon*, Second Edition (London: Longman Group Limited, 1969), 514.
[76] Most of the other papers in this volume attest to this. Readers who are interested in the facts, figures and statistics can refer to the other papers.
[77] Craig, *Europe since 1815*, 2-3 and 12-32; Gay and Webb, *Modern Europe*, 557-563; Storey, *The First World War*, 12-19.

boundaries, and these nationalities were also demanding independence in the name of nationalism. Thus, there were disputes among the powers over the Balkan states. The rivalry between Austria and Serbia was actually the direct cause of World War I. The Slavs in the Austrian territories formed potent movements for their emancipation from Austrian domination. These movements received direct and indirect assistance from Serbia. Some of the movements were actually secret and terrorist societies, such as the *Black Hand*.[78] It was these terrorists that made a sudden attack on the Austrian royal couple and killed them.

Here, too, there was continuity during and after the war, which establishes historical connections between the past-causes, the present-course and the future-consequences of the war. Let us note first that it was the feeling of nationalism that made the Balkan states, who wanted independence from Austria, join the camp of the Allied Powers. In view of this, their conduct in the course of the war was influenced largely by the nationalist spirit which started in 1815. In addition, when the Tsarist regime in Russia collapsed in 1917 and Austria refused to make a separate peace with the forces, Britain and France began to encourage nationalism and self-determination.[79] The spread of democracy and nationalism has also been regarded as the most significant effect of World War I. By 1919, many European intellectuals subscribed to the view that the right to national self-determination was a fundamental moral principle.[80] This phenomenon developed to the extent that nationalist movements gained in strength not only in the various countries of Europe but also in Asia and Africa. It is needless to state here, the extent to which nationalism gained deep roots in all the colonial territories in Asia and Africa and contributed towards the recovery of independence from the middle of the twentieth century. George Padmore traces the evolution of Ghanaian nationalism from the foundation of the Asante Confederacy, but he insists that Ghanaian nationalism has deep roots and a long tradition founded in well-established political institutions which draw emotional inspiration from the ancient empire of Ghana.[81] Adu Boahen also argues that nationalism and the process of nation-building occurred much earlier in Africa than in

[78] Gay and Webb, *Modern Europe*, 938.
[79] Johnson, *Modern Times*, 21.
[80] Reportedly, intellectuals like Karl R. Popper opposed the idea. They argued that self-determination was a self-defeating principle since "liberating" peoples and minorities simply created more minorities. See Ibid., 37.
[81] George Padmore, *The Gold Coast Revolution: The Struggle of an African People from Slavery to Freedom* (London: Dennis Dobson Limited, 1953), 1.

Europe and the USA.[82] But in saying that "… as a rule self-determination was accepted as unarguable for Europe [in 1919], just as in the 1950s and 1960s it would be accepted for Africa",[83] Paul Johnson is drawing a connection between African mass or radical nationalism and the recovery of independence, and the nationalism that evolved from the First World War. This point is authentic to the extent that proto-nationalism[84] in Ghana, for example, metamorphosed into radical nationalism, which, in turn, culminated in the eventual recovery of independence and sovereignty. In a sense, therefore, the attainment of independence in Africa could be regarded as one of the long-term and indirect outcomes of the First World War.[85]

Analysis and Conclusion

This paper set out to examine and use the causes, the course, and the consequences of the First World War, to illustrate and to prove the legitimacy and superiority of the concept of historical connections. It was also intended to use the reality of the concept to highlight connections between the African past, present and future. The findings of the study have shown that what the concept of historical connections brings to the fore is the notion of a developmental or genetic relation among the three strands of time. The findings also emphasize that indeed there were and still are both direct and indirect connections between the past-causes, the present-course and the future-consequences of the war. What is important to us here is not the extent to which the individual causes contributed to the outbreak of the First World War. We are rather interested in the fact that by the beginning of the war, all these developments had occurred and, for that matter, were historical events. Hence, not only did the generation

[82] A. Adu Boahen, *Clio and Nation-building in Africa* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1975), 7.
[83] Johnson, *Modern Times*, 37.
[84] The word *proto* means *first*, *original* or *primitive*. For our purpose, *proto-nationalism* should be understood as the first in an order or the first of its kind. Proto-nationalism, therefore, refers to the first or early phase of Africans' resistance to European domination. Several scholars use the term *proto-nationalism* to refer specifically to the various forms of protests that the colonized peoples of Africa made in demand for institutional reforms and improved conditions of life during the twenty-year period 1919-1939, usually referred to as the *inter-war years*. On the other hand, mass or radical nationalism refers to the militant style of African protests that developed after 1945 when the Second World War came to an end.
[85] Interview with Mr. Isaac Gyan, aged 26 years, Teaching Assistant in the Department of History, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, September 9, 2015.

that fought in the war think and act in a historical context, but they also showed the extent to which the said factors connected them to the generations that produced the causes of the war. This realization shows that although the two generations were separated by time, in some cases by several years, they were still connected to one another through the causes, the outbreak, and the fighting of the war. It is also clear that several developments that took place in the course of the war were largely influenced by past events, which were themselves the causes of the war or developments related to the causes. It could, therefore, be maintained that just as those who started the war thought and acted on the basis of past events, those who joined the conflict later also behaved in the same historical context. Hence, the past influenced the present a great deal during the 1914-1918 period when the war was raging and established relationships, both direct and indirect, with the present. In the same way, the consequences of the war and the generations that have lived since the end of the conflict are related in one way or the other to the course of the war and the generation that witnessed the conflict, and also to the causes of the war and the people who lived during the 1815-1914 period.

Indeed, in describing the First World War as "Confused in its causes, devious in its course, [and] futile in its result …", C. V. Wedgewood draws our attention to the fact that the causes, the course and the consequences of the war are, in the context of time, three separate aspects of the war, but are connected by being parts of the same historical event.[86] In the sense that the world of the twenty-first century is changing at a more rapid pace than ever before, it may be assumed that the present generation is absolved from all influences of the First World War. Such an assumption would be erroneous because we are still smarting under the effects of the Great War, although other wars have been fought since then. In 1920, Ernst Jünger, a front-line soldier in the war, published a widely-read book entitled *Battle as an Inner Experience*. In this work, Jünger informed his readers,

> What has been revealed here in battle will tomorrow be the axis around which life revolves … This war is not the end, but the chord that heralds new power. It is the anvil on which the world will be hammered into new boundaries and new communities.[87]

[86] Craig, *Europe since 1815*, 525.
[87] Ibid.

Clearly, what the author predicted in 1920 has come to pass because all the generations from the 1920s to the present have experienced the consequences of the First World War in several ways.

Particularly, many of the political changes brought about by the war could still be heard today reverberating around the world. We are, for example, still feeling the impact of the war through the artificial boundaries that the European imperialist powers imposed on some African societies. The division of Togoland between the British colonial administration of Ghana and the French colonial administration of Togoland in 1920 was one of the immediate political effects of the war. Today, people who historically belong to the same ethnic stock and speak the same language are divided and now belong to different sovereign nation-states, and movement from one area to another to visit neighbours is now considered as an international migration that requires travelling documents.[88] Cantonments, a suburb of Accra in Ghana, was established as a military base for the Allied forces in World War I.[89] The existence of this settlement and our use of it today obviously connect our generation to that of the First World War. Another issue that illustrates the connection between the First World War and the present generation and, therefore, the impact of the past on the present generation is the spread of internationalism as an upshot of the war. After the conflict, most of the countries showed their eagerness for international co-operation and assistance. This development ultimately led to the birth of the League of Nations. While the League itself proved to be ineffective, it was the precursor to the United Nations Organization, a much more effective international organization. The mere existence of this international association and our membership of it are an indication of contemporary Africans' connection to the generations of Africans that lived during the past-causes (1815-1914) and present-course (when the war was fought)

[88] Interview with Mr. Eric Sakyi Nketiah, aged 39 years, Senior Lecturer in History at the Department of History Education, University of Education, Winneba, September 18, 2015. This is a clear indication that the colonial boundaries which divide Africans today were, in almost all cases, drawn by the imperialist powers without any regard to language or cultural divisions among the indigenous people. They rather reflected the political, economic and social requirements of the colonial powers.

[89] Interview with Mr. Kingsley Agyapong, aged 26 years, Teaching and Research Assistant in the Department of History Education, University of Education, Winneba, September 18, 2015.

periods.[90] Because of the social, economic and political relations between North Africans and the Arab world in general, the Israel-Palestine conflict, as a political sequel of World War I, could be mentioned here. This never-ending conflict in the Middle East is traceable to 1917, if not earlier. In that year, the so-called *Balfour Declaration* promised the Jews a national home in Palestine to encourage them to desert the Central Powers.[91] This promise was fulfilled in 1948 when the state of Israel was created. In the event, the Palestinians, in particular, and the Arabs, in general, came to perceive the Allied Powers and, ultimately, the Western world as their enemies.[92] These poor relations have affected the North African countries in the sense that they have influenced their relations with Israel and the Western powers. It could even be generalized that the nature of relations between all pro-Palestine African countries and Israel, on the one hand, and between all pro-Israel African countries and Palestine, on the other hand, is traceable to the First World War.

Socially, too, there have been developments that derived either directly or indirectly from the First World War. For example, some of the weapons used by the Ghanaian soldiers in the war are still found at the Military Museum in Kumasi, Ghana, and have been serving not only as a tourist attraction, but also as representations of the war.[93] Many Ghanaians today are proud, not only of the participation of more than 11,000 of their predecessors in the First World War and how they distinguished themselves, but especially of the fact that a Ghanaian Sergeant called Alhaji Grunshi is reported to have been the first to fire a shot on the side of the British forces.[94] In addition, there are millions of people in Africa, and across the world, who still feel a connection with the Great War. They

[90] Interviews with Mr. Joseph Udimal Kachim, aged 34 years, Principal Research Assistant in the Department of History, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, September 9, 2015.
[91] Ibid., 22.
[92] Interview with Mr. Nketiah; telephone interview with Mr. Sahadu Hamdawaihi, aged 29 years, Imports-Exports Executive of Weave Ghana Limited, Accra, August 28, 2015.
[93] Interview with Mr. Peter Essuman-Mensah, History Teacher and Deputy Senior House Master at Mpasatia Senior High Technical School, Mpasatia, July 17, 2015. Mr. Essuman-Mensah added that there are even some buildings in Kumasi, between the Okomfo Anokye Teaching Hospital and Bekwai Roundabout, which serve as memories and representations of the First World War. Readers should note that Kumasi was the base where the Ghana contingent was trained before being sent to battle.
[94] This is a fact well-known to many Ghanaians, historians and ordinary people who have adequate knowledge on Ghana's participation in the First World War.

knew the people whose lives were changed by it. They remain moved by the enduring works of art that were created as a response to it. They live with its unresolved political legacies. If for nothing at all, we are all biologically connected to the generations of Africans who lived before and during the war because they are our predecessors and we are their descendants—one generation forms another.[95] It is also because of the same connection we feel with the war and the generations that lived before, during and after the conflict that the Department of History at the University of Cape Coast organized the conference at which the papers in this volume were originally presented. The organization of this successful conference was itself a form of our remembrance of the war, and so the issues discussed in the various presentations refresh our memories of the conflict and its immediate and remote effects on Africans.

Also in economic terms, Africa today still suffers from the consequences of the war. Generally, the war brought about economic dislocation, depression in the prices paid for the primary goods produced by Africa, a rise in the prices of imported goods, agricultural decline, domination of the import-export trade by expatriate firms, and many other dire economic effects.[96] All this contributed towards making the African economy dependent on those of other continents. Hence, the dependence of our economy today could be blamed partly on the First World War and its disastrous consequences on Africa. The First World War, thus, created a common sense of history that, decades later, still links together people from many disparate nations and different generations. In view of this, it is essential for African students of the present and future generations to study the First World War in order to appreciate how the various disparate generations are connected to one another, and how they themselves are related to the generations that lived before, during and after the Great War.

At this point, it must be clarified that in saying all this, we are not insisting that the world has remained the same. As S. Hoffman emphasizes, there are periods of history when profound changes occur all of a sudden.[97] Indeed, our own experiences show that the world in which

[95] Interviews with Miss Gloria Adomaa Edusei, aged 26 years, Postgraduate Student at University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, August 21, 2015; Mr. Kenneth Tagoe, aged 27 years, Teaching Assistant in the Department of History, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, October 2, 2015.

[96] David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism 1850-1928*, Reprinted (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 48.

[97] S. Hoffman is cited in Kwame Boafo-Arthur, "The Liberal Ghanaian State and Foreign Policy: The Dynamics of Change and Continuity", in Kwame Boafo-

we live is an incredibly fast-changing one, and though the process of change has been proceeding even more rapidly in recent generations, it is certain even now that the process is by no means complete. From all this, the conclusion we may draw is that human experience is like a stream; it is forever new and changing, never duplicating itself exactly. That is why Heraclitus has said, "You cannot step twice into the same river, for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you."[98] What he means is that if one steps into the River Volta, for example, today, and again tomorrow, one steps into the same River Volta, yet the water he steps into is not the same because the water that flowed in the river yesterday is gone, it has taken the lead, and so differs from the water that flows in the river today. Society has, therefore, never remained static because conditions have never been the same. It is obvious then that the African present is different from the African past, and the African future will also not be the same as the African present. Indeed, the African past is different and enables us to see the African present and the African future in new lights.

Meanwhile, it is important to note that elements of continuity could still be perceived even in the midst of sudden changes, implying that elements of continuity move in tandem with the rapid changes. Moreover, no system is completely destroyed by its successor in the dialectical process. Consequently, the various stages of human life are connected by a natural chain that dictates that each generation should pay enormous attention to the study of the past in order to better understand its position in the chain of life. This statement emphasizes that there is a great deal of connection and relevance between what exists in the past and present and what lies in the future. Genuinely, a critical examination of history shows clearly that the discipline is capable of providing an understanding of the whole range of time because history is a study of human behaviour both in the past and in the present and future. Ernst Breisach, for example, argues that history, as a reflection on the past, is never isolated from the present and future because it deals with human life as it *flows* through time.[99] The study of history makes us aware of the continuity of humankind as a river through time, and of the progress of civilisation, which help us to understand and appreciate the continuous chain of connection between past and present generations. It is this chronological continuity of human

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Arthur (ed.), *Ghana: One Decade of the Liberal State*, CODESRIA Edition (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2007), 227-250.

[98] Bertrand Russell, *Wisdom of the West: A Historical Survey of Western Philosophy in Its Social and Political Setting*, edited by Paul Foulkes (New York: Crescent Books, Inc., 1972), 25.

[99] Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval & Modern*, 2.

life that makes it illogical for us to adopt an indifferent attitude towards what happened to our predecessors in the past. In Henri Louis Bergson's estimation, "The present contains nothing more than the past, and what is found in the effect is already in the cause."[100] In fact, events have consequences in their future. The present, therefore, contains the past in the sense that there are consequences or traces of the past in the present. This is the reason why it is often argued that the *present* can be understood only in terms of the *past*. For example, in examining the military take-overs led by J. J. Rawlings—May 15, 1979; June 4, 1979; and December 31, 1981—Kevin Shillington states,

> In order to understand the nature and underlying causes of events in 1979, which led to the revolution of 1981, one needs to go back to the roots of Ghanaian political instability, social dislocation and economic decline, and it is wise to look for these in the early years of Ghanaian independence.[101]

The study or knowledge of the past is, therefore, declared to be a prerequisite to knowledge of the present. In this sense, the past is the gateway to all rational conduct in the present. We do not insist that the present state of Africa has no particular impact on our understanding of its past and the present itself. What we mean here is that, to understand the contemporary situation of Africa, we have to inquire into its past. To gain a holistic understanding of the present socio-economic conditions of Africa, for example, we have to go back into the past to examine the position of Africa before her contact with Europe, how colonialism exploited both her human and natural resources, and the consequences of this indiscriminate exploitation on Africa today. Without any knowledge of how and where people were born and raised in childhood, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to gain a good understanding of their behaviour in adulthood.

Clearly, history in action has been a continuous process. If African history were a play, its theme would have been timeless, and its message ageless. Contemporary Africans are where we are today because we stand on the shoulders of those Africans who in their turn stood on the shoulders of the Africans of the remote past. Coming to terms with this conception of African history helps us to appreciate the course of the life and history of Africa in order to understand the inextricable link between its past,

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[100] Cited in "History Quotes", retrieved June 7, 2013, from http://www.notable-quotes.com/h/history_quotes. html.

[101] Kevin Shillington, *Ghana and the Rawlings Factor* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1992), 2.

present and future, which enables us to develop a chronological frame for our knowledge and understanding of the significant developments in Africa today. Alex Thomson has stated,

> The world does not radically reinvent itself on a continuous basis. It evolves. There are no total revolutions where all that has gone before is laid to rest, and a new polity is born enjoying a completely clean slate. Traditions, customs, institutions and social relationships will survive and adapt from one era to another. … The same goes for Africa. … there are lines of continuity that run from the pre-colonial period, through the colonial era, right into the modern age.[102]

It was the pre-colonial period that produced the colonial era, while the post-colonial age was produced by the colonial era. This *connective* role of African history in relation to its past, present and future contributes a sense of stability, security and even comfort to human life in general, and African life in particular. It makes us certain about the stability and durability of the African cultural context in which we live and gives us assurance of the certainty of the nature of our cultural universe. This will always help Africans to consider our future, and not only our present, in every decision we make and implement. In essence, Africans must never forget that there are *historical influences on the world we now live in*.

All this brings us to the point where the need to emphasize the serious scientific study of African history becomes crucial. Indeed, the foregoing analysis shows that an understanding of the African past is essential to our survival today and tomorrow. This needed understanding of the African past could only be obtained through a vigorous study of African history. Thus, contrary to the numerous tenuous impressions people have about African history, there is the need for more and more systematic historical research into African history and the scientific utilization of results. In the general sense, the American historian, George Bancroft, has argued that "Of all pursuits that require analysis, history … stands first."[103] A. L. Rowse has also added that there can be no subject of study more important than history.[104] These observations underscore the significance of history in our everyday lives. Moreover, every society that places special value on

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[102] Alex Thomson, *An Introduction to African Politics*, Second Edition (London, New York and Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2004), 7-8.

[103] Cited in R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), 159.

[104] Rowse, *The Use of History*, v.

its existence expects an interpretation of its past, which is relevant to its present, and a basis for formulating decisions about its future.

This expectation, no doubt, places an enormous demand on African historians. Genuinely, professional African historians are the only people qualified to equip African society with an accurate historical perspective and to save it from the damaging effects of exposure to historical myth. The fact is that if professionally trained African historians do not carry out these social functions, then others who are ill-informed and more prejudiced will produce ill-founded interpretations of the African past which will distort the reality of the African present and eventually misrepresent the image of the African future. In this important context lies the rationale for the unusually clear-headed, balanced, compassionate, and professional recovery, recording, and preservation of African cultural heritage for both the present and posterity, to make the experiences of the African past available for our judicious exploitation for varied purposes in the African present and its future.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CINEMA, WORLD WAR I AND THE NEW NATIONS OF AFRICA: THE CASE OF GHANA

VITUS NANBIGNE

Introduction

The subject matter of what is known as "film history" has been of concern to many writers interested in understanding the phenomenon of film since the early 20th century. To ask, what is film history, might seem like an unnecessary question, argue Allen and Gomery (1985),[1] because since the early 1910s there have been many books that announce themselves to be film histories. According to these, continuous interest in the subject matter of film history persists because of the considerable disagreement among the so-called film history texts. Even though it begs the question to ask, "What is film history?", its apparent simplicity is deceptive, for behind that simple question can be found a long trail of complex discourses of film as "an art form, an industry, a technology, and cultural artifact" [2] and how it relates to the history of mankind.

Cinema has developed from a simple mechanical recording of nature to a complex tradition of art, a continuously evolving technology, a business, and the basis for intellectual pursuit. Our appreciation of cinema has shifted from the question of the 1900s "Is the image discernible?" to a contemporary question "Is the image meaningful?"[3] The meanings that are

[1] Allen, R. C. & Gomery, D., *Film and History: Theory and Practice* (McGraw-Hill, 1985).

[2] Sobchack, V., "What is Film History? or, the Riddle of the Sphinxes," in Gledhill, C. & Williams, L. (eds.), *Reinventing Film Studies* (Arnold, 2000), 300-315 and 300.

[3] Elsaesser, T. (ed.), *Early Cinema: Space Frame Narrative* (London: British Film Institute and Indiana University Press, 1990).

associated with cinema offer the medium power over minds and perceptions which colonial authorities recognized and explored during WWI to support the war efforts, and which also, later supported the rise of African nationalism.

Therefore, even though this paper will dwell on history, it will not be concerned with the definition of film history *per se*. Rather, the arguments will lead to an appreciation of the connections between film and what is often referred to as social history. In particular, the paper will examine the nexus of cinema, which broadly encapsulates the art, industry, economics and spectatorship of filmmaking, and the evolution of nations in Africa, especially following the end of World War I (WWI). Not only will the paper examine cinema as part of social history, but it will argue that films, by their nature, are both historical artefacts and also sources of social history. The paper will therefore seek to demonstrate the important role that cinema played in the historical development of nations in Africa, particularly Ghana during and after WWI.

Cinema has been one of the most quintessential means of representing the histories of nations, peoples and cultures. One is able to appreciate aspects of social history through films. Films also often derive their content and imagination from social historical sources. Examples can be cited from the film repertoires of Sembene Ousmane, Med Hondo, Kwaw Ansah, Dani Kouyate, and many others. At the same time, the films themselves can be studied as an integral part of the same social history. The making and watching of films are part of national histories.

The rest of the paper is organized in six main segments. The first part offers a theoretical prelude that attempts to establish a relationship between cinema and history. This theory will offer a historical framing of cinema, and also a cinematic framing of history. This is intended to lay a foundation upon which the other arguments will be built. The second part of the essay offers a brief narrative on how cinema was introduced to the African continent in ways that supported various imperial projects. Following the introduction of cinema to the continent, the third part will pursue the use of cinema in the consolidation of the colonial project. The fourth part tackles the use of cinema during WWI, and how this served the dual purpose of emphasizing the power of colonialism, and at the same time, offered an impetus for agitations of self-rule by indigenous peoples. This feeds into the fifth part, which very briefly examines the role of cinema in the rise of nationalist movements in Africa. Finally, the sixth part offers a short discussion on the importance of cinema in the early rumblings towards the independence of African nations.

Cinema and History

As a point of departure this first part of the essay seeks to build a theoretical framework on the basis of the relationship between cinema and history. It will first of all attempt a historical framing of cinema, that is, to establish the place of cinema in human history. This will be followed by a cinematic framing of history, that is, how the history of humanity is captured and represented in films. This is intended to lay a foundation upon which the other arguments will be built.

It has been noted earlier how a great number of published texts have claimed the status of film history, and how there has been controversy over what really is film history. Whilst the earliest film historical texts may have appeared in the early 20th century, the study of films as history emerged within the academy as late as the 1960s following the growth of cultural studies and the elevation of cinema from a demeaned side-show to the status of an important cultural phenomenon.[4] At the same time, there were attempts to legitimatize the study of films as a serious academic discipline that sought to understand cinema as an important aesthetic and historical form worthy of serious scholarly consideration.[5] Allen & Gomery (1985) have pointed out how the influx of European art film directors to the United States elevated cinema to a higher social status, and therefore how academic institutions gradually saw cinema studies as an extension of other academic disciplines, such as literature, journalism, media theory and history. According to them, this interest "gave rise to the demand for film scholarship—particularly scholarship that could be used as textbook material in film classes" (Allen & Gomery, 1985: 28).[6]

By the early 1980s, there was an increasing cornucopia of film historical texts that offered a wide variety of approaches to the history of film (Arthur Knight, 1957; Ulrich Gregor and Enno Patalas, 1962; Jean Mitry, 1968-1980; David Robinson, 1973/1981; Georges Sadoul, 1975; Jerzy Toeplitz, 1979). However, as both Andrew (1998)[7] and Sobchack (2000)[8]

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[4] Allen, R. C. & Gomery, D., *Film and History: Theory and Practice* (McGraw-Hill, 1985).

[5] Sobchack, V., "What is Film History? or, the Riddle of the Sphinxes," in Gledhill, C. & Williams, L. (eds.), *Reinventing Film Studies* (Arnold, 2000), 300-315.

[6] Allen, R. C. & Gomery, D., *Film and History: Theory and Practice* (McGraw-Hill, 1985).

[7] Andrew, D., "Film and History," in Hill, J. & Gibson, P. C. (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 176-189.

have observed, the primary task of the film historian has been to uncover previously unknown films and to interpret them according to culturally specific contexts. Hence, the early attempts at film history were often mere excavations and historical accounts of "cinema as the story of fearless pioneers, of 'firsts', of adventure and discovery, of great masters and masterpieces".[9]

The growth of cinema studies as a discipline in academia occurred when it borrowed from other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, philosophy, semiotics and psychoanalysis. In addition to this, cinema's claim to social functionalism broadened its relationship to social history, particularly in colonial and post-colonial African nations, where film was often overtly used for propaganda with serious social and pedagogical intent.[10] This deepening of the relationship between cinema and social history is evident in the ways in which film narratives and texts were seen to have been informed by the dynamism of social history, such as transformational events (e.g. WWI), memories, myths, folktales of the past, and cultural practices. At the same time, historians often turn to film texts for evidence of history.[11] In brief, social history provides the sources for film ideology, form and narrative, whilst films in turn, serve as sources for our construction of social history.

Therefore, whilst the history of WWI offers a great deal of information and motivation for films, there are films that offer insights into the war and how it affected nations, peoples and individuals. That is what this paper is interested in. First, however, one needs to understand the circumstances under which film (and cinema in a broad sense) was introduced into Africa.

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[8] Sobchack, V., "What is Film History? or, the Riddle of the Sphinxes," in Gledhill, C. & Williams, L. (eds.), *Reinventing Film Studies* (Arnold, 2000), 300-315.

[9] Elsaesser, T. (ed.), *Early Cinema: Space Frame Narrative* (London: British Film Institute and Indiana University Press, 1990).

[10] Pfaff, F., "Africa from Within: The Films of Gaston Kabore and Idrissa Ouedraogo as Anthropological Sources," in Bakari, I. & Cham, M. (eds.), *African Experiences of Cinema* (British Film Institute, 1996), 223-238.

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[11] O'Connor, J. E., *The Fiscal Crises of the State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973).

Cinema Comes to Africa

This part of the essay offers a brief narrative on how cinema was introduced to Africans on the continent, particularly in ways that supported various imperial projects. The early 20th century witnessed the proliferation of films across the globe and Africa was not left out of that early experience. Shortly after the French Lumière Brothers held a public exhibition of their cinematograph, just as other inventors produced similar recording and projection devices in Europe and North America, various explorers, adventure seekers, Christian missionaries and of course colonialists, brought films and filmmaking to the African continent. Film historians believe that Africans experienced the phenomenon of cinema shortly after its invention in Europe and North America.[12] Various circumstances account for the introduction of cinema to Africa, but the most prevalent were the activities of Christian missionaries.

The period of the emergence of cinema in Africa also marked the arbitrary colonization of most parts of the continent by European nations. Between 1900 and 1938, Africa experienced a mixture of pain and fortune through colonial subjugation, economic exploitation, the magic of cinema, the First World War, and the beginnings of African nationalist movements agitating for political independence. Whilst films were made and/or shown to indigenous populations as a means of mental subjugation and to both legitimatize and enforce colonialism, the same medium, ironically, became an eye-opener to many formally educated Africans who understood the illogical ideological foundations of colonialism and therefore sought to fight it. Even though the story of colonialism was mostly told from the colonizer's point of view, which sought to rationalize the human cost of the imperial project, and to validate the European occupation and exploitation as a philanthropic enterprise towards Africans,[13] not everyone could be fooled. Soon after the end of WWI, returning soldiers would join forces with indigenous intellectuals to wage oppositional actions against colonial authorities that would eventually lead to self-governance.

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[12] Barnouw, E., *Documentary: A History of the Non-fiction Film* (Oxford University Press, 1993).
---Rouch, J., "The Awakening African Cinema." *UNESCO Courier* No. 3, 1962; Tomaselli, K., *Appropriating Images: The Semiotics of Visual Representation* (Hojbjerg: Intervention Press, 1996).
---Ukadike, F. N., *Black African Cinema* (University of California Press, 1994).
[13] Shohat, E. and Stam, R., *Unthinking Eurocentrism—Multiculturalism and the Media* (London: Routledge, 1994).

Cinema and Colonialism

By the end of the 16th century, most of the people that occupy present-day Ghana had already settled and established firm ascendancies over various territories. Trade flourished among several cultural and linguistic groups and between indigenous peoples and Europeans.[14] This booming economic activity would soon be replaced by the most atrocious and abhorrent form of trade in human history—the Slave Trade. However, after several centuries of this shameful activity, it was abolished, only to be replaced by another insidious form of exploitation and abuse— colonialism. It will be recalled that it was the early period of colonization that also saw the introduction of cinema to Africa. Following this introduction, European colonizers then pursued the use of films in the consolidation of the colonial project.[15] In Ghana, Christian missionaries were used to clear the path to total colonization of the area then known as the Gold Coast.

When the trade in slaves was abolished, there was a shift in interest on the African continent to regular trading and the exploitation of the continent's natural resources to feed industrialization in Europe. This shift in focus also meant a shift in tactics, in the way that Europeans dealt with Africans. This involved the use of Christian missionaries who were armed with Bibles and projectors, and commissioned to go out and court the friendship of indigenous communities, whom the colonizers generally still thought to be savages. Once the colonialists were able to occupy the hinterland and take control, they built roads, railways and shipping harbours, and complemented these with European-style educational institutions and hospitals.[16]

Whilst these were welcome developments, it must be noted that their primary purpose was to serve European exploitative interests. In all these, cinema featured prominently, not only as a means of entertaining indigenous populations, but more importantly as a means of diverting attention away from the exploitative and oppressive tendencies of colonial rule. Cinema was also used to manipulate indigenous people into abandoning their traditions, cultural practices and religious systems in preference of European religious ideologies, cultural practices and consumable commodities.

In the Gold Coast it was the Basel Missionaries who were employed in 1910 to interact with the indigenous populations in an area of Accra called

[14] Anquandah, K. J., *Castles and Forts of Ghana* (Accra/Paris: Ghana Museums and Monuments Board/Atalante, 1990).
[15] Ukadike, F. N., *Black African Cinema* (University of California Press, 1994).
[16] Ibid.

Osu. They set up their mission within the Christianborg Castle where George Geppert projected slides to groups of people at the YMCA in the Castle as part of his Bible lessons.[17] These efforts to use cinema for evangelism were nonetheless part of the colonial programme of getting acquainted with Africans.

Once the colonialists achieved contact with the rest of the country, they sought to use cinema to reinforce their authority and to keep indigenous people obedient and dutiful. Films were made and shown to the people about citizenship, taxation, hygiene and loyalty to the King of England. There were also films that promoted European businesses. For example, Roberts (1987) reports that in 1913 Cadbury (the British chocolate maker) made a film to advertise their model factory at Bourneville, which of course was also intended to promote the Cadbury brand.[18]

By 1913 several cinema houses had sprung up, especially in the urban centres. Even though these cinema houses were categorized according to social class, they offered easier access to films and also allowed colonial authorities to reach out to many people with their propaganda. In addition to that the Ministry of Information possessed mobile cinema vans that travelled around the country offering free viewing to people, mainly of films that concerned colonial policies and other interests.

Indigenous people were quick to appreciate the various functions of cinema as they were generally not as ignorant and naive as the migrant rulers had always thought. But as African people were being indoctrinated into Christianity and European culture, the combination of cinema and Western education also produced a corps of African Aristocratic elite who began to take cognizance of their colonized status and to feel a need for improved social services and a share in political power.

By 1897, The Aborigines Rights Protection Society had been set up by Western Christian educated Africans in the Gold Coast to fight for political and social rights. After WWI, many other nationalist movements arose from among the African elite to fight against the invasion of their lands, against the imposition of harsh working conditions, unfair colonial laws, a discriminatory social system, and an abusive and oppressive tax regime.

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[17] Dadson, N., "'Cine' in Ghana," *Graphic Showbiz*, 21st & 27th May, 1998, Newspaper Editions.
[18] Roberts, A. D., "Africa on Film to 1940," *History of Africa*, 14, 1987.

Cinema and World War I

Information about the use of cinema in the Gold Coast during WWI is very scant. Neither the National Archives of Ghana nor the film archives of the Ministry of Information possess any material that relates to the Great War. Information about the connections of the war to this country can only be gleaned from equally scant secondary resources.

However, available literature acknowledges that cinema during WWI served the dual purpose of emphasizing the power of colonialism, and offering an impetus for agitations of self-rule by indigenous peoples. When the British declared war against Germany on August 4, 1914, it effectively commenced WWI. By extension, all the British colonies were involved in the war, as tens of thousands of mostly African men were drafted into the army. African peoples were served equal amounts of media propaganda, especially using films, as the British or their allies. The propaganda efforts that aimed at exhibiting British military invincibility and patriotism in order to recruit men, and sometimes women, were not lost on Africans.

WWI is known to have introduced modern technologies into battle, just as they served as the basis for the enlistment films as instruments of both surveillance and documentation. At the same time, many propaganda films and newsreels were produced to keep civilian populations in the home countries and the colonies informed about the progress of the war and to incite them to join the fight.

The British were already familiar with the use of film propaganda as far back as 1900. Around this time, the War Office had been happy to provide consultancy services on films such as *Army Life, or How Soldiers are Made* (1900) by R. W. Paul. A year before the start of the war, in 1913, Keith Prowse made *The British Army Film* which also received backing from the War Office. These films were produced through private efforts, but the state and the military offered support. However, it was only after the war had started that Britain consciously produced films for propaganda purposes.

McKernan (2013) has argued that the First World War created the context within which modern state-controlled propaganda was born. Citing Philip Taylor's book, *Munitions of the Mind,*[19] McKernan (2013) says that it was during the Great War of 1914-18 that the modern "scientific" use of

[19] Taylor, P., *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda* (Manchester University Press, 2003).

propaganda developed.[20] The British in particular are said to have set the standards for others to follow in the effective application of modern propaganda. Interestingly, they did not have any propaganda machinery before the start of the war, and did not show much interest in such efforts until they thought it wise to counter some forms of propaganda emanating from Germany (Sanders, 1975).[21] Sanders argues that British propagandists were slow in exploiting cinema as a form of propaganda. Wellington House, a reference to the War Propaganda Bureau set up by Herbert Henry Asquith's cabinet, had suggested the use of film soon after the outbreak of the war, but the suggestion was overruled by the War Office.

About a year after the start of the war, in 1915, Wellington House was then permitted to implement its plans for film propaganda. A Cinema Committee was formed, producing and distributing films to allied and neutral countries, including colonized territories in Africa.[22] The propaganda films of Wellington House had a decidedly different tone and content, because, as Paris (2012) argues, the success of the independent propaganda films "awoke" politicians to the usefulness of film as instruction.[23]

British propaganda during WWI appeared in various forms, such as pictures, literature, posters and films. A significant part of the media output emphasized so-called atrocity propaganda which was usually aimed at mobilizing hatred for the Germans by spreading details of their atrocities, whether real or alleged. This strategy was used extensively by Britain in the First World War, and reached its peak in 1915, focusing mostly on the atrocities related to Germany's invasion of Belgium.[24]

Films complemented other forms of media in portraying the so-called barbarity of the Germans. There were newspaper accounts of "Terrible Vengeance" in which the word "Hun" was first used to describe the

[20] McKernan, L., *Newsreels and World War I.* Talk given at "Picturing Propaganda: A Study Day", British Library Conference Centre, 1 June 2013. Retrieved online at lukemckernan.com/wp-content/uploads/newsreels_and_WWI.pdf. 15 October, 2015.
[21] Sanders, M. L., "Wellington House and British Propaganda during the First World War," *The Historical Journal* 18 (Cambridge University Press, 1975), 119-146.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Paris, M., "The Great War and the Moving Image. Cinema and Memory," in Piette, A. and Rawlinson, M. (eds.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-century British and American War Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 58-63.
[24] Wilson, T., "Lord Bryce's Investigation into Alleged German Atrocities in Belgium, 1914-15," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14 (Sage, 1979), 369-383.

Germans in view of their atrocious activities in Belgium. There was a continuous stream of stories that painted the Germans as destructive barbarians, even though, Moyer (1995) argues that many of these atrocities that were reported were entirely fictitious.[25] Even as late as 1918, towards the end of the war, German barbarity was still the subject of the Ministry of Information's productions. An example is the film *Once a Hun, Always a Hun* (1918), "one of the war's most notorious propaganda films…which played upon popular prejudices about the beastly Germans in a way that had not been done before in this medium."[26]

Sanders (1975) also notes that there were various debates regarding the British use of atrocity propaganda and commentators such as Arthur Ponsonby had exposed many of the alleged atrocities as either lies or exaggerations. Such revelations, according to Sanders, later had the potential to cast doubts on atrocity stories like the Nazi persecutions during the Second World War.[27]

The first notable propaganda film was *Britain Prepared* (1915), which was distributed worldwide, including colonized territories such as the Gold Coast (Ghana). The film used military footage to exhibit what was believed to be British strength, valour, and determination in the war effort. In August 1916, Wellington House produced another significant film, *The Battle of the Somme*, which was viewed favourably in the United Kingdom, allied states and colonized territories.

A common plot in the early propaganda dramas was the threat of invasion. For example, *England's Menace*, released in September 1914, "vividly illustrates a carefully planned invasion of England by the German Navy… Grim realism is imparted to the story by the introduction of fine naval spectacles."[28] It was a simple film in which a politician's daughter discovers her butler is a German spy, and uses his information to get her father to stop an invasion. One review read that the "gripping" drama should "stir up patriotism in the breast of anyone."[29] In Africa, these, and many other similar films were widely shown with the intention to

[25] Moyer, L. V., *Victory Must Be Ours: Germany in the Great War 1914-1918* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1995).
[26] Sanders, M. L. and Philip M. T., *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-18* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 130.
[27] Sanders, M. L., "Wellington House and British Propaganda during the First World War," *The Historical Journal* 18 (Cambridge University Press, 1975), 119-146.
[28] *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1914.
[29] *Billboard*, 1914.

propagate a feeling of patriotism in the people for the British Crown and the war effort.

Shortly after *England's Menace*, another propaganda film, *The German Spy Peril*, was released. Its story also revolves around the threat of German invasion in which a group of German spies is on a mission to blow up the Houses of Parliament. These narratives were intended to spark hatred for the Germans and a patriotic determination to defend Britain, whether the spectator was British, an ally or the colonized. There were other early independent productions that more explicitly sought to encourage recruitment. These films were used to support the efforts of the army to bolster enlistment. One such notable film was *England's Call* (1914). *England's Call* relied on the nostalgic recalling of Britain's glorious past in order to appeal for enlistment. This was similar to propaganda posters that featured the image of Lord Kitchener asking British males to respond to his call to duty.

As indicated earlier, there was no precedent for state-controlled film propaganda before the war. However, a few weeks after the war had begun, Asquith's government created the War Propaganda Bureau, for the production of propaganda films.[30] Asquith then tasked Charles Masterman, a liberal politician, with heading the operations of the bureau. Masterman used his office at Wellington House as the operations centre to carry out his duties. It was for this reason that the term "Wellington House" became synonymous with the activities of the War Propaganda Bureau.[31]

Foreign countries, especially foreign neutral countries in Africa, like the Gold Coast, needed more tactical dealings to be coaxed onto the British side of the war. This is how Masterman thought about this propaganda approach:

> Anything in the nature of an appeal to neutral countries has been rigidly ruled out; our activities have been confined to the presentation of facts and of general arguments based on those facts. The importance of secrecy need not be laboured here. The intrusion of a government, or of persons

[30] Reeves, N., *Official British Film Propaganda during the First World War: Published in Association with the Imperial War Museum* (London: Croom Helm, 1986).

[31] Reeves, N., *Official British Film Propaganda during the First World War: Published in Association with the Imperial War Museum*. London: Croom Helm, 1986).

> notoriously inspired by government, into the sphere of opinion, invariably excites suspicion and resentment…. (original emphasis)[32]

The content of the propaganda films reflected Masterman's ideas about films and how they might be used in this enterprise. In an article published in *The Nation* (1915), Masterman suggested that if any appeals should be made to men, they should be founded on German savagery on the continent.[33] The vast majority of these films and newsreels would be produced after 1916 after the establishment of the War Office Cinematography Committee (or WOCC). The increase in the production of war propaganda films was in recognition of film's usefulness only after Britain had observed the success of German propaganda in Romania.

It was contingent on these thoughts that *Britain Prepared* (1915), directed by the Anglo-American Charles Urban, was produced. For its time, the film was a marathon three hours and forty minutes long, comprising twelve reels, and each reel revolved around a unified theme. Some of the reels focused on simple images intended to exhibit the power of the British military. For example, one reel showed the manufacturing and firing of a 15-inch naval gun, whilst another displayed the Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow in the North Sea. The contents of the reels reflected Masterman's hope that

> some glimpse of the power and energy of the most powerful of the allies might have its effect on neutrals and induce them to remain neutral if hostile, and to throw their lot in with the allies if they were friendly.[34]

The main goal of films, such as *Britain Prepared,* was to get neutral countries to join the fight on the Allied side, and not necessarily to persuade British men to get into uniform. However, reminiscent of propaganda posters, *Britain Prepared* did have elements that attempted to shame men into enlisting. In Africa, the approach of shaming men into joining the army may not have been very effective, which explains the need to conscript or give quotas to traditional rulers to supply men for the British war effort. The colonial government usually employed itinerant mobile cinema vans to show propaganda films in various communities. These propaganda films would usually be preceded by very entertaining

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[32] Masterman, C., "First Proof of the Wellington House Interim Report, December 2, 1914," in Reeves, N. & Imperial War Museum (Great Britain) *Official British Film Propaganda* (London: C. Helm, 1986).
[33] Masterman, C., "Why the Working Man Enlists," *Nation* (September 11, 1915).
[34] Masterman, L., *C. F. G. Masterman: A Biography* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1968).

comic films, such as the films of Charlie Chaplin. Having gained the attention of the crowds with the hilarious comedies, the propaganda films would then be shown with the intent of winning the support of indigenous people for the war.

Meanwhile, in Germany, several military officials serving during the Great War, such as Ludendorff, admitted that British propaganda had been instrumental in their defeat. Adolf Hitler acknowledged this perception, which informed the Nazis' later adoption of many British propaganda techniques for their own political ends.[35]

According to McKernan (2013), the British approach was referred to as modern propaganda because of the state's conscious use of all available mass media—communications cables, newspapers, pamphlets, leaflets, letters, cartoons, posters, photographs and films—to construct the narrative of the war for its own ends. Britain is said to have employed different strategies for home, neutral and enemy audiences, targeting the elites in order to influence what they thought were the most important hearts and minds. The propaganda also targeted the masses through the use of mass media, particularly films.[36]

The propagandists created some films primarily for foreign audiences. The filmmakers intended to capture the patriotism surrounding the outbreak of war, with

> deliberate efforts to arouse a warlike spirit included not only the topical dramas, but many elementary 'recruiting pictures' shown to the accompaniment of military bands with girls in khaki singing patriotic songs and pointing out the nearest recruitment office.[37]

Such films were produced to make the military look attractive, and to present an invincible allied force that any young person would be proud to be a part of. For example, the films would usually portray the British army and its allies possessing superior weapons and a more advanced military training programme than the enemy.

Apart from these fiction films, there was also the use of factual films such as newsreels. McKernan (2009) offers a brief overview of the history

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[35] Sanders, M. L., "Wellington House and British Propaganda during the First World War," *The Historical Journal* 18 (Cambridge University Press, 1975), 119-146.

[36] McKernan, L., *Newsreels and World War I*. Talk given at "Picturing Propaganda: A Study Day", British Library Conference Centre, 1 June 2013. Retrieved online at lukemckernan.com/wp-content/uploads/newsreels_and_WWI.pdf. 15 October, 2015.

[37] Low, R., *The History of British Film 1914-1918*, Volume III (London: Routledge, 2013).

of newsreels in Britain, and notes that the first British newsreel was issued in June 1910, known as the weekly *Pathe's Animated Gazette*. He claims that, even though films had been exhibited in Britain since the 1890s, and that news events had been covered by early filmmakers, newsreels were a novel concept that appeared as a result of the more settled, regular pattern of film-going that was becoming established with the rise of cinemas.[38] A newsreel was often a reel of film that ran for about five minutes, and usually showed a number of stories illustrating the week's news. They were silent and accompanied by brief titles that introduced each item. By 1912 newsreels were produced in a pattern of two issues per week, to suit the regular cinema programming.

McKernan (2009) claims that the idea was naturally appealing, and attracted rival newsreels such as the *Warwick Bioscope Chronicle* and the *Gaumont Graphic* which appeared later in 1910. There was also the *Topical Budget* which started in 1911, and several others emerged in the years leading up to the First World War. The war had a devastating effect on the British film industry, but the strongest of the newsreels, such as *Pathe Gazette*, *Gaumont Graphic*, and *Topical Budget*, survived. McKernan reports that by 1917 the *Topical Budget* was taken over by the British War Office and run on propagandist lines as an outlet for official war films. Its name was then changed to the *War Office Official Topical Budget*, and later the *Pictorial News* (*Official*).[39]

McKernan (2013) argues that the use of propaganda newsreels, however, had a double-edge effect. Whilst the spread of literacy and the introduction of new forms of mass communication gave the colonial state ample opportunities to deliver its message, there was also an implicit weakness in such a strategy. He argues that when state institutions feel the need to control the narrative it is not because they wish to exercise power but often because they fear losing power. He believes that people may not always read messages in the way that those delivering them intend the messages to be read. For him, the assumption that propaganda always has the intended effect may not always be true.[40] As the quotation below suggests, the more that people are exposed to propaganda messages, the

[38] McKernan (2009) *A History of the British Newsreels.* Retrieved online at http://bufvc.ac.uk/wp-content/media/2009/06/newsreels_long_history.pdf.
[39] McKernan, L. (2009) *A History of the British Newsreels.* Retrieved online at http://bufvc.ac.uk/wp-content/media/2009/06/newsreels_long_history.pdf.
[40] McKernan, L., *Newsreels and World War I.* Talk given at "Picturing Propaganda: A Study Day", British Library Conference Centre, 1 June 2013. Retrieved online at lukemckernan.com/wp-content/uploads/newsreels_and_WWI.pdf. 15 October, 2015.

more they tend to administer informed questioning of the messages with the result that the messages may not be effective.

> The more we read, and the more we are able to see, the more we may question. The First World War demonstrates the great power of the propaganda machines established by the leading combatant nations, but it also showed the management of propaganda to be something very problematic, particularly when it comes to judging its effectiveness.[41]

At the time of the Great War, 1914-1918, many nations, especially in Africa, were fairly new to cinema and its capability of spreading and influencing mass sentiments. The use of films as a tool for propaganda was still experimental. However, it eventually became one of the most important instruments used to rally the masses, as if they already formed nations, for the purpose of manipulating their so-called nationalist sentiments and therefore mobilizing them for the "national" cause of fighting against imagined or real adversaries. It was this conviction in the power of film that led to the newsreels, and other films particularly made for war propaganda, being produced and distributed. Not only were the films intended to achieve the sympathies and support of indigenous Africans for the war efforts of their imperial rulers, but these propaganda materials were also aimed at recruiting soldiers and other ancillary military personnel, such as carriers, for the war. Thus, in 1915, General Charles Mangin of France, "launched a propaganda campaign for the recruitment of half a million soldiers in the French colonies."[42]

But as Koller (2008) has observed, the use of propaganda did not always achieve the intended objectives of massive recruitment. In many African communities, there were pockets of resistance to recruitment in several ways, such as young men running away to hide in bushes or engaging in open physical resistance. Koller reports that by 1917, when the French government decided to resume the recruitment of Africans, after a lull, the Governor-General of French West Africa, Joost van Vollenhoven, wrote back reporting the resistance of Africans against further recruitment and that no amount of convincing (propaganda) would

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[41] McKernan, L., *Newsreels and World War I.* Talk given at "Picturing Propaganda: A Study Day", British Library Conference Centre, 1 June 2013. Retrieved online at lukemckernan.com/wp-content/uploads/newsreels_and_WWI.pdf. 15 October, 2015, 1.

[42] Koller, C., "The Recruitment of Colonial Troops in Africa and Asia and their Deployment in Europe during the First World War," *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 26, Nos. 1/2, March/July 2008, 111-133.

work. He is reported to have said that France could only recruit by force, thus running the risk of a general revolt.[43]

Under these circumstances, whilst some people saw the tragic parts of the war, others, particularly the new African elites and the returning WWI veterans, saw opportunities for a revolutionary accession to political power. After the war, many nationalist groups made up of mainly the urban elite, and supported by the returning African veterans of the war, who had gained a new vision of the world from various battle fronts in Africa and Asia, sought radical political, social and economic changes. As Mathews (1982) reports, by the end of the war some 54,000 Nigerians alone had participated in the war, fighting in the Cameroons and German East Africa. Most of those who returned home served as catalysts of political change.

> Their experiences had altered ideas, attitudes, and habits during the war, and made them not only receptive to additional changes in the post-war years—especially socio-economic, military, and political—but also inclined to compel others to follow suit.[44]

WWI was an eye-opener for the African political consciousness, as these veterans had seen first-hand the vulnerabilities of their colonizers. The experience on the battlefield was in sharp contrast with the recruitment and propaganda films they had seen which showed the European armies and war machinery to be comparatively superior and invincible. Having realized the deception of European propaganda films, observed the human frailness of Europeans, and suffered racial discrimination at the hands of Europeans, informed Africans and veterans of the war could now distinguish between the fictional invincibility of the Allied Forces as portrayed in films, and their real weaknesses on the actual battlefields.

Cinema and the rise of nationalism in Africa

By the end of WWI, nationalist movements had proliferated across the African continent. As noted earlier, returning African soldiers added

[43] Koller, C., "The Recruitment of Colonial Troops in Africa and Asia and their Deployment in Europe during the First World War," *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 26, Nos. 1/2, March/July 2008, 111-133.

[44] Mathews, J. K., "World War I and the Rise of African Nationalism: Nigerian Veterans as Catalysts of Change," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 20 (3), 1982, 493-502, (493).

impetus to these nationalist struggles. By this time, many Africans, particularly those who formed the core of the nationalist movements, had come to understand the demeaning interpretation of African people by Europeans, and how such images were inserted into their cinematic narratives in order to illustrate a putative superiority of the migrants over the indigenous people. For example, films such as *The Wooing and Wedding of a Coon* (1905), *The Kings of the Cannibal Islands* (1908), *The Slave* (1909), *The Sambo Series* (1911), *Missionaries of Darkest Africa* (1912), *Voodoo Vengeance* (1913), and *The Terrors of the Jungle* (1913),[45] which often formed part of evening film programmes by itinerant film screening teams, sought to reinforce the notion of white superiority over blacks. Often black people were presented as, "a dancing machine, a comic stooge, a faithful retainer, a cheerful flunky, a tainted unfortunate, or an ignorant savage."[46] Such images were often used to justify the occupation, colonization and exploitative imperial enterprise. Nationalist movements therefore sought to resist such representations, and the early stages of the emergence of Pan-Africanism began to manifest itself both abroad and internally.

African nationalism, just like in Europe, depended on a certain emotional preference for a romantic past, and an idealist future, to a present which was often rejected for its oppression. The need to free themselves from the tyranny of the present required the identification of an enemy, from whom the freedom of consciousness would be wrestled. African experiences with films, soon offered the basis for an appreciation of the racial condescension they suffered, and therefore needed to free themselves from what they considered to be mental slavery. Africans soon found that the tyranny that was their enemy was the foreign occupier and ruler of their territories, who had exploited their human and natural resources for a war in which they (the Africans) really had no stake, and after which they did not enjoy any gratitude.

In Africa, WWI and its accompanying visual representations provided substance for such emotive responses to colonialism and subsequently to the formation of nationalist movements. Following the experiences of Africans with the harsh Slave Trade and the imposition of a harsh and degrading colonial rule, the Great War became an eye-opener to the humanity of the native European, his false pretenses, his weaknesses and vulnerabilities, and therefore the capability of the African to measure equally.

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[45] Ukadike, F. N., *Black African Cinema* (University of California Press, 1994).
[46] Leab, D. (1975), cited in Ukadike (1994), 37.

Cinema and the emerging nations of Africa after WWI

The combination of the war and cinema produced a strong ideological basis for indigenous people to seek self-rule and self-determination. After the war the colonialists shifted their focus of cinema from war propaganda to educational cinema. But this was no reprieve for members of the nationalist movements who thought that the foreign occupation needed to end. However, it would be more than forty years before indigenous Africans took control over the political administration and also film production, to be able to tell their own stories.

Formerly educated Africans and enlightened veterans of WWI understood the ideological basis of colonial cinema. They saw through the arbitrary textual nuances that demeaned the African in order to uplift the European as a better human being. However, the more colonial films sought to make the African subservient, obedient and dutiful through various so-called educational films, the more Africans became aware of the deception and therefore resisted such representations, albeit in subtle ways, but at the same time pursued an aggressive political agenda to achieve governance by African people.

The proliferation of cinema houses, albeit segregated by race and class, offered more opportunities for people to watch a wide variety of films, to the effect that attempts by the colonial government to censor the films were not always successful. Censorship was often intended to remove parts of films that were believed to be negative representations of Europeans. For example, films that were imported from the United Kingdom and North America were often censored by the removal of scenes of nudity, sex, sloth and anti-social behaviour.

However, because a few businessmen had become importers and exhibitors of films, it was not always possible to have total control of what they imported and showed. Information about films during this period is rather scant and largely inaccessible, but there is some evidence that apart from the war itself, the use of media, particularly films, contributed to the education and enlightenment of Africans to rise up and seek to establish their independent nation-states and self-determination.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be argued that the new nations of Africa did not emerge after independence. Independence only served as moments for the declaration of the territorial bondage of disparate ethnic groups, albeit arbitrary, to form imagined communities that are now referred to as

nations. The seeds for these nations were sown during and after WWI through a combination of battlefield experiences, political awakening, and cinematic representation. These provided the fertile ideological grounds for the new nations of Africa, such as Ghana, to sprout and grow.

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