

**\*\*\*\*CALL FOR PAPERS\*\*\*\***

**Re-evaluating Africa and World War II  
A workshop to be held at Rutgers University  
March 28 - 29, 2008**

World War II remains an important touchstone in American and European history. Most documentaries or texts that discuss the war make passing reference to Africa's engagement in World War II, and when they do, they tend to concentrate on North Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa contributed substantially to the war effort and was greatly affected by the war. For most Africans the impact of the war was mediated through the policies and redirected priorities of their colonial masters. As Nancy Lawler argues, Britain and France in particular "...looked to their overseas territories to continue to fulfill their well-established role in the imperial systems....the colonies were expected not only to support themselves, but to provide resources, both natural and human, for the good of the respective metropolises." Across the continent, communities mobilized to support the war effort. They contributed financial support both directly and indirectly. They supplied soldiers in a variety of capacities and they provided resources for the troops. In small and large ways mobilizing for World War II transformed people's lives whether they fought in France or Burma or remained in their towns and villages.

This workshop seeks to explore the social, cultural, political and economic impact of World War II on the continent. In addition, the workshop will explore the possibility of launching a major publication project that would result in the production of a text and supporting materials (web site, CD-ROMS, images, primary documents) that can be used in advanced undergraduate classes on Africa, the African diaspora, and more general classes on World War II. This text will fill a void in the historiography on twentieth century Africa. Many of us teach World War II in our survey and topical courses in African history, and it is treated in our texts and courses as a 'watershed event' in colonial African history. Yet, there is no extant text that brings together the threads of this event as a transformative process in the continent's colonial history.

This text will provide a continental perspective. It will examine a range of questions and topics that highlight the experiences of African soldiers, the impact of the war on communities as well as cultural and social processes shaped by this watershed event.

How were men recruited for the war effort? How did war-time mobilization affect African villages, towns and cities? What were the experiences of conscripted men, as well as male and female volunteers? For African

soldiers who served in other parts of the continent, what was the nature of the interaction between these soldiers and local communities? What was the nature of the interaction between African and African American soldiers in Europe and in Africa? How did the war affect cultural practices and production? What impact did the war have on gender and generational relations? How did it affect notions of African and European masculinity? How were African men and women represented in cultural productions about World War II? How was the war memorialized in Africa? How did the war affect African attitudes about empire? How did the war transform African armies? What was the fate of African war veterans after demobilization?

We envision a workshop in which each participant presents a paper of 7 –10 pages. Participants should bring a sampling of photos and primary documents as well as pedagogical ideas for the text and supporting materials.

If you are working on any of these topics, please send a one page abstract to Judith Byfield <jab632@cornell.edu> by November 30th, 2007.

Conference Organizers:

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