

as a leader in the Nam Bo insurrection, was captured by the French, and tortured. She is revered as a heroine for remaining silent about her revolutionary contacts under torture. On 28 August 1941 she was executed. Her husband later died from torture in a French prison in 1942. A woman fully devoted to the Communist cause, Nguyen exemplifies the terrible choices women had to make: forgoing domestic fulfillment to serve their nation.

[See also Bui Thi Xuan; Duong Thu Huong; Le Thi; Nguyen Thi Dinh; and Southeast Asia, *subentry* Modern Period.]

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KAREN TURNER

NIGERIA. Nigeria is in West Africa and borders the Gulf of Guinea in the south, the Republic of Benin in the west, the Republics of Chad and Cameroon in the east, and the Republic of Niger in the north. This oil-rich country takes its name from the country's longest river, the Niger. The most populous country in Africa, Nigeria had at the beginning of the twenty-first century a population of approximately 140 million, and this was expected to grow to 170 million by 2020—accounting for more than a quarter of the continent's sub-Saharan population. Nigeria has more than five hundred ethnic groups, whose peoples speak different languages and have different cultures and different religions. The most populous of these groups are the Hausa and Fulani in the north, the Igbo in the east, and the Yoruba in the west.

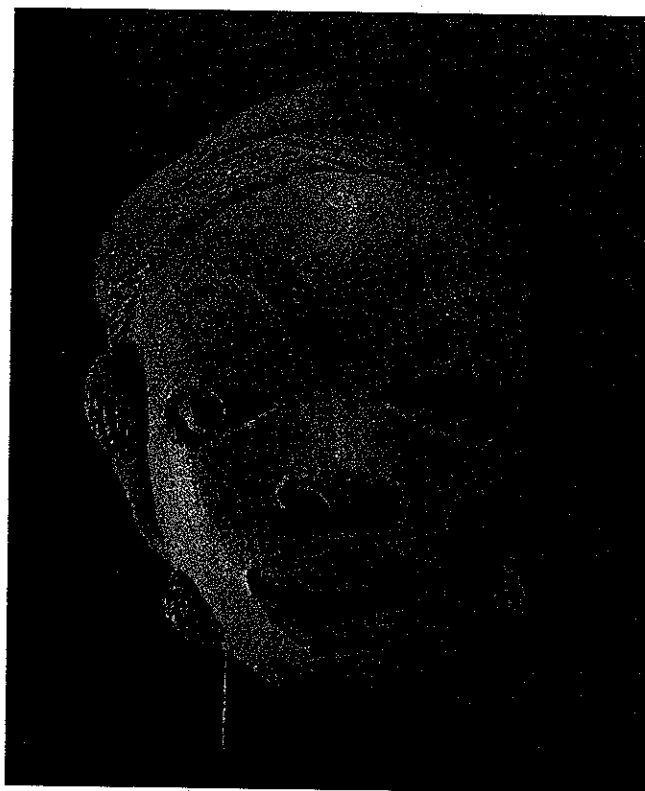
Nigeria has a rich and varied history. The oldest evidence of metalworking in West Africa dates back to the fourth century B.C.E. in Taruga, Nigeria. Two thousand years ago the skilled artisans and ironworkers of the Nok civilization were producing terra cotta sculptures, which were valued not only for their abstract and geometric sophistication but also for the high standards of their production. Nok sculptures represent Nigeria's earliest material culture.

Much of what is now Nigeria was made up of small- to large-scale kingdoms and numerous small-scale societies. As early as the 1500s the Hausa-speaking people of northern Nigeria formed themselves into seven Hausa Bakwai (original) and seven Hausa Banza (bastard) city-states—states that mirror the present-day Muslim Sharia states of Nigeria. The Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria organized into a number of prominent city-states, including Ife and Oyo, and the Edo people organized into the kingdom of

Benin. Eastern Nigeria was the terrain of the Igbo, and they—like the Ijo and Idoma—organized themselves into small-scale societies.

The spread of Islam began more than a millennium ago in Nigeria. With the conversion of Sarki Yaji Ali (1349-1385), Islam took root in the Hausa kingdom of Kano and spread from there to the other Hausa states. Islam had a far-reaching influence on northern Nigerian government, its social, cultural, and religious life, and its education. In the early nineteenth century, with the introduction of *ajami* writing—using Arabic script to write West African languages—the tenets of Islam could be more readily spread. As a result of jihads between 1804 and 1808, the Sokoto Caliphate joined northern Nigeria with the adjacent regions of Niger and Cameroon into a loose confederation of Islamic emirates.

The Portuguese era of exploration ushered in the greatest forced migration of Nigerians. With the so-called discovery of the bights of Benin and Biafra, the slave trade began—a time of immeasurable grief and destruction. Once the slave trade was no longer economically viable, from the middle to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Europe began searching for a new relationship with Africa. And find it they did—African raw materials led to



Nok Civilization. A Nok head, 500 B.C.E.–200 C.E. ENTWISTLE GALLERY, LONDON/WERNER FORMAN/ART RESOURCE, NY

Europe's eventual occupation of Africa. For the country that became Nigeria, the British colonial era lasted but six decades, until 1960. It unleashed, however, rapid change and upheaval in the social, cultural, economic, and religious foundations of the country.

In more recent years, Nigeria has experienced a hobbled history of political instability. The country is now recovering with the elections of the civilian governments of Olusegun Obasanjo and, in 2007, Umaru Yar'Adua. The choices that Nigeria makes for itself once Yar'Adua has consolidated his office will surely have a lasting impact on not only Nigeria's future but also that of the western region of Africa.

Women's Changing Place in Society. Nigerian women have always played important roles in the lives of their communities. In some Nigerian societies, a system of joint sovereignty existed whereby leadership responsibilities were shared between a king and a female counterpart. In these systems women held power because of their relationship to the ruler in question, especially as mother, daughter, or sister. The Nigerian queen Aminatu of Hausaland was known for her warrior instincts and exploits. Queen Aminatu was said not only to have created the great Hausa empire of Zaria but also to have ensured that the kingdom survived by having protective walls built around it. It was she who led a fierce army of horsemen into battle. Indeed, so powerful is the memory of her exploits that songs of her deeds are still sung.

The *ilois* (wives) and *iyobas* (mothers) of the *obas* (kings) of the ancient kingdom of Benin fulfilled important nurturing and religious roles. They ensured the continuity of the family and the state, and the memories of generations of queen mothers have been preserved in the ritual furnishings of the kingdom's ancestral altars, shrines, chiefly ornaments, masquerades, and cults. Much like the queen mothers of Benin, the queen mothers of the Nupe kingdoms of Sagi and Sonya occupied important political positions, ruling in tandem with the kings of Nupeland. So, too, did the royal princesses of the Kanuri people of the Bornu kingdom.

Among the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria, the *iyalode*—mother in charge of external affairs—held significant political power, exerting considerable influence over men's offices and participating actively in policy making and traditional government. She, too, ruled in tandem with the kings of Oyo, and like her male counterparts she had her own insignia of office, personal servants, drummers, and bell ringers. The *iyalode* was the voice of the women in government and had jurisdiction over all their affairs.

Other Nigerian societies had a dual-sex political system in which each sex managed its own affairs. Among the small-scale noncentralized Igbo, a joint system of male

and female government typically obtained. In this system of government the *umuada* (daughters of the lineage) and *inyomdi* (wives of the lineage) emerged as supreme political bodies—with the *otu umuada* featuring as the society's supreme court of arbitration.

Colonialism marked the beginning of the end of any kind of equality between the sexes in Nigeria. Women suffered the greatest loss of power. The colonial administration introduced a sexist Victorian ideology that sought to remove women from the positions of power that they were used to occupying. With colonialism came Christianity and the introduction of a male god that replaced the genderless traditional god of most Nigerian peoples. Women were not allowed to occupy any positions of significant power in the church government. Nigerian women also suffered a great loss of power in the economy. These traditional cultivators of the lands found that they were often sidetracked in favor of men to work the colonial cash-crop plantations. In education, Nigerian women also experienced discrimination. The few who attended schools were taught only those subjects that prepared them to become good wives, unlike the schooling that they received in the precolonial era, when their education prepared them for both the private and the public domains.

These violations did not go unchallenged, however. Nigerian women attempted to right these abuses in a number of small- and large-scale rebellions against the offending government of British colonials. The strategies that Nigerian women employed to "punish" the colonial government mirrored their precolonial resistance strategies: the use of strikes, boycotts, force, sit-ins, sleep-ins, nudity, and "making war" or "sitting on a man." "Making war" or "sitting on a man" was the greatest sanction that Nigerian women had to enforce compliance to their rules and regulations and to right any wrongs done them. The *ogu umunwanyi* or "women's war" of 1929—fought to call attention to a number of grievances against women, including the introduction of forced taxation, the unjust treatment of warrant chiefs, and the rising of oil prices—was the most celebrated of these wars.

But colonialism was not uniformly negative for Nigerian women. History will always remember King Ahebi Ugbabe (c. 1880–1948), who, even though she was from a noncentralized society, transformed herself into a man—in gender, not sex—in order to become king. She eventually became the only female warrant chief in all of colonial Nigeria.

During the nationalist period of the early twentieth century, Nigerian women played important roles—moving to recover much of the political clout that was lost during the colonial era. The most prominent of these early female nationalists were Funmilayo Ramsome-Kuti, Margaret

Ekpo, and Laila Dogonyaro. Ransome-Kuti was a tireless fighter for the emancipation of Nigerian women. She battled against the indiscriminate taxation of Abeokuta (Yoruba) women by the British colonial government and was the only female member of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) delegation that traveled to London to petition for self-governance and independence. After Nigeria's independence in 1960, Ransome-Kuti became a loud critic of the country's unjust military regime. She was, in fact, thrown to her death in 1978 by soldiers under the orders of the head of state, Olusegun Obasanjo, when the soldiers stormed the Kalakuta Republic—the commune, recording studio, and home of her son, the musician Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, which he had declared independent from the Nigerian government in 1970.

Hajiya Laila Dogonyaro is one of northern Nigeria's foremost activists for the liberation of women. She was a president of the National Council of Women Societies (NCWS), the umbrella body for all Nigerian women's liberation organizations. Prominent also during the anti-colonial period was Margaret Ekpo. She was the founder and proprietor of the Windsor Domestic Science and Sewing Institute, in Aba, eastern Nigeria, between 1948 and 1966 and was a member of the Nigerian delegation to the constitutional conferences in London and Lagos in the years 1953, 1957, 1958, and 1959. Like Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, Ekpo was a founding member of the NCNC as well as a member of the House of Chiefs, Eastern Region. She served as a member of the same region's House of Assembly between 1960 and 1966 and became a member of the parliament. During the Biafran War (or Nigerian Civil War, 1967–1970), Ekpo became a political detainee.

In July 2002 unarmed village women held seven hundred Chevron/Texaco workers inside a southeastern Nigeria oil terminal. Their demand was for jobs, electricity, and development in the country's oil-rich Niger Delta. The women threatened to evoke a traditional and powerful shaming gesture—removing their clothes. "Our weapon is our nakedness," the women chanted, evoking an earlier era in which unwanted displays of nudity by wives, mothers, and grandmothers represented an extremely damning measure that could inspire unimaginable shame for those Nigerian men at whom the action was directed. But this time the women's wrath was directed toward a multinational corporation and its non-Nigerian heads.

Changing Attitudes toward Women. In Muslim northern Nigeria since independence, Sharia has been used to regulate family and personal law. However, in the mid- to late 1990s a far more restrictive version of Sharia was introduced in the twelve northern states of Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Nassarawa, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara and has had far-reaching

consequences for human rights, democracy, and general political stability in Nigeria.

Since 1999, Zamfara State has used the *hizbah*—a religious police that acts outside of Nigeria's criminal justice system—to enforce Sharia, including requiring Islamic dress and sexually segregated public transportation. The Islamic governor from 1999 to 2007, Ahmed Sani Yerima, banned the consumption of alcohol and closed Christian churches and non-Muslim schools. Zamfara State now requires all its residents, including non-Muslims, to learn and use Arabic—a language that few Nigerians speak.

This extreme version of Sharia is provoking the worst violence since Nigeria's civil war. Thousands have been killed in Sharia-related conflicts nationwide. Sharia law as it is now practiced in northern Nigeria is extremely detrimental to women. Since the implementation of the law, Amina Lawal, Fatima Usman, Hafsat Abubakar, and Atanda Fatimo have all been sentenced to be stoned to death for adultery. What is more, Sharia as now practiced does not protect men, either; they, too, have been sentenced to fates similar to those of their female counterparts. Fatima Usman's lover, Ahmad Ibrahim, for instance, was sentenced to stoning for adultery, and one Ado Baranda was also sentenced to stoning, for rape. These Muslim Sharia states are increasingly attempting to enforce Sharia laws on all residents of northern Nigeria, irrespective of faith. This violence and disruption, combined with Nigeria's already deep political divisions and widespread ethnic strife, could splinter Africa's most populous nation.

Women in other parts of Nigeria have fared much better than their northern sisters. In a country where work is extremely valued, the Nigerian constitution recognizes equal pay for equal work. Also, all Nigerian working women are by law entitled to twelve weeks' maternity leave, and their employers are required to provide them with at least one hour each day to nurse their babies for up to fifteen months after they return to work.

Significant Women. Nigerian women have distinguished themselves in all realms of human endeavor, and many have reached the very pinnacle of their chosen professions. Madam Tinunbu (c. 1810–1887) enriched herself by participating in the slave trade, but she became an abolitionist after she witnessed firsthand the inhumane conditions to which slaves were subjected. Tinunbu Square in Lagos Island is named after her. Another Yoruba *iyalode*, Bisoye Tejuosho, founded the Teju foam company in 1972; the company employs more than two thousand workers and has eighteen depots outside Lagos.

In the arts, Flora Nwapa (1931–1993)—an administrator, teacher, cabinet minister, and owner of her own publishing company—was the first African woman to publish a book in English. Following Nwapa's example there has been a growth in the number of internationally

renowned Nigerian women writers, including Buchi Emecheta (b. 1944) and Zaynab Alkali (b. 1950).

In journalism and communications, Dr. Doyinsola Abiola served as the managing editor and editor in chief of Concord Press, publisher of one of Nigeria's major national daily newspapers. Mercy Udemé-Mfon Ette has been the founding editor of *NewsAfrica* magazine since 2000.

In academics Professor Grace Alele Williams (b. 1932) was one of the first Nigerian women to obtain a PhD. She was also the first female vice chancellor of a Nigerian federal university, the University of Benin, a post that she held between 1985 and 1991. Since her tenure, three more Nigerian women have headed institutions of higher learning. Chief Folake Solanke, a lawyer, administrator, and social critic, was the first female commissioner for the Western Region. She was also the first female Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN). Likewise, Chief Folayegbe Mosunmola Akintunde-Ighodalo was the first Nigerian woman to become a permanent secretary, in 1968. Major General Aderonke Kale has made her mark in a profession where few women excel—the armed forces. A medical doctor by profession, she was the highest-ranking female officer in the Nigerian army.

Since the late twentieth century there has been an explosion of Nigerian women artists, including Sokari Douglas-Camp (metalworking), Chinwe Chukwuogo-Roy (painting, printmaking, and sculpting), the mother-daughter team Elizabeth Olowu (sculpting) and Peju Layiwola (printmaking), Ndidi Dike (sculpting), and Lara Ige Jacks. Some of these artists have challenged deep-seated gendered norms in gaining entry into the exclusive male guild of Benin bronze casters and Yoruba sacred drumming. Taken collectively these artists have managed to marry older traditional art forms with Western artistic styles and media, and in the process they have managed to create new expressions of art.

With the growing popularity of the Nigerian video industry, called Nollywood, acting is fast gaining respectability. Numerous Nigerian actresses, including Genevieve Nnaji, Omotola Jolade, Grace Amah, Regina Askia, and Stella Damascus, have become national celebrities.

Gender and Work. Nigerians live in a society in which sex and gender do not coincide: Gender is socially constructed as fluid and flexible, allowing women to have male gender roles—there are female husbands, female kings, female warrant chiefs—and likewise allowing men to have female gender roles, such as male priestesses. Work is also gendered in Nigerian society, and so is the planting of crops; women plant the so-called female crops, such as cocoyam and beans, and men plant male crops such as yam. In the artistic traditions of precolonial Nigeria, male and female roles were usually clearly defined. Sculptors in wood and metal were almost invariably men, while

most potters and weavers were women. These gendered traditions still hold true in present-day Nigeria and are revealed in Ijebuland (Yorubaland), where women weavers produce a distinctive style of highly ornate cloth known as *aso olona*. Akwete, Nupe, Igbo, and Edo women are equally versed in the art of weaving, and their products—which are still produced on traditional looms—can be bought in all major marketplaces in Nigeria.

Regional Women's Political, Social, and Economic Groups. One of the major impediments facing Nigerian women has been access to credit, health care, family planning, and small-business training. To help, Chief Bisi Ogunleye has been particularly influential in organizing women, beginning in the 1980s when she donated one month's salary to a group of rural women so that they could start their own businesses. Once the loans were repaid, Ogunleye reinvested the money in other women's groups. She was instrumental in founding the umbrella organization COWAN (the Country Women Association of Nigeria), which has a membership of fourteen hundred association and more than thirty-one thousand active members. CEDSHA (Center for Development and Self-Help Activities) caters to young women and rural women, while CEDPA (Center for Development and Population Activities) aids women with health and family planning issues. There is also NARWA (Network of African Rural Women Association), which provides programs in credit, agriculture, and small business development, and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO).

[See also African Liberation and Nationalist Movements; Aminatu, Queen of Zaria; Codes of Law and Laws, *subentry* Islamic Law; Dual-Sex Political Systems; Emecheta, Buchi; Imperialism and Colonialism, *subentries* Modern Period and Anticolonial Protests; Islam; Matriarchy; Nwapa, Flora; Ramsome-Kuti, Funmilayo; Tinubu, Madame; and West Africa.]

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NWANDO ACHEBE

NIGHTINGALE, FLORENCE (1820-1910), English social reformer and theorist of nursing and public health. Although best known as the "Lady with the Lamp" for her work at the battlefield in the Crimea and her subsequent establishment of nursing as a profession, Nightingale was also a spiritual visionary, parliamentary lobbyist, and gifted statistician.

Nightingale longed for a purpose away from the privilege of her upper-class life in Derbyshire, Hampshire, and London that expected her only to marry and fulfill social obligations. In her book *Cassandra*, privately published in 1860 but not widely circulated until 1928, she railed against the social pressures that led women to lead half-lived lives to maintain the social status quo. Nightingale's discontent was fueled by the extensive education given to her and her sister by their father. Their studies included Greek, Latin, Italian, French, history, philosophy, mathematics, and linguistics. Her reading was therefore extensive and her curiosity piqued by the religious and philosophical thoughts of ancient and medieval thinkers. She believed herself called to a vocation by God in a vision on 7 February 1837.

In her quest to pursue a useful occupation, Nightingale incorporated numerous theologies into her own Anglican belief system and the influence of her father's Unitarianism. Her travels in Egypt and Greece in 1849-1850 increased her sense of divine vocation, justifying her desire to pursue nursing despite her family's adamant disapproval. Her accounts of her spiritual journey show her as a mystic inclined to follow her inner strength and to channel the restrictions placed on women into her vocation.

In 1851 she trained at the Kaiserswerth school for Protestant deaconesses in Germany, and in 1853 she trained at the hospital of the Sisters of Mercy in Paris. She served as superintendent of the Establishment for Gentlewomen during Illness in London in 1853-1854. She chronicled from each of these institutions the best ways to organize, staff, and manage hospitals and sickrooms.

When the Crimean War began in 1854, Nightingale was asked by Sidney Herbert, the war secretary, to lead thirty-eight nurses being sent to the British military hospital in the Crimea. Through a fund-raising effort by the *Times* of

London, Nightingale arrived in Scutari, in what is now Turkey, in October 1854 with thirty thousand pounds to secure sorely needed provisions in the battlefield hospital. She scoured the facility, trained nurses, and comforted soldiers, documenting her efforts in private letters as well as in copious official and unofficial reports. While heralded for her work in the Crimea, Nightingale consistently rejected the public adulation she received on her return to England in 1856.

With a talent for statistical analyses, Nightingale became a lobbyist for military medical reform. By 1857 she was ill, owing perhaps to the stress of fevers contracted in the Crimea or perhaps to repressed guilt induced by the revelation through her analyses that, despite her efforts in Scutari, the lack of sanitation and hygiene in the barracks hospital had raised, not lowered, the death rate. These analyses led her to investigate mortality rates in military hospitals



Florence Nightingale. PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS