

WORLD WAR I AND II FAILED TO MEET UNIVERSAL STATUS: AN EXAMINATION OF AFRICA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE WARS

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ABSTRACT: *Many Research works have been published on two major historical events in the history of man “The First World War and the Second world war”. These are events whose impact was experienced far and wide. After the First World War 1918, the Second World War followed in just a range of 21 years. The First World War occurred between 1914-1918 while the Second World War occurred 1939-1945. The war which began in August 1914 was a new experience in human history. It was a struggle until then unparalleled in the forces involved i.e. the number of warring states, the size of the armies, the deadliness of the weapons the colossal expenditure of life and money. Other conflicts had lasted longer and by their savagery or prolongation had inflicted greater suffering on some unhappy land e.g. (Germany’s thirty years war – 1618 -1648), but no armed struggle could previously have caused such wide spread human agony as the four years’ war which followed the murder of Franz Ferdinand (Dennis. 1938: 262). Expressions such as this make people to conclude that the First World War and the Second World War were simply world events. The purpose of this paper is therefore aimed at correcting the impression that the two events were world events. According to this research a war can be said to belong to some people when the reasons/cause emanates from them. The people involved must own the causes. A careful examination of the two historical events show that Africans did not have a cause of their own. Africa was only used as a battlefield and by the fact that the effects spread to Africa is not enough reason to call the two or describe them as world events. This paper is organized and structured thematically with four sub-headings i.e. introduction, causes of the wars, course of the wars and the reasons for the two not being world events. The paper brings out an argument that appropriates the two historical events as simply great wars*

KEYWORDS: World Wars, Great Wars, Universal Status, African Involvement.

INTRODUCTION

World War I and World War II were never African affairs or events and the title of the wars should be “Great Wars” The term war can be defined in several ways. In the words of a Prussian Military General and theoretician, Carl von Clausewitz, war is defined as an act of force to compel an enemy to do one’s will (www.clausewitz.com/readings/onwar1873/BK1ch01.html)

According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/war>), war is defined as a state of organized armed and often prolonged conflict carried on between states, nations or other parties.

From the above definitions and more others not mentioned in this work, the term war can appropriately be used to refer to armed conflict or fighting between two parties e.g. countries, states or region. In most cases the conflicts involve hundreds of people and cover a wide area or region. War can also refer to conflict or hatred between two or more parties without necessarily engaging in physical fighting. For example the cold war was a war of words between nations (USA & USSR) and did not witness the nation's engagement in direct physical fighting.

World war I & II were started in Europe and had causes that can be classified as political, economic and social. This paper discusses the causes, course and finally explain why the two wars are not an African issue.

This paper has given a new approach to the two events. The reason for this approach is because the two events are so related to a point where the first is seen as causing the second one. It is like in the Bible where the New Testament is said to be the Old Testament revealed. Equally, the First World War is the Second World War covered. Clear demarcation between the two has been provided to avoid confusion.

The causes of the two wars that are similar have been discussed under one sub-headline. Those causes which are only in the first war or only in the second war have been discussed separately. Some of the causes that are similar in the two wars include; political rivalry, arms race, and formation of alliances, causes that occur only in the First World War includes; the Balkan wars, assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

Causes of the wars that are only in the Second World War include; Violation of the Versailles treaty, (1919), Great Depression in Europe and appeasement policy.

Causes of the First and Second World wars

The First World War was started in August 1914 between Austrian-Hungary and Serbia. It was sparked off by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to Austrian throne and his wife Sophie, in Sarajevo, Bosnia (Dennis 1938:259). The assassination was done by a fanatic student Gavrilo Princip, a member of a secret Serb organization referred to as "Union "or "Death" or "Black hand" (Felix. Jacinta and Wilson 2000:7). This is regarded as the immediate cause of the First World War. The assassination led to Austria-Hungary declaring war on Serbia which was being supported by Russia.

By this time, Britain, France, Russia and Germany were superpower of Europe. They feared for their security and so formed military alliances. In 1879, Germany and Austria-Hungary formed what came to be called "Dual Alliance". Among the Major, objectives of the alliance was an agreement for these countries to assist each other in case of an attack by their traditional enemy. They resolved to remain neutral in case any one of them could be attacked by other powers who were not their traditional enemies. In this agreement Germany under Otto Von Bismark aimed at protecting the Alsace Lorraine from the French who eyed it. (Felix Jacinta, Wilson 2000:4)

In 1882, Italy joined the Dual Alliance making it "Triple Alliance. Italy was angered by France's occupation of Turkey which was an Italian territory up to 1881. In 1882, Russia and France signed the Franco – Russian Alliance. The two feared and felt isolated when Britain and Germany signed the Helgoland treaty in 1890. Tension was growing high as the superpowers were busy signing military alliances. This made King Edward VII to reconcile

Britain and France. The two signed the Dual Entente. Russia joined the two in 1904, Making it Triple Entente (Malkiat :59)

Military Alliances seemed to be one of the major strategies in war preparation. The Second World War (1939 – 1945) had similar alliances formed by warring nations. In 1936, Hitler (Germany) and Mussolini (Italy) formed a pact known as the Berlin-Rome Axis. They agreed to assist each other in case of an attack by enemy power. In 1939, Japan joined this alliance becoming the Berlin –Rome-Tokyo Axis. On 24.8.1939, Britain signed the last formal stages of her alliance with Poland (Felix, Jacinta & Wilson 2000:26).

European countries had created political rivalry in the year preceding the first world war of 1914 -1918. They unfairly competed for colonies in both Africa and Asia. Acquisition of more colonies made them to feel prestigious as those that did not have any felt ashamed and despised. They behaved like an adolescent boy who enjoys and regards himself a hero when having many girlfriends, but one who has one or does not have feels ashamed and is despised as not being a real man. Competition for colonies became the order of the day with some conflict being created whenever one or more countries eyed the same region. According to Tsar Nicholas I of Russia 1853 (<https://wikipidia.org/wiki/sick man of Europe>) Turkey for example was viewed as a “sick” man of Europe when she lost many of her colonies. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sickman of Europe>

Another factor that led to the first and second World wars is nationalism. Nationalism is a feeling of deep loyalty to one's nation. It is a belief that people who share the same culture and language should have their own nation and be ruled by their own people, not by foreigners (Sarah, Catherine, Michael, Arthus, Patricia and Marchall . 1939:388).

Germany felt that their unity was incomplete with some of her groups being under different rulers. Italy was equally not comfortable with Trentino being ruled from outside. The surge for this unity contributed to high international tension

Nationalism had unified Germany and was rapidly becoming popular in France. France nationalists sought revenge against Germany for depriving them of the border provinces of Alsace Lorraine in the 1870-1871, Franco- Prussian war. According to a French novelist, Victor Hugo” the French had to have one thought to reconstitute her forces, gather her energy, nourish her sacred anger so that one day she would be irresistible. Then she would one day take back Alsace – Lorraine” (Farah and Karls 1999:739)

In Austraria – Hungary, nationalism was creating the most violent tension in Europe. Slavs were attracted to pan-slavism, an idea which aimed at making their country a centre of South Slav/Yugoslav nation.

In 1908, Austria-Hungary annexed the Slavic territories of Bosnia-Herzegovina which was previously the province of the Ottoman Empire. This act angered the Serbians who called on the Russians for protection. Russians were not willing instead they persuaded the Serbs to take it easy. This is because Russian had agreed to let Austria-Hungary have Bosnia-Herzegovina in exchange for Russian workshops to go through the Dardanelles. The Russians were bitter to find that Austria-Hungary had made its move before she (Russia) could get its part of the deal.

The 1912, Balkan war inflamed further the Serbians. They aimed at acquiring Albania so as to have water outlet to the Mediterranean sea. (Farah &karls.1999:339)

In the 1913 Balkan war Albania was made independent, frustrating once again the Serbian ambitions (Farah and Karls 1999:339).

In the years proceeding the second Great War, nationalist's spirit surfaced in the Nazi political party. Many Germans thought that the National Socialist Party was the answer to Germany's problems. The party's leader Hitler made his people to believe that they were superior to other nationalities. He said that German's Jewish population was inferior and that the Jews had destroyed the Germany nation (Sarah, Catherine, Michael, Arthur, Patricia and Pat 1939:390).

Strong disagreement among European powers such as Britain, and France over colonies created tension and hatred. The powers competed for colonies which they believed could make them economically superior. Acquisition of colonies meant creation of wider markets and sources of raw materials.

Germany and Italy were late starters in the race for colonies. This is because of the disunity that they had for a long time. They became jealous of the other colonial powers such as Britain and France. Germany's industrial Revolution called for supplies of raw materials which were cheaply and easily provided by colonies. Germany was quite ready to fight for a share of colonial riches (Malkiat S:58).

In 1911, Italy declared war on Turkey because she wanted to control Libya as her colony. Turkey also had interest on Libya and so the two could not amicably agree to surrender/give up their interest to the other.

In 1905 -1906, a crisis arose over Morocco. European countries competed to have dominance of Morocco. France's interest to have Morocco was supported by Britain a thing that angered Germany. (Felix, Jacinta, Wilson 2000:2). Apart from being a cause of world war 1, Colonial rivalry also became a cause of the second World war in 1939, this is when Germany tried to attack and acquire the territories she eyed and probably lost in the 1914/1918 war.

The other cause of the First World War was the competition in military strength. Since the Napoleonic wars, Britain had been the strongest power in Europe. But since the 18th C, Britain military superiority began to be challenged. Germany under Kaiser was determined to compete with Britain at sea as well as on land (Malkiat 5 :59). Germany's efforts to build a strong navy was perceived by Britain as a threat. In 1905, Britain began work on a powerful new warship called dreadnought. Germany and Austria-Hungary both doubled their military spending from 1905 – 1914 to enable them resist any external attack.

After 1870, all the powers except Great Britain adopted a conscriptions, the compulsory military call up for civilians and universal military training. (Farah and Karls 1999: 740). They were set and militarily ready for any attack by nations perceived to be enemies.

The occurrence of the Second World War is to a large extent as a result of the 1914-1918 World war. The conditions of the Versailles treaty of 1919 were so severe to German which was blamed entirely for the outbreak of the 1914 war. Under Hitler, Germany embarked on aggressive policy. She disregarded the resolution of the Versailles treaty which she regarded as undermining her national pride. All the attacks that Germany under Hitler advanced to other nations can be said to be on a revenge mission. Hitler's Mission to control the world was thwarted in the 1914-1918 war, making her to harbour enmity to those who were

responsible. He taught the Germans that they had been humiliated in the war and that he was prepared to make Germany a world power once again. (Malkiat .70)

The defeat and humiliation that Germany suffered in the Versailles treat made Hitler to have a reason for his expansion policy. He said that Germany was lacking enough room for all its people. (Malkiat s :70). The bitterness that Hitler experienced can only be compared to that of the British when they had the news of the fall of Norway and Denmark to Germany in April 1940. Both the labour and Liberal opposition parties lost confidence in Prime Minister Nevilie Chamberlain and his leadership. On 10th May. 1940, King George VI appointed Winston Churchill, the new prime minister of Britain replacing Chamberlain. (Farah & Karls 1999:832)

In 1936, Hitler invaded the Rhine land. Together with Mussolin of Italy, they signed the Berlin –Rome axis. Japan’s entry made the alliance, Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis. (Farah & Karls 1999). After the Rhine land, Germany went a head to claim Austria Adolf Hitler wrote in his book “German- Austria must return to the great mother country. One blood demands one Reich” (Farah & Karls, 1999). All these acts were not only in violation of the Versailles treaty, but also harbored a lot of nationalistic feelings.

The aggression and hostility through which Germany attacked in a sequence territories in Europe made Britain and France to apply a peaceful approach. This is possibly after realizing that the strict conditions of the 1919 Versailles treaty were futile. On September 12, 1938, Hitler demanded that the Germans of Sudetenland be given the right of self-determination. To avert a crisis, British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain called for a meeting with Hitler. Hitler was convinced that the west would do nothing if he moved against Poland. “The men of muniach” he said, will not take the risk” (Farah & Karls 1999:830).

In the meeting Adolf Hitler demanded that the Sudetenland be given to Germany. To avoid another war in Europe, Chamberlain accepted Hitler’s demand. Further consent to Hitler’s demand was given by Mussolin of Italy. The appeasement approach never lasted long as Hitler attacked Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939. Chamberlain was infuriated at Hitler’s action violating of pledges given personally to himself.

Western democracies could no longer maintain their illusions about Hitler’s plans and they began to prepare for war. (Denis 1938, 318).

The effects of the First World War led to the outbreak of the Second World War. Western democracies paid a heavy price for their Victory in 1918. Although the U.S.A suffered Minor financial losses huge war debts threatened the economic and political stability of Great Britain and France. The west did enjoy a short period of prosperity in the 1920s but soon followed a global economic depression. The depression led to fall of prices leading to closure of banks, sales dropped off, salaries and wages fell.

Unemployment was experienced in both Europe and America. By 1933, more than 13 million workers were unemployed (Farah & Karls 1999: 77), Instead of checking the behavior of the post war 1 the economic depression made Great Britain, France and allies to concentrate in their internal affairs. The poor economy would not enable them to monitor Germany’s activities. Great Depression was blamed on the Allied powers, who developed what was seen as a protectionist policy for their markets and sources of raw materials. They raised tariff and had low quotas for imports. This situation led the Central powers to aggressively search for

colonies in a way to get a share of the world's wealth. The great depression led to re-introduction of colonial rivalry as a major cause of the Second World War.

The failure of the Allies (Britain, France, Italy and Russian) to involve the Central powers in the peace settlement is also one of the causes of the 1939 war. Formation of the league of Nations on (10th. Jan.1920) was perceived by the Central powers as the making of the Allies. Far from being a body to which members would take their disagreements, it stood little chance of being successful. This is majorly because Germany and USA were not members of the league and yet they were major actors. This weakness was compounded by the deep mistrust and suspicion existing between some of the members. European leaders such as Mussolin (Italy) Josef Starlin (Russian) General France (Spain) and Adolf Hitler (Germany) felt discriminated and they united against the Allied powers. They strongly opposed any idea from within or outside that favored their enemies. They are referred to as dictators, and their behavior contributed a lot to the start of world war 11.

The courses of the First World War (1914-1918).

The First World War began in September 1914. It was sparked off by the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and his Wife Sophie. The war fought mainly on two fronts i.e. The Western Front and Eastern Front. In the Western Front, the war fought mainly in France and Belgium. In the Eastern Front, the war was mainly experienced in Russia and the Balkans. (Felix, Jacinta, Wilson 2000:7).

The Germans invaded and overrun Belgium Luxembourg on their way to France. By attacking neutral Belgium, the Germans thought of defeating France the soonest possible. This was not possible because the French reacted very first by attacking Germans at Alsace-Lorraine. The British gave support by attacking the Germans. Sensing danger, the Germans pulled back to Marine River. Only by striking Belgium, rather than at the heavily defended Franco-Germany frontier could they hope to crush France with the necessary speed. "We can be at Paris within a forth night" said the Kaiser. (Dennis. 1938:262) The main weight of the German offensive had been thrown against Belgium, in pursuance of the long-matured schlieffen plan. The plan was to guard the Russian frontiers in the East with few divisions, while sweeping into France through Belgium and Luxemburg to win the war in the west in a few weeks. (Marcel D. 1974:350).

The Schlieffen plan which involved attacking France from Belgium had failed. A determined Germany employed yet another tactic of fighting by digging trenches and reinforcing them with barbed wires. The British and French did the same. The forces could attack their enemy from the highly protected trenches. Both sides realized that the tactic was not taking them any where. No major advancement was made as the forces were stationed at one specific point.

The warring powers especially Britain and Germany went a step higher and started using new and more dangerous weapons. They used poison gas, airplanes and tanks which caused a lot of destruction.

In May 1915, the Italians joined the war by supporting Britain and France. Austrian forces were held on the Alps and stopped from attacking Russia in the east. The French and British combined forces and resisted the Germans at Verdun and Somme in 1916. Fighting in this area left scores of people dead and others maimed. The Germans and British together lost about 1,000,000 soldiers each at the Somme River by November 1916 (Dennis 1938: 268)

By the end of 1915 many countries had joined the war either as allies or central powers. Japan joined the central powers with an aim of acquiring some territories in the Far East that belonged to Germans. Italy, Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro too supported the central powers (triple entente). The original three allied powers were also joined by Turkey and Bulgaria. The title, "Triple alliance and triple entente" were no longer meaningful as many nations had joined the groups from the original three.

On the Eastern front, the war was mainly fought in Russia and the Balkans. In 1914, Russia attacked Austria and Germany. In 1915, Turkey joined in support of Germans. She (Turkey) cut off the main supply and trade route through the Dardanelles straits. This enabled the Germans to wrest wars on and the whole of Poland from Russia.

The Allies tried in 1915 to assist the Russians in what was referred to as "Gallipoli campaign" but they lost. In general, the war in the eastern front did not favor the Allies. Russia which was their major member surrendered from the war in 1917. The decision to surrender was as a result of Russia being preoccupied with internal problems, the climax being the November 1917 Bolshevik revolution.

A part from the Western and Eastern fronts, the First World War was also experienced fought in the seas. Britain was feared and widely known for her strong naval force. In 1914, German navy attacked British naval force in the Pacific sea. After a fierce fight, Germany's naval force lost to Britain. (Farah & Karls (1999:751)

In May 1916, the Germans and British naval forces were at war in the North Sea. In this encounter, Germany lost 11 ships while Britain lost 14 ships. Although Britain lost many ships compared to Germany, she won (Felix, Jacinta, and Wilson 2005:10)

The entry of USA into the war in April 1917 marked the end of the First World War. German sank four of America's merchant ships. President Wilson on 2.4.1917 asked the congress for a declaration of war calling on Americans to help "make the world safe for democracy" (Farah & Karls 1999:751). USA was a super power and her decision to support other super powers i.e. Britain and France, led to the defeat of Germany and her Allies.

In the First World War Germany was defeated, humiliated and lost her glory. The occurrence of the Second World War can be attributed to the conclusion of the First World War in the Versailles treaty. Germany became totally uncomfortable with the results of the First World War she embarked on a campaign to revive her lost glory.

Course of the Second World War (1938 – 1945)

Tension and enmity was high among European nations to a level that any small incident within rivals would spark off war. On 3 September 1939, the Second World War started. This is after Germany refusing to withdraw from Poland making Britain and France to declare war on her. In the western part of Europe, Germany attacked Poland (1.9.1939) and under the Nazi-soviet pact, Russia joined. On 30th Nov 1939, Russia attacked Finland. On 9th April 1940 Germany invaded Denmark. France and Britain tried to resist, but were defeated. This led to a revolt in British parliament and chamberlain was replaced by Winston Churchill on 10th May 1940. Germany continued to attack Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. On 14th June 1940, Germany troops captured Paris. On 22 June 1940 Germany and France signed a peace agreement.

Britain was attacked in July 1940 by Germany. Hitler applied both night and day attacks, but failed as Britain used their radar system that made them aware of impending attacks. The British received USA reinforcement and were able to humiliate the Germans.

In Eastern Europe, Germany invaded Russia on 22nd June 1941. The Germans lost to the Russians. In the Far East, Britain used her bases in India to attack Japan. In 1944 Japan attacked India, but was defeated at the battle of Kohima.

In July 1941 Japan launched a sudden and attack on the American great base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii Island. The Germans also sank four American merchants' ships. This incident dragged USA into the war. On 8th 12.1941, USA, Britain and Netherlands declared war on Japan. Germany and Italy also declared war on USA.

The Second World War was felt in Africa on the northern part. The Italians under Mussolini captured the French and British Somaliland. They did not receive much resistance since France had already been defeated by the Germans. The British forces attacked the Germans and Italian forces at El Alamein in Egypt. On 8th November 1942, the British and American forces invaded Morocco and Algeria. The axis forces were trapped between the allied forces from both sides. They surrendered.

The Second World War came to a gradual end with the defeat of the axis powers. On 25th August, 1944, allied forces liberated France. Belgium was liberated on 2nd September 1944. Many more countries under Germany rule were liberated. Allied forces entered Germany from the west in 1945. Hitler took refuge in an underground bunker in Berlin from where he committed suicide in April 1945. (Felix, Jacinta, Wilson 2000:31)

Japan which was by this time the only axis power remaining in the war, surrendered unconditionally on 14th August 1945. This was after USA dropped two deadly bombs, at Hiroshima 6th August and Nagasaki 9th killing or injuring more than 160 thousand, men, women and children. (Dennis 1939:334). The second World war came to a total end.

Reasons why the two wars were not an African issue

Having gone through the definition, causes and courses of the two wars, the research finds that the two world wars were a three continent affair i.e. Europe, Asia and America. This is because of the following reasons:

1. No cause of African origin

The 1914 and 1939 wars did not have any causes that were "African". There were no demands that were raised by African leaders/countries to justify their being in the wars. Just to mention a few, Britain, Germany, Japan and USA, each had a personal reason for being in the war. For example Britain entered into the war to protect her colonial empire. Africa did not have any reason similar to those of the warring nations. Not even one African country joined the wars because their European friend(s) had been attacked by their enemies. Many of the African regions were colonies of the Europeans and so not Independent to decide on their own.

2. Africans in the war were used as mercenaries

African who participated in both wars were promised huge rewards by their masters. They were to be paid for the service provided in terms of lands and money when the war was over. In the Second World War, about 25,000 Africans were actively involved. Ten thousand of these were soldiers while the remaining were carriers. (Felix, Jacinta Wilson 2005:35). They were hired by their masters whose reason of fighting was totally different. Those who appeared fit and were not willing got forced to join the war. There were others who voluntarily joined the rest because they wanted to have an adventure to places such as Burma. It is a fact that Africans could not clearly differentiate a British man and German man. Both were simply white men. The war was over and yet African soldiers were not rewarded to their expectation. It is for this reason that many ex-soldiers spearheaded the struggle for independence.

3. African land was simply used as a battlefield.

The warring nations had extended their fight into Africa as a strategy to win their rivals. On 18th /11/1942, the British and American forces invaded Morocco and Algeria. The two African Nations were not enemies to either America or Britain. These two superpowers wanted to strategically corner their rivals (central powers).

The Italians are said to have captured the, “British and French Somaliland”. This shows clearly that the Europeans were fighting among themselves in Africa for reasons which fundamentally involved themselves. Italians could have not attacked Somali, were it not for British and French occupation of it. The war was extended to Somaliland due to British and French presence.

Germany army commander in Tanganyika, general von Lettow-vorbeck took military operations against the British in Kenya and Uganda so as to disrupt the aid that Kenya and Uganda could give British in terms of food and other supplies (malkiat singh:172). These were not voluntary aid but forced on Africans Further more they were not given by the Africans but the white settlers.

4. African countries are not mentioned on how they entered the wars.

The two wars (1914 and 1939) were sparked off purely by European nations and soon after more other nations joined. The wars were not African because no mention is made on how any of the African country got into the fighting. For instance the First World War started following the assassination of Franz Ferdinand of Austria in Bosnia. America for a long time regarded the first World war as a European affair, “for a long time, the USA had refrained from interfering in European affairs as Americas.....” (Felix, Jacinta , Wilson 2000:11). She was compelled to join the war when on 17th May 1915,128 Americans got sunk and died in a passenger liner called “Lusitania”.

In 1902, Edward vii of England entered into an agreement with Japan (Asia) in which Britain promised to support Japan incase of attack. The Second World War was sparked off by Germany invading and claiming Sudetenland. The incident revived the rival groups (Axis and allies) and once again they were in war. These were European, American and Asian countries. No African country was involved in this case.

5. Africans never attacked fellow Africans in the wars.

The courses of both the first and the second World wars indicate clearly how the wars spread by countries attacking one another. A war or fight is said to belong to so and so not because of the region or place where it is fought (battlefield), but the reasons and the trend (course). The causes and courses of the wars are really the factors that determine whose war the first and second World wars were. Africa was just battlefield. African countries were “peaceful”. For example, in Europe, Germans directly attacked Britain and France. Russia on 30th November 1939 invaded Finland. This trend went on until many European countries, America and Asia were involved. There is no case whatsoever mentioned of an Africa country attacking another one either as an ally or axis power. No history records that say for example “Egypt invaded Kenya”.

Malkiat S in his book “World History Book 2 (pg 172) describes the war in East Africa as having developed into a “hit and run” affair. Germany forces were being chased around the Mombasa-Kisumu railway lines by British army made up of white settlers, African regiment and large European contingent from South Africa and Rhodesia. The Germans were reacting to a British naval attack on Germany radio station at Tango and Dar es Salaam.

The above mentioned railway and radio stations were European projects and not African. Africans had not yet known the importance of these developments. The Nandi of Kenya could steal the telephone cables to make earrings and necklaces ignorant of the risks involved.

6. African countries were neither Allies nor Axis power

One of the major causes of the 1914 and 1939 wars is the formation of Military alliances. European countries joined one another either as allies or central (axis) powers. Americans joined the allies and Japan (Asia) joined the axis. It is unfortunate therefore to refer to the two wars as “world wars” when for sure no African country got into the wars as an ally or axis.

7. No reward for African ex-Soldiers

The first and second World wars were basically a European affair because even after the wars only white ex-soldiers were rewarded. African men were lured into joining the war by being promised among many things, free land. The white ex-soldiers were given tracks of free land in Africa while their African counterparts were simply told, “Thank you!!” The African ex-soldiers felt cheated on their return home when they were not accorded the same treatment as their white counterparts (Matthias, Kenyanchui 1991:201). This act angered many Africans and it led to African nationalism. The struggle for African independence started.

8. The peace agreement after the wars did not involve Africans.

Five separate treaties made up the final Paris peace settlement but the treaty of Versailles signed by Germany in the historic Hall of mirrors at the palace of Versailles on 28.6.1919 the most significant and controversial. The chief cause of the war was German military power and this is what dominated peace confirmed (Frank 1997)

The Versailles peace agreements of 1919-1920 discussed sharing of African land, but did not realize that, African involvement was vital. For example one of the results of the peace

treaties is that Germany lost all her colonies in Africa (Rwanda –Burundi, Tanganyika, Togoland, Namibia and Cameroon).

In the Moroccan crisis of 1905 the Africans were fighting because of being incited by the Europeans (Germans). When the interests of European powers got settled, the problem ended!! The issue of Morocco being independent ceased to be a reasonable cause for the crisis to continue. Britain got Egypt, France got Morocco and Germany got parts of French Congo. Morocco and Africa as a whole was just a property to be shared by European powers. Africans were in the war because their masters wished so. When the masters wished that the war should come to an end, so it did.

9. Africa was one time part of the Americas.

The first and second World wars occurred at a time when the world was comprised of the following continents: America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. Later on, South America was curved from America to create North and South America. According to the theory of Continental Drift, Africa was one time part of the Americas, Antarctica and Australia (Gondwanaland). It is also true that at one time Africa was not separated into two parts as it is now by the Sahara desert. This is because the Sahara region was arable with plenty of rainfall (Matthias, Kenyanchui 1991) many countries have been created from the original ones. For example, on 9th /July/2011, a new nation was created called south Sudan. The creation of new continent/Countries raises new understanding of the concept “World Wars”. It is possible for a new continent being born from a region and people who never experienced the effects of the two wars. To this people, referring to the two wars as “World War” will be irrelevant to them.

According to this research paper, the phrase World War is purely Euro-centric. The phrase seems to ignore assume the critical analysis discussed in this paper. Therefore according to this paper what is commonly referred to as World war I should instead be called Great war I (1914 – 1918). World War II should in the same way be called Great War II (1939-1945).

CONCLUSION

This research paper has briefly explained the main causes of the first and second world wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945. The researcher bases his main argument on the causes of the wars as having very little to do with Africans. The main actors in this case are the continents of Europe, America and Asia

A brief but clear description of the two world wars has been given in this work. Combined with the causes of the wars, one is able to have a clear picture on what caused the wars where and how they were fought. The paper has raised a nine point’s argument as to why Africa’s involvement is not significant. According to William Ochieng Africans suffered needlessly in the European Inter-tribal trauma (Ochieng 1985). While it is very clear on how warring nations entered the wars it is not clear how any of the African countries got into this drama. World War 1 came to an end when Europe- America Asia felt that it should end, without involving Africans. Equally World War 11 ended without a mention of Africa because it was insignificant.

According to this research, the best participation that can be attributed to Africa is simply being a battle field. The wars spread to Africa because warring nations wanted to protect interests best known to themselves. This paper, therefore suggests that the two wars be referred to as Great War (1914 – 1918) and Great War II (1939 – 1945).

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