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The End of the 1914–1918 War in Africa

Abstract

The end of the First World War in Africa occurred at different times across the continent as the German colonies capitulated and surrendered to the allied forces between 26 August 1914 and 25 November 1918. The experience of each territory was indicative of its colonial development and local conditions. As the war inched across the landscape so people moved between states of peace and conflict, all caught up in some aspect either directly or through the provision of food and other materials. This chapter explores different experiences across the continent and the legacy of the discussions at Versailles.

1. Africa: After the Armistice

In contrast to the war in Europe, the war in Africa staggered to an end. The Armistice agreement which led to the ceasefire on 11 November 1918 made provision for a ceasefire in Africa within a month. This was because the powers in Europe were unclear about where their forces in East Africa actually were. As it turned out, the first attempt at alerting the German forces to the surrender took place on 13 November after the battle of Kasama. Five days later the Germans accepted the fact that they were to lay down their arms, which they formally did on 25 November 1918 in Abercorn, Northern Rhodesia (Mbala, Zambia).

The length and reach of the campaign in East Africa makes it easy to forget that other African regions were also caught up in the war. The state of flux in territories where fighting had ended before the war in Europe – Togoland, Cameroon and South West Africa – brought its own frustrations and challenges to both the inhabitants and the interim overseers as they waited for the Imperial powers to determine the fate of the loser and its subordinate territories. The East Africa campaign was affected by each of the other territories declaring peace. It therefore seems appropriate to look briefly at the end of the war for each of these territories: Togoland, South West Africa, and Cameroon. Not to be forgotten is Egypt, which although a major centre for troops fighting in Gallipoli and travelling through the Suez Canal, saw its own local struggle particularly against the Senusi. This latter was an ongoing struggle which in effect continued until 1921.

The first territory to declare peace in Africa was Togoland on 26 August 1914. The German commander saw little reason for the country or peoples to go through the pains of war when he knew his force would be overpowered by the joint British and French contingents. When the Acting German Governor Hans-Georg von Döring offered terms of neutrality to the Allied Forces, the British refused and demanded full surrender within 24 hours. In response, the Germans withdrew from Lomé to make a final half-hearted stand outside Kamina, where the international radio station was, before surrendering on 26 August.

The surrender of Togoland allowed the British and French forces along with support from the Belgians in the Congo to focus on German Cameroon. Following a tough struggle there, mainly as a result of the terrain and climate, the Germans, 155 men, under Captain Ernst von Raben surrendered on 18 February 1916 at Mora.

Prior to the defeat of Cameroon and further south, the South Africans brought the Germans in South West Africa, under the command of Erich Victor Carl August Franke and Governor Theodore Seitz, to surrender on 9 July 1915. The conclusion of the campaign in South West Africa enabled the British government to relaunch the stagnant campaign in East Africa, when the South African Union government offered to send 10,000 men to the territory. They arrived in early 1916 while, later in the year, contingents from West Africa and the West Indies, having defeated the Germans in Cameroon were able to join the fray in East Africa. This resulted in a diverse fighting force in the area – 177 micro-nations from across 23 countries participated in the conflict which finally ended on 25 November 1918.

The nature of the conflict in the African territories, and in East Africa particularly, meant that different regions experienced peace before others. In East Africa, the first significant date was March 1916 when the British allied forces moved into German East Africa. This removed the direct threat to British East Africa (Kenya) and the colony was able to return to some sort of normality whilst remaining a military base or centre. The second date was 24 November 1917 when the German forces left German East Africa and moved across the Rovuma River into Portuguese East Africa. General Jan Christian Smuts, Commanding Officer of the British Allied forces, believed the campaign to be over, except for mopping up operations and introduced civil administration to the German territory on 11 December 1916. This caused problems for the administrator, Horace A Byatt, when the Germans re-entered their territory on 28 September 1918 turning it back into a war zone. The Germans did not stay long as they moved into Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia where they surrendered two months later.

This article will explore the final days of the war in Africa, for each of the territories which surrendered early, and for East Africa from 11 November through to the departure of the Germans on 19 February 1919. The discussions at Versailles will be considered in light of the final ‘scramble for Africa’ as well as the repercussions of these talks. In addition to the primary and secondary sources available, fictional accounts are used to understand how the communities

adjusted to peace and their emotional reactions to the end of the conflicts which started with the first shots in Togoland on 7 August 1914 followed a day later by the bombing of Dar es Salaam in German East Africa on 8 August. Four years separated the first and last surrenders suggesting a chronological and regional approach to the topic while emphasising that Africa is not a homogenous whole and should not be treated as such. In addition, this approach highlights the imbalance of treatment across the continent by both fiction and non-fiction writers of the First World War in Africa.

2. Searching for the Local Voice

Recent commentators have criticised the bias of articles and books for being white dominated with minimal focus on the black African voice and that little, if anything, has emanated from African authors. While in many respects this criticism is valid, the position is changing as researchers are becoming aware of more localised accounts and memoirs as well as an increased interest in the campaigns in Africa. Numerous historians and scholars of other disciplines working on aspects of the war in Africa find it difficult to get their voice heard outside of Africa and where authors are heard, their academic training has been such that the European perspective dominates.¹ Africa consists of diverse cultures each with its own truth of the past expressed in different ways. For many cultures in Africa, the oral tradition dominated and according to westernised standards, literacy was restricted. The reasons for this are outside the scope of this chapter, but the impact directly concerns it: There are very few accessible sources containing the local voice and as these were not sufficiently valued at the time to record, local accounts and memories of the Great War in Africa have been largely suppressed.

The memory and significance of those who lost their lives in the First World War in particular appears to have little meaning for many local populations although most Commonwealth countries have a service on 11 November to remember those who gave their lives in the conflict. In contrast, amongst peoples of African descent in Europe and America there seems to be a growing interest in what happened during the years 1914–1918 and the impact the conflict had in the post-war years as witnessed in the number of British Heritage Lottery Fund applications and social media interactions. This divide has been highlighted by the centenary commemorations of the Great War demonstrating an apparent lack of interest through the low number of special commemorative events in Africa (Hastings). In 2014, an event in Tsavo, Kenya marked the first shots of the war in East Africa on 15 August 1914, in 2017 Egypt held what appears to be its first commemorative event of the war and in 2018 both Kenya and Zambia will be holding remembrance events to mark the end of the war. Interestingly, in 2014 Nigeria moved its service to remember the country's "fallen heroes" from 11 November to 15 January,

the date the civil war ended in 1970 (CFCP Nigeria). There does not appear to have been another that year to mark the outbreak of what became the Great War and although the 1914–1918 war is mentioned in the literature of the event, it clearly plays a minor role. In addition, a recent perusal of documents on Sierra Leone in the Commonwealth War Grave Commission Archive indicated that in the 1950s the war graves were in a poor state as people going to bury their dead walked over the grave stones in the CWGC section. More recent photos of CWGC cemeteries in Nairobi show how shanty towns were encroaching on the sites supported by a local petition to safeguard the remaining cemeteries (Change.org).

The absence of local voices has been obvious in centenary-focused community-led projects in the United Kingdom where project managers have complained about the lack of engagement by Africans in Africa around the Great War; a point evidenced in the paucity of fiction around the events of 1914–1918. One of the reasons for the shortage of literature is the fact that African literature as a genre only started to develop from the 1950s as the independence struggles became more vociferous. Significantly, Joseph Lon in his discussion on the role of memorials notes “that the sustainability of monuments and historical sites depend on the values attached to them and the historical importance or popularity of the events they represent” (8). The lack of fictional and even first-hand accounts can be attributed to the low value, historical importance and popularity of the Great War in Africa.

Before looking at each of the territories concerned, it might be helpful to consider the context of World War One commemorations in and around Africa through the available literature – fiction and non-fiction. For reasons of language, this will be limited to texts dealing with the British Empire although where known other languages will be included.

‘Africa is a country’ is a phrase regularly bandied about today and a search on the Internet will provide a list of senior politicians, including United States of America presidents, referring to the 53 countries as one entity. In fairness, Africans although aware of the diversity of the continent will often refer to it as though it is one country too – a product of the international media. Since 2014, the centenary year of the outbreak of World War One, there has been a slow growth of interest in the war in Africa with many expecting to find the same level and type of information available as there is for the British Western Front. The shock at not finding this information has led to accusations of racism, colonialism and demands for the history to be ‘decolonised.’ These claims in themselves fail to recognise the diversity of the African continent (Williams).

On the positive side, however, opportunities have arisen through increased awareness of, and engagement with, the First World War in Africa to allow the diversity to be explored. For the purposes of this discussion, this chapter divides Africa into four sections, recognising that by doing so it is treating numerous territories as one. However, the move is justified for reasons of space and coherence, especially as each zone tends to have a regional dominant character.

North Africa to start, is generally regarded as the area north of the Sahara Desert along the coast of the Mediterranean. It is predominantly French, Muslim and Arab. During the war, Egypt was used as a base for troops on route between India, Gallipoli, Australia and Europe. It has therefore generally been treated as an extension of the European war. However, as noted later in this chapter, there was local conflict against the Senusi and local mobilisation. Egypt, today's Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sudan, all need more research conducted into their involvement in the war and should, in contrast to current mainstream practice, be considered as part of the African continent. The press release issued by the Egyptian State Information Service on the 12 November 2017 service to commemorate the 103rd anniversary of the First World War provides evidence of the challenge to locate the local voice in a dominant narrative:

The Armed Forces celebrated on Sunday 12/11/2017 the 103rd anniversary of their participation in the World War I that was marked by heroic actions in defense of humanitarian principles.

Lt. General Reda Fadel, the head of the Armed Forces-affiliate military research authority, delivered the inaugural speech of the ceremony and expounded efforts of the authority in documenting Egypt's military history.

A documentary on Egypt's participation in WWI, among allied powers in Asia and Africa and the European front with 100,000 soldiers, was screened during the event.

The short film highlighted the heroism and sacrifices of Egyptian soldiers who received the Victoria Cross (VC) decoration, the highest award of the UK honors system.

The North West African territory which was French-dominated during the war requires similar treatment in terms of its African-ness – most attention currently being given to the forces who served in Europe, while the home fronts, at least in English texts are ignored. In terms of the centenary commemorations, the Europe-Africa divide is prevalent, although Algeria appears to break the mould based on conference and network announcements. Algerian academics are tapping into West African networks on the First World War, the zone which seems to be most active in researching the conflict. Parallels can be drawn with its greater political awareness, developments and links with the west.

Pan Africanism was strongest in West African countries in 1914 than elsewhere and this impacted the attitudes of different groups to involvement in the war; the coastal elites being more anti than the inland peasant farmers, the latter being more malleable by the colonial powers. Private correspondence and network announcements suggests there is engagement with World War One, however, for reasons set out at the beginning of this section, the findings are not reaching the wider academic or public world.

Moving east and south, awareness of the war and the involvement of each of the territories is dependent on the prevalence of whites, ex-pat and settler, resident in the area. Of the East and Central African territories, awareness in Kenya is greater with Zimbabwe and Zambia following. Congo, controlled by Belgium during the war, has a developing local knowledge as Congolese academics are linking with colleagues in Brussels. Of the European powers, Belgium appears to be ahead in terms of remembering what happened on the African continent in 1914–1918. Zambia is becoming aware of its role in the war due to the centenary of the surrender in that country approaching. This has provided an opportunity for white Zambians to engage with the local black communities and the government to raise awareness of the country's contribution. The impact of white researchers taking time to engage with local communities and politicians has been witnessed in Tsavo, Kenya where for the centenary of the end of the war, local government has taken the lead, compared to the 2014 commemoration event being led and organised by the white Kenyan community (Guerrillas of Tsavo).

This leaves South Africa, a territory divided in its commemoration as it was with its war service. South Africa has remembrance around four events, each representative of the major cultural groups: the whites have Delville Wood commemorated on 11 November, the blacks Mendi Day on 21 February, the Coloured population recalls the Battle of Square Hill between 18 and 21 September 1918 and for the anti-Empire Afrikaner, there is Jopie Fourie who was executed as a traitor during the rebellion of 1914. Recollections of the Mendi have filtered into songs and mythology, this becoming the South African remembrance event in recent years. For the men of the Mendi whose war ended when their ship sank and they drowned, the story is recorded in a few books, the most recent being the 2017 novel, *Dancing the Death Drill* by Fred Khumalo. As with Britain, the Western Front dominates South African World War One literature, numerous non-fiction books being published by Ian Uys on the topic, Stuart Cloete and Wilbur Smith being the most well-known fiction writers. Wilbur Smith has three novels concerning the war in East Africa, none of which consider the event most closely associated with South Africa, namely the battle of Salaita Hill where approximately 600 white South African lives were lost (wounded and killed) on one day on 9 February 1916. The only novelist to consider this event is the American journalist Hamilton Wende who was resident in South Africa in 2005 when *The King's Shilling: A Novel* was published.

Memory and remembrance in Africa have traditionally been different to Europe, the demands of life and environment together with traditional beliefs seeing death as a natural part of life with the spirit of the individual being more important or significant than physical reminder, in other words, stories around the fire versus gravestones. Practices varied depending on whether missionaries or slavers had made inroads by the time of the war, the former leading to Christian education and Western burial practices, the latter to Islamic education and

traditions. Scattered between, and often combining with external religious practices and beliefs were traditions. The fact too, that the First World War was, for many locals, seen as another war in a string of many again impacts on memory and commemoration. Those events we remember stood out and still do. If it did not strike one as significant at the time, it is not likely to be remembered in later years, unless resurrected for specific political purposes. At the time, 1919–1925, the need for so many to survive and rebuild their lives especially in places like Tanzania became paramount. The previously German colonies were learning to adapt to new rulers and administration. In South Africa, white nationalist agendas led to commemoration ‘being swept under the carpet’ and in West Africa, pan-Africanism continued as the dominant rhetoric.

The above is not an excuse for ignoring the local voice, it is an attempt to understand why it is, and has been, silent. As will be seen in the discussion below, one or two accounts exist which are not Europe-centred. A change in focus from Europe-centred to one where Africa is the locus of events, will hopefully bring more local accounts to the fore, before they are lost forever. This chapter in discussing the end of the war in Africa aims to bridge the divide between the diversely ethnic local and European perspectives.

Impacting on the peace in each territory was the realisation that everything was in limbo until the war in Europe was won and the spoils divided. Although the British and French diplomats came to agreement during the war about what they wanted in Africa, they would have to wait for the ratification of all the powers involved (Samson 2005). At a local level, this provided a challenge to convince the local populations in previously German territories that their erstwhile-controllers had been defeated.

3. Togoland

Albert Calvert records his surprise at the way the Togolanderns responded to the occupation by France and Britain after thirty years of “peaceful occupation and unprecedented progress in colonisation”:

the ungrateful Togolanderns [...] have welcomed [the Anglo-French troops’] triumphant entry into Lome with every demonstration of enthusiastic joy – “for days on end, in fullest gala attire, the population paraded the streets, singing and chanting songs of praise and thankfulness.” (iix)

He expands on this with an extract from the *Gold Coast Leader* of 12 September 1914:

The surrender of Togoland has given rise to outbursts of joy and thankfulness among natives throughout the colony. In the Central and Western Provinces women, dressed in white, their wrists and necks encircled with white beads, and their necks and chests

rubbed with white chalk, for days on end paraded the streets singing and chanting songs of praise and thankfulness for the victory of our soldiers. The terrible doings of Germans in Togoland [...] have become matters of common knowledge [...] and instinctively our people have felt that the loss of Togoland by the Germans is a distinct gain to the cause of the progress of natives and their good government throughout British West Africa. (83)

Calvert was motivated by a desire that Britain obtain the territory at the end of the war and set out to “present as completely and concisely as possible the material on which to base an estimate of the colonial and commercial value of this first fruits of the war that Germany thrust upon the Allies” (xxiv). In this he paints a picture of a territory having a wireless station, Kamina, “755 miles of road suitable for motor traffic” and rest houses in which only whites are allowed to stay. Surrounding the guest house was a “compound” consisting of between fifty and sixty round huts which were “sufficiently commodious to shelter a native family.” There were rail links between Lomé and outlying regions such as Anecho, Palime, and Atakpame totalling 200 miles (5–6).

In giving the reader an openly biased account of the situation, Calvert has provided some insight into local reactions as depicted in the European-oriented media.² Nearly one hundred years later, Benjamin Nicholas Lawrance recorded a similar feeling but noted that by the 1930s there was “widespread anti-British sentiment” due to the threat of direct taxes and a desire to return to the united German era pre-1914 (144). For the duration of the war in Europe, Togoland remained occupied by Britain and France, the area of the Ewe being administered by the British until 1919 when two-thirds of the country became part of the French mandate, splitting the Ewe community in half.

The Germans who were present in the colony became prisoners, the majority under British jurisdiction, although the German military commander was imprisoned in French West Africa for the remainder of the war. Britain shipped civilians to the United Kingdom before deporting them to Germany and allowed wives the option of joining their husbands imprisoned in Dahomey. Until 1916, German and Swiss missionaries were allowed to remain in the territory when they were sent to the Gold Coast. Mahon Murphy (45) records that 243 people were shipped to Britain during the war and 280 Germans were interned in Dahomey. Black soldiers who had fought for the Germans enlisted with the British forces serving in Cameroon and later East Africa (Ngung).

4. Cameroon

The surrender of Togoland allowed the allied naval and military forces in the area to unite and target Cameroon. Having successfully brought Cameroon to surrender on 18 February 1916, as in Togoland, the French and British continued to work

together in a condominium. However, within a month of the German surrender, they had given up and on 4 March 1916 the conquered territory was split between France and Britain. The division was confirmed initially by an agreement signed in London in March 1916 and later the Versailles peace talks kept the territories separate until the independence of Southern Cameroon when the territories became united in name if not in substance; an issue still debated in 2014 (Dze-Ngwa 88). The Belgians who had supported the French against Cameroon had no part in the division of the territory, the involvement of the *Force Publique* being an offensive-defensive action. Congo's interest was the south bank of the Congo River which Portugal controlled and the occupation of German territory it would be able to use at the negotiating table in Europe, if needed. German East Africa was the only territory Belgium could consider fulfilling this aim.

The fall of Cameroon and the split agreed by the colonial powers broadly satisfied Britain and France which had reluctantly ceded the captured territory to Germany thirty-two years previously. For France, the additional land would help the country achieve its desire of a continuous stretch of French land from Algiers to Congo Brazzaville (Dze-Ngwa). By all accounts, Britain did not want huge amounts of land in West Africa, only territory, the equivalent of one-fifth, to round off the boundaries of its existing colonies of Nigeria and Gold Coast.

Across both sectors, French and British, "new languages, ideologies and systems of administration" were introduced (Dze-Ngwa, 83). These differed according to the occupying power and were not always welcomed or understood by the conquered. One of the terms of surrender was an amnesty for Cameroon *Schutztruppe* who had carried out instructions given by their German masters. However, according to British General Frederick Cunliffe, the French disregarded the clause and had executed a number of Cameroonians. This did little to help win support for the French. However, when Cameroonian subjects were to be returned during the war from German South West Africa where they appeared to be serving prison sentences, the French welcomed them back, even paying for their passage (Murphy 118).

The split in administration almost immediately gave rise to nationalist movements which worked towards unification – the pan-Kamerun Idea. The extent to which the pan-Kamerun Idea was based on nationalist ideals or a return to German colonial administration is questioned by authors. What is accepted, is the "sense of oneness among Cameroonians" which German colonial administration had created (Dze-Ngwa 84). The desire to be rid of colonial rule was apparent at the peace talks when a group led by Prince Alexander Ndoumbe Douala Manga Bell of Douala petitioned those meeting at Versailles to give "Cameroon for Cameroonians and Africa for Africans" (Dze-Ngwa 84). A similar movement began in the Congo under the Kibanguist movement led by Simon Kibangu from 1921.

As Kamerun capitulated, the German forces and their *Schutztruppe* fled into neighbouring Spanish Guinea where they were imprisoned on the island

of Fernando Po. Here, outnumbering their jailers, the German officers began to plan their return to the mainland, until France and Britain threatened the King of Spain with reprisals. Nevertheless, the Beti leader, Karl Atangana, together with six other Beti leaders, remained loyal to the Germans and left with the officers for Spain. Having tried to lobby for a return of the territory to Germany at the peace talks through the intervention of the King of Spain, Atangana and his colleagues returned to French controlled Cameroun in 1920.

Despite the loyalty of Atangana and other chiefs, the Beti “spoke of horror of the First World War,” they could not believe the extent of the destruction. In addition to the carnage, the war saw a breakdown in law and order, thefts, extortion and witchcraft increased with little traditional or colonial authority available to stem the tide. An American missionary noted that “former soldiers roamed freely about the countryside, raiding compounds, seizing women and looting goods” (Quinn 728) and others reported atrocities such as “Germans murdering unarmed civilians, mostly women, and children” (Ngung 307). Uncertainty in the area remained until France was guaranteed its control of the territory through the Versailles discussions.

The campaign accounted for 4,235 allied losses amongst soldiers and carriers either wounded or killed. Askari losses are estimated to be around 6,000 (Ngung) over the nineteen months of fighting. In contrast to some of the horror stories about German treatment, a month before the German forces surrendered, on 8 January 1916, the British commander in the Yaounde area, Gorges recorded that the enemy:

returned all our prisoners of war, amongst them being some British and French officers and civilians, native soldiers and a few non-combatants who had been taken by the Germans at various stages of the campaign. All had received fair and humane treatment during their capture. (Quinn 725)

In addition to these returned soldiers and non-combatants, Ngung (275) notes that “when Yaounde was taken, 255 askari men quickly deserted into the Allied African force, fifty per cent of whom brought in their arms and equipment.” Insurrections and mutinies were regular occurrences leading to white officers becoming demoralised and capitulating. This appeared to be the outcome where askari had been conscripted, unlike the loyal Beti who joined voluntarily, before the war, accepting payments and promises of better times to come. The lack of discipline exercised by the soldiers led to large numbers of refugees fleeing into neighbouring territories, which in turn put pressure on the local economy and employment opportunities.

5. British West Africa

In the countries which fought against the West African German colonies, the end of the fighting also had an impact. In the 1917 Annual Colonial Report on Nigeria, the Governor set out the economic impact in terms of imports and exports as well as taxes and other financial aspects, comparing current with pre-war and previous-year figures, splitting costs which were incurred as a result of the fighting from those which were associated with the general running of the territory. The need for people to focus on war-related work and join the army led to shortages which needed to be filled both during the fighting but more especially when peace was restored. For example, it was noted that 13 education staff in Nigeria had been involved in war work and between 1916 and 1917 there was a decrease in the number of secondary school pupils. Despite the number of police having been seconded to war work, discipline “was well maintained and the health of the force was generally satisfactory” (Colonial Report 14). However, in areas of sanitation distraction by the war led to increases in disease such as small-pox and yellow fever. “Material development” continued to be affected. The demands of the war meant that railway construction and public works programmes remained in abeyance (Colonial Report 24–25). Six mail steamers were lost during the war accounting for 67 lives, including four women, and “a large quantity of valuable Government stores which it was almost impossible to replace” (Colonial Report 25). Government was set back in its development of the country. The total cost of the war to 1916 excluding the East Africa campaign was £358,700, £8,546 being contributed in 1916. The cost of the Togoland campaign was estimated to be £43,756 for the Gold Coast (Colonial Report; Prempeh).

The end of the war in West Africa saw a continued drain on manpower for the British West African territories. During 1916, the Nigerian government sent 6,605 rank and file and 3,974 carriers to East Africa. Of the official staff, 112 had volunteered for service and the remaining staff absorbed the work of the third who were directly involved in war service: “Native Administration of the North had contributed a total of £98,406 up to the end of 1916 towards these war costs.”

Despite the impact of the war and the challenges people were faced with, subscriptions to War Charities amounted to £90,928 of which £49,546 had been donated during 1916; £4,000 by Native Administration and the remainder was through private donation (Colonial Report 25). In Gold Coast, ten aeroplanes were purchased in support of the war effort along with over £17,500 raised for the Red Cross (Prempeh).

Governor Lord Lugard who signed the report on 12 November 1918 noted that the political situation was “progressive” whilst detailing arrangements that had been made with the chiefs in the Southern Provinces. In addition to insights which can be gleaned from official documents on the impact of the war, reports

from missionaries and their experiences provide further valuable insight into the consequences of the conflict on local populations as well as political. The effect of Prophet Garrick Briade on the purchase of liquor between 1915 and 1918 corroborates the Colonial Report recording an unexplained significant decline in the purchase of alcohol and hence, government income (Prempeh xxi). The removal of civil servants from remote areas led local chiefs to believe the British were withdrawing with the result that lawlessness took hold as power vacuums developed with no neutral body to mediate.

The war had provided an opportunity for increased employment as men were sent to other countries for military and development work. Wartime wages were better. During 1918, 1,595 men enlisted into the Gold Coast military forces. On the conclusion of the war later that same year, the majority were demobilised to return home with money and increased independence. Some, on return, chose to challenge their chiefs (Prempeh 9). Some areas had to cope with increased numbers of refugees such as the Northern Provinces of the Gold Coast as men from the French colonies fled to avoid conscription. A total of 235 British West African lives were lost in Togoland and 562 in East Africa. This does not include those who returned home unable to work because of their war-induced injuries which had a serious impact on the economy as the men lost constituted the most able. The civil service was similarly affected by the loss of lives both due to military action and the loss of ships carrying personnel (Prempeh).

6. South West Africa

For all Togoland being the first German territory to capitulate during the war, it is South West Africa which is regarded as the first allied or British victory of the conflict. The reason is political: the commander of the South African forces and his deputy along with many others of the Union Defence Force had fought against the British Empire less than fourteen years before, and now, in 1915 had defeated the Germans who had promised the Boers their support all those years earlier. In addition to this victory, the same commander, General Louis Botha who was Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, had put down a rebellion of his own people in the last months of 1914. Much was made in the British press about this quiet victory in the south of the African continent. Of the nine months in which the forces opposed each other, three were spent dealing with the South African rebellion whilst minor skirmishes took place in the German colony and the Germans took the opportunity to invade Portuguese Angola in the north, while in the remaining six months, only twenty-six days saw contact between the two sides. It was the nature of the terrain.

On 9 July 1915, the German Governor and his commanding officer agreed the unconditional surrender terms they were presented with. Governor Theodore

Seitz had attempted various delay tactics but Louis Botha, following Lord Kitchener's actions in the Boer war of 1899–1902, held forces in readiness pending a breakdown in talks. This final surrender was to see an almost instant change in government. Although the Union was aware that it was only temporarily in charge until the delegates in Paris determined who was awarded the territory, the confidence of Deputy Prime Minister Jan Smuts was such that he took steps to ensure South Africa would be difficult to remove.

Military administration was implemented whereby German legislation, namely the Civil Code and the Criminal Code, was left in place except where it impacted on martial law. This remained the position until the mandate was approved, when systems were adapted to those of the Union of South Africa which had been awarded the mandate on behalf of Britain (du Pisani). The Union being in nominal control of the territory permitted Afrikaner trekboers to move in to boost the white population in an attempt to alleviate the "black fear" and add further support to South Africa's claim to the land; land it felt Britain had incorrectly given to Germany in the 1880s. In 1917, in an attempt to boost the case for South Africa being awarded the territory at the peace discussions, the Union published a Blue Book on German atrocities in South West Africa. Compiling this publication necessitated numerous interviews with the local population, an action which had a propagandist effect in winning "hearts and minds." According to Christo Botha, the occupation of South West Africa created a situation where the forward-looking and thinking Germans were controlled by Afrikaans Boers who were still caught up in a pastoral life. This was to cause some friction when the Germans who remained in the country were denied equal rights as set out in the mandate document. Of the approximately 12,000 Germans who had been resident in South West Africa at the start of the war, half were repatriated to Germany and their farms handed over to South Africans (Botha).

Before being repatriated from April 1919, many women, children and elderly men had been sent to South African internment camps during the war whilst Germans captured during the campaign were put into camps in remote locations such as Aus – locations the Germans had initially used to imprison South Africans. The delay in repatriating Germans was no doubt due to the lack of shipping and the priority to return dominion soldiers home to prevent unrest which was starting to develop. In camp, with little chance of survival if they escaped and nowhere to go other than to East Africa, the prisoners set about building more permanent accommodation, vegetable and flower gardens. For the Kaiser's birthday in January 1916 they built a monument to celebrate (Bruwer).

South Africa's reaction to the Germans was mixed. Whilst reservists had been allowed to return home along with indigenous labour, officers and non-commissioned officers were interned. After the war, some internees would be allowed to stay in the conquered territory if their standing could be vouchsafed. This led to friction within the community where individuals who coveted property

filed false claims against the owner, in the hope that the latter would be repatriated and the land given to the accuser (Bruwer).

Whilst many, such as the Bondelswarts, in South West Africa seemed to welcome South African control and assisted the invading forces, others took the opportunity of the change in power structure to fight for their independence. In Angola and along the border into South West Africa, a power vacuum had been created by the German invasion of Portuguese Naulila. This led to both South African and Portuguese attempts to restore order in the area; a task which took years to achieve. The juxtaposition of suppressing a people whilst at the same time accusing the previous controllers of rule with the sword was evident in South West Africa. While presenting the case against German re-occupation of South West Africa, the Union was launching a campaign against the Ovambo Chief Madume who was opposing white rule (EISA).

Alongside having to manage new territory, the South African government also had to keep a watchful eye on the men who had rebelled. Many were released after paying a fine, but tensions remained. Wilbur Smith in *The Burning Shore* (1985) has a rogue Boer, who evades capture during the rebellion and South West Africa campaign, assist German submarines locate British ships. A shipwrecked survivor crossing the Namib desert remains ignorant of the war ending till three months later when the Boer happens to rescue her from an attacking lion. The distrust and dislike between English and Boer continues amongst sections of both communities.

A related African territory which had to cope with peace from 1914 was the Caprivi Strip or Zipfel in the northern part of South West Africa, which surrendered to forces from Northern Rhodesia on 22 September 1914. The German officers were sent to Livingstone in Northern Rhodesia for the duration of the war and then, along with others repatriated to Germany. During the four years of war, the area was administered by four South African appointed army captains, which did little to stabilise the area. In 1916, the High Commissioner of South Africa, Lord Buxton, visited the area to reassure the Barotse of their rights to remain in the Caprivi Strip. This formed part of Buxton's wider tour where he also reassured the Katanga in Belgian Congo that South Africa had no designs on their territory despite it being rich in mining minerals. Times were uncertain and rumour rife around fulfilling long-term land desires at the peace talks.

7. East Africa

The armistice in Europe was to have the biggest impact on the East Africa theatre where fighting continued to the end. The resulting occupation of German East Africa by Britain resulted in English becoming the dominant unifying language over Kiswahili which had been developing as such following its use during the

1905 Maji Maji rebellion. However, by 1928 the idea of standardising Kiswahili across the region had taken hold again. This was a significant move for developing a written language and later fictional writing (Park 79). The extent and range of the campaign in terms of geography and manpower has led to the greatest number of fictional accounts being written on this theatre of war (Samson 2014). Of the eight covering the end of the war, the only East African author is MG Vissanji, although most have had experience of living in Africa. In addition, it is the one theatre for which there are various personal accounts, surprisingly few official, of the surrender, some of which were published in the media soon after.

November 1918 saw most of the fighting forces in East Africa in the south-east corner, in Nyasaland (Malawi) and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) to be more precise. The German forces under Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck had moved out of Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) back into the German colony (Tanzania), causing distress for the British civil administrator who had recently taken control. From there the German forces marched into Nyasaland and on 1 November after attacking Fife (Nakonde) crossed into Northern Rhodesia. Here, the forces led by AN Spangenburg, planned to launch an attack on the town of Kasama, roughly 240km from the Tanzanian border and 320km from Karonga in Malawi, the site of one of the early German attacks in August 1914.

Jarvis Murray, serving with 4 King's African Rifles, wrote about his last days of the war:

By the 9th [November] we were out of touch of everything with our wireless, and continued out of touch with everything behind us. On the 12th, we had another severe engagement, knowing nothing of the Armistice. In this night I was slightly wounded through my arm, and also side, but it did not lay me up.

On the morning of the 13th, we again skirmished with the enemy near Kasama (which is between Lakes Banguelo and Mivero) intending to heavily attack them again on the 14th. While moving along the road to Kasama, on the 13th about mid-day, we met two of von Lettow's Askaris, with a large white flag, and a cyclist of our own, who gave us the great news of the Armistice and Peace. It appears that, a couple of hours before, two of our cyclists had passed, on their way to deliver despatches to our Batt[alion] and to von Lettow. Thinking we were in Kasama, von Lettow received both despatches – so getting the news about two hours before we did. On receipt of the news there was tremendous excitement amongst our people. Porters, Askaris, officers and local natives all joined in the continuous cheering. The news came most unexpectedly. We at once halted, and so did the enemy, who were about five miles off. (3)

The news of the armistice was welcomed “with ringing cheers” as recorded in *Comrades Ever!* (348) and relief at not having to fight any longer. With it, however, came confusion as described in *An Ice-Cream War* (364) where a despatch rider arrived in German-occupied territory, the officer not knowing peace had been

declared. The situation was not helped by Lettow-Vorbeck's challenging of the surrender, believing the allies were trying to fool him. It was only on 18 November that he finally accepted the Kaiser's abdication and agreed to lay down his arms. The same day, Jarvis Murray's brother Lennox, based in Kigoma at the railhead on Lake Tanganyika, was sending cattle south to Bismarckburg where the Germans were surrendering. This was to supplement the German rations. Lettow-Vorbeck had made it known that he would have no food supplies to feed his force of around 3,000 after 22 November.

The final official surrender took place on 25 November 1918 at 17.40 when the documents were signed by von Lettow-Vorbeck for Germany and General Edward Frederick Savery Edwards representing Great Britain. At the surrender ceremony in Abercorn (Mbala), there were 30 white officers, 125 other Europeans, 1,165 Askari, 1,516 enlisted carriers, 482 local and Portuguese carriers, 13 headmen and 819 women (29% of the total local force) (TNA WO 158/905). In attendance were men of 4 King's African Rifles and the Northern Rhodesia Police, two contingents which had served for almost the whole duration of the war. Fictional heroes were also present at the surrender, namely Drew Spaight of Rhodesia (Duncan) and Simon Fonthill together with his batman Jenkins and trusty tracker Mzingeli, the latter three getting bored with the proceedings (Wilcox).

The Germans were to be escorted to Dar es Salaam for transport back to Germany whilst their askari, carriers and followers were paid and released to return home. Lennox expected Lettow-Vorbeck to pass through Kigoma on his way to Dar es Salaam on route to Germany and eventually on 12 December the two Murray brothers saw each other briefly as Jarvis moved to Tabora. He arrived with the same boat as Lettow-Vorbeck (Murray 3). Rosemary in *Curse of Magira* is in Dar es Salaam to wave farewell to Lettow-Vorbeck, while Kate, the woman Lettow-Vorbeck married in *Ghosts of Africa* lay buried where she had died shortly before news of the armistice was received by the German commander; the author Stevenson blaming revelry and drunkenness for the delay in the message getting through.

The end of the war saw men discharged at staggered intervals which caused some upset. The impact was variable as noted by the Murray family in Kenya. Jarvis Murray was discharged in January which allowed him to get married on 3 February, however, his brother Lennox was only discharged in March and therefore missed the joyful occasion. In addition, Jarvis discovered that as he had taken leave earlier in the year he was to be penalised in terms of pay and transport – a regulation he had not been made aware of being in one of the remote territories. The brothers returned to the family farm in “West Kenia” to experience “a strenuous time, getting this building habitable [...]” (Murray 1, 2, 7). In addition to looking after their own farm, the brothers were involved in supporting the soldier settler scheme where there were 2,000 local and 5,000 applicants in England for 800 farms.

The land in the conflict areas was poor. In addition to the ravages of war, “there is terrible drought and famine [in Dodoma], and the country looks as bad as the Karoo could look after the worst of droughts. The distress amongst the natives here is terrible, and they are dying in their hundreds from starvation. This has been going on for the last year, and now it has come to a climax.” Lennox (8–9) continued in harsh terms about how the local black population was being exploited by the sale of food and grain for animals.

In his fictional account, *Book of Secrets*, M. G. Vassanji (221) writes:

And then finally one day came the end of military authority. The tents and uniforms, the animals and vehicles, the thousands of soldiers had gone; the town was cleaned up. And the residents of Dar took stock of what happened.

There were those who had come from the interior wiped out, to unload their woes on family and community. And there were others, whose fortunes had risen in the same war, who had bought out the Germans, foreclosed on loans, received outlandish collaterals, smuggled, hoarded, supplied the arms. Property was scarce in Dar [...]. (221)

Brian Wade, who went to East Africa after the war to manage a mine supports the challenges faced in *Peace, War and Afterwards*:

Morogoro, 6 January 1919. This is a frightful country at present in which to buy anything. I am in need of knives, forks, serviettes, table cloths and a hundred more little items for a household. I am hoping to buy up such things from the local German householders who are to be repatriated about the middle of the month. (86)

Others were excited and “as soon as I can pinch a leave, I’m off to dear old London to have a good time. Grilled steaks and bottled beer, taxi cabs, jazz-teas, theatres and any other excitement” (Lynn 389).

8. Egypt

Turkey’s entry into the war on the side of Germany in October 1914 created a dilemma for the British who had until then controlled Egypt through a consul-general ostensibly recognising the territory’s nominal independence and allegiance to the Ottoman Empire. In order to ensure control over the country which, through the Suez Canal, formed a vital link between Britain and its Asian Empire, the British declared the area a protectorate. This led to unrest with the result that after the Gallipoli campaign, some of the returning troops were directed to deal with the rebelling Egyptians. South African forces on their way to the Western Front also found themselves diverted to Egypt to bring the Senusi to heel. In 1916 the British defeated Darfur as part of an offensive-defensive move which brought the territory into the Sudanese-Egyptian sphere. This however, led to a period

of violence as arms and ammunition were more widely and easily available, and power struggles between local leaders took place requiring the British administrators to get involved, often meeting violence with violence and using local loyal tribes or micro-nations against rebels (Vaughan). The situation was ripe for local communities to exact revenge from neighbours and to raid across the border into French territory leading to further destabilisation in the region. A lack of local knowledge by administrators often led to manipulation and biased decisions being made in favour of those who were able to obtain the confidences of the government. Decisions and actions from this time would have long-lasting repercussions.

Egypt found itself in an anomalous position. It became a base and half-way stop for British forces moving to and from the outlying areas of empire and a base for waging war against the Germans and Turks in Europe and Asia respectively. Having asserted its superiority over the Senusi in 1916, the British turned to Palestine and Sinai where Turkish forces were engaged. By the time the Germans collapsed in Europe, the campaigns in Palestine and Sinai were ostensibly won by the allies.

Reactions in Egypt to the end of the war were similar to elsewhere. F. R. Cobb serving with 1/4 Northhamptons in Egypt wrote on 12 November 1918 (Rushton Echo):

Just a few lines to let you know we are having a royal time out here, celebrating the Armistice. I had the honour of playing the glad tidings on the piano. We had a tableau on the stage, including all flags of our Allies. As each flag was presented cheers were given by a very large audience, and I played the National Anthem as each one was presented. The boys gave vent to their voices; in fact, they sang till they were hoarse. I played all popular patriotic tunes, which suited immensely, but I think the two most popular ones were "Take me back to Blighty," and "I want to see the dear old Home again." There are numerous boys here from our county, so you can imagine we had a decent night together.

The paper continues with some cuttings of articles from Egyptian newspapers:

There were great scenes of enthusiasm in the streets of Cairo on Monday evening when the news became known that the Armistice had been signed. Cheering crowds marched through the principal streets; in the cafes would-be orators got up and made speeches, and "God Save the King" and the "Marseillaise" were repeatedly sung. The principal cafes and bars were crowded with customers, who were toasting the Allied Cause. Many of the Boy Scout Associations paraded the streets with music at their head. Altogether Cairo has not known so hilarious an evening for years. On Monday evening also all places of amusement were crowded, particularly the Kursaal, where the excellent Bandmen company gave their play "Billetted."

Lanver Mak, in an as-yet-unpublished article, estimates that there were about 9,000 British citizens resident in Egypt at the start of the war, some of whom stayed

the duration working in hospitals and as civil servants. With many volunteering to serve, schools were left without teachers and other sectors suffered vacancies which affected their output. The large numbers of men moving through the ports, Egypt was one of the few countries to experience an economic boom during the war with the result that when peace was declared and the troops left, there was a slump until the markets readjusted. By that time, the world depression started to impact.

For the local population, however, it was time to reassert themselves as the British military presence reduced. Nationalism and a desire for independence came to the fore with the Al-Wafd al-Misri, WAFD party, being formed two days after the armistice. The intention was to have Egypt represented at the peace talks. With these attempts thwarted, tensions rose which erupted in demonstrations and other outbursts. In 1922 following discussions between Britain and the Sultan, Egypt became independent. As to reactions of the local populations, other than the recording of uprisings and the struggle for independence, little if anything has been written.

9. Versailles Peace Talks

A little over two months after the armistice came into effect, on 18 January 1919, the delegates to the Versailles peace talks met for the first time. One of the first topics to be discussed by the attendees was the fate of the German colonies and on 30 January 1919 the Council of Ten agreed that the German colonies would be awarded as mandates not as colonies or other permanent acquisitions. The detail of allocation was still to be determined and would result in various discussions, some lasting into 1923. This position was confirmed in Article 119 of the Treaty of Versailles, whereby Germany formally renounced all colonial claims in favour of the Allied and Associated Powers. Germany signed the document on 28 June 1919. The outcome was that the previous German colonies became subordinate to the League of Nations, administered on its behalf by named countries through Mandates. Togoland and Cameroon were identified B mandates which meant the governing country was:

responsible for the administration of the territory under condition which will guarantee freedom of conscience and religion, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the drug traffic, the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military bases, and of the training of natives for other than police purposes and the defense of territory, and will secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other members of the League.

South West Africa was classified a C type mandate which allowed for the territory to be administered as an integral part of the country holding the mandate.

South Africa's mandate over South West Africa was administered on behalf of the British government which had suzerainty over the Union.

Arriving at these decisions had not been easy, with those desiring territorial aggrandisement having to give way to the spirit of the 14 Points which President Woodrow Wilson of the United States of America had proposed and which had been agreed by the Peace Council. On 9 May 1919, the day the Germans were handed the terms of the Peace, the decision over who would get which German colony was initially agreed. The allocation left the Italians and Belgians to complain. The Treaty of London signed in 1915 resolved the Italian claim to land in East Africa but the Belgian claim led to further discussion.

The discussions between Britain and Belgium took place outside the formal meetings of the peace talks in an attempt to keep the American delegation out of the issue. The Americans, led by Wilson were against the allocation of colonies and Belgium objecting to Britain's claim to the whole of German East Africa would give the American delegation the leverage required to support breaking the British Empire. Of all the territory in German East Africa, that most wanted by Britain in 1919 was the land claimed by the Belgians – the territories of Ruanda (Rwanda) and Urundi (Burundi) occupied by the Belgians during the war. This land happened to be the most fertile in Africa but it also contained the strip necessary for the British to complete the imperial Cape Town to Cairo railway line stretching the length of Africa.

The outcome of the deliberations between the Belgians and Britain was a complex territorial swop which suited the desires of the imperial powers but which did not take local considerations into account. Belgium did not really want more territory in Africa as it was difficult enough developing the Belgian Congo which it had taken over from the Belgian King in 1909, although to assist in the Congo's development, obtaining the southern bank of the Congo River which was controlled by Portugal would be beneficial. The idea was that if Portugal was amenable to Belgium getting this territory, Belgium would cede its rights over Ruanda and Urundi to Britain. In compensation for ceding the west coast territory to Belgium, Portugal would be given the Kionga Triangle on the east coast which it claimed Germany had stolen from the country in the 1880s. In addition to the Kionga Triangle, Portugal would be given a strip of German East Africa bordering on the Portuguese East African divide to compensate for an equivalent strip in the south of Portuguese East Africa being given to the Union of South Africa. This move would round the Union territory to the Zambezi River, a long-desired aim.

The whole realignment of territory rested on Portugal. However, political instability in the mainland meant that politicians were reluctant to be seen giving away Portuguese territory even if the territory was an unnecessary drain on the treasury. It was an issue of status. Despite its desire for the Kionga Triangle the overall territorial loss was too great for the Portuguese to consider and they declined the proposal. The result was the map of Africa remaining as had been agreed at

the Berlin Conference of 1885 slightly amended by the Treaty of Versailles and Mandate agreements. Kionga was awarded to the Portuguese as part of the formal territorial allocation. Of the countries which had fought in East Africa, the only one relatively satisfied with the outcome was the Union of South Africa which was awarded South West Africa as a C type mandate. This was the closest the Union would get to complete occupation and integration of the territory.

In the west, the British and French governments eventually agreed their spheres of interest on 10 July 1919. France had agreed to stay out of East Africa providing concessions were received in the west. By means of the Milner-Simon Declaration the boundaries of Cameroon and Togoland were defined (Elango). Yet, the final mandate agreements were only signed on 13 February 1923.

As alluded to above, many in the African territories saw the opportunity of the Versailles peace talks to have their nationalist aims addressed. This was partly inspired by the claim that the war had been fought to protect the rights of small nations; those making the decision assuming that their subordinate territories were excluded. Representations were made by black and white alike from South Africa, political parties from Gold Coast, Nigeria, East Africa and others. India put forward a special plea to Britain to obtain German East Africa as a colony to enable Indian emigration without the restrictions imposed by the other dominions. The Viceroy vetoed the idea believing there was sufficient space in Aden to allow for Indian expansion. Of all the separate representations, only Egypt was to have its nationalist desires fulfilled when it obtained its independence in 1922.

10. The Aftermath in Africa

The war and the ensuing peace discussions have had a lasting impact on Africa, consequences which are still reverberating in 2018. With all communities which experience conflict, there is the issue of reintegrating those who opposed the majority position, whether they were incarcerated or not. Economic adjustments are required as industries disrupted by the conflict are either found to be superfluous as a result of war-time developments, others require restarting while yet others no longer need to operate on the scale the war demanded. The accompanying social adjustments may require management especially when groups refuse to return to the position they occupied in the pre-war years. Each of the territories in Africa was affected differently based on its specific circumstances and involvement in the war, however general themes are identifiable.

Internees and prisoners of war needed to be returned to their countries of origin or reintegrated into the society. Similarly, soldiers and labourers needed to be returned home. This put continued pressure on transport links and governments who were felt to be dragging their heels. Questions arose over who had priority in being sent home: men who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for

their country and beliefs, internees who had been deprived the freedom of travel because of being associated with the enemy or prisoners who still posed a potential threat. Men like Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck were returned on the first available ships whilst in August 1919, 336 internees from the Rhodesias, South West Africa and the Union, were still in Pietermaritzburg in the Union, awaiting repatriation to Germany (Dederig). Some, mainly South African residents had been allowed to slowly reintegrate back into society.

Soldiers, carriers and labourers needed to be demobilised. Questions over pensions and employment had to be addressed, often with unsatisfactory results when made by people who had little contact with the countries over which they were making decisions. To maintain internal peace, the South African government thought it best that black labourers were not awarded medals claiming that as they were employed as labour through recruitment agencies they were not technically entitled to medals. Similarly, uniforms and blankets had to be returned. The fear was that by retaining these items, men would be able to identify each other and form groups which could rise up against the white minority rulers (Grundlingh). In East Africa there was concern that releasing large numbers of German soldiers, labourers and carriers without some sort of payment would result in disruptions to local communities as the men passed through. This had to be avoided at all costs if the new administrators were to maintain peace and restore some control in the area.

The nature of the war and the movement of men meant that at the end of the conflict, people found themselves on leave in countries not their own, particularly men serving in the Royal Navy and Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. Where they were on leave in their own country at the end of the war rather than being shipped back to England before demobilisation, they were processed at a local naval base such as Simonstown. As a result, men returned in small numbers, the first large group of 88 RNVR men arriving in South Africa on 14 April 1919 (Hay). Groups such as this were inspected and paraded through Cape Town or other cities whilst the others received no welcome reception. This was particularly pertinent for the future remembrance of the First World War in Africa as demonstrated by Anne Samson (2005) in the case of South Africa's involvement in the East Africa campaign.

Power structures had been eroded with the removal of chiefs to support the military endeavour. Leaders not loyal to the governing administration were replaced by men purporting to support the war effort and aims of the colonial power, often to the detriment of the traditional hierarchies, community stability and economic development as discussed by David Killingray in his study of the repercussions of the war on the Gold Coast. Returning soldiers and labourers having fought alongside the white man, and on occasion having killed the white man with none of the previously promised dire consequences, were more confident in standing up for their rights and wants. No longer was the white man's threat and power enough to awe, aspects Melvin Page considers in his work on Malawi (then Nyasaland).

Missionary organisations experienced a decline in the number of missionaries they had in Africa. The combination of mission pre-war education and the impact of the war on local communities led to a growth in nationalism and pan-Africanism led by local black missionaries. The distrust engendered between German and allied (British and French) missionaries eroded confidence and contributed to the undermining of white superiority. This had been exacerbated by their support of the war effort through co-ordinating carriers and intelligence as well as fund-raising (Prempeh).

To address the high unemployment of returned soldiers in England, ex-soldier-settler schemes were introduced as early as 1919. These were to prove a failure as the men were given no agricultural training or financial support. Attempts were made to encourage white settlers to move to specific parts of Africa, such as East, South and South West Africa, to help create a bulwark against the majority black populations (Fedorowich). However, as the world economic slump took hold, so steps were taken to make the economies viable. As with the initial scheme, this was at the expense of local subsistence farmers who experienced severe hardship, Ochieng (122) recording that from being in a dominant export position before the war, local African farmers were only contributing 20 per cent of exports in 1928.

The outcome was political movements which developed in response to improved colonial organisation brought about by mass mobilisation, more effective and systematic collection of taxes and greater restrictions on traditional practices (Ochieng). As the colonial governments were able to build on the systems set in place during the war, so the local political leaders saw the benefits of organising themselves, working across tribal barriers and finding common ground in response to the increasing control they found themselves under (Hodges). In countries such as South Africa, women saw the opportunity to campaign for the right to vote, have a political voice and continue in the formal economic system.

In countries such as Northern Rhodesia, the investment into maintaining war-time infrastructure was allowed to evaporate, the Administrator noting that the upkeep of roads and motorised vehicles was in excess of what the economy could support. Roads were therefore allowed to revert to bush and traditional methods of transport – carrier and boat – were reverted to (Yorke, Gewalt).

Significantly, the horrors and length of the war had such an impact on men that recruitment for the permanent military forces stagnated and in some cases even fell to below what it had been pre-war. However, McKenzie (58) notes that sufficient men remained to guide units into war again in 1939.

As in Europe, the Spanish flu caught everyone unawares. In Africa, the virus spread rapidly along the supply and communication lines, hitting hard those whose immunity was lowest having had little exposure to such diseases. The returning soldiers brought disease home with them, not all contagious, but it led to an increase in the number of recorded deaths such as malaria and blackwater fever amongst those returning from East Africa. In Gold Coast, of the 59 European

deaths recorded, 28 were from influenza and of 7,756 local cases treated, 204 died. Added to this is an estimated 30,000 victims who did not get to medical treatment. In Ashanti alone an estimated 9,000 died from the epidemic (Prempeh). In Aus prisoner of war camp, South West Africa, 65 prisoners (4.1%) and 60 guards (8.3%) perished (Bruwer). Part of the challenge in treating the outbreak was the lack of medical staff – themselves caught up in the military machine. Death from the virus damped the feelings of relief the end of the war brought. Peter Rainier (1940), in Nigeria, records he had no interest in continuing to live. He had buried his wife and new born son two days before the armistice.

Disease added to the labour shortage led to reduced planting and care for crops. The result was an increase in crop disease, smaller harvests, greater famine, theft and poor health. Industry was just as affected when mines and other factories had to close for the duration of the epidemic, sometimes for two weeks (Rainier). The cycle was exacerbated by drought or flood depending where on the African continent a person happened to be. Returning able and fit men were less tolerant of poor working environments with the result that mines found it difficult to recruit. Trained men with diversified skills were in demand. Many moved to towns and cities where work and better pay was more readily available. Women, too, who had been involved in war-time work looked to retain their employment despite the men returning. Their economic independence accompanied by increased confidence resulted in conflict as many struggled to keep their new-found freedom.

Where boundaries had been changed and new administrators appointed to look after previous German territory, responses were mixed. Some welcomed the change until the new administrator started to behave in the same way the Germans had. Others, such as Mzee Ali (MacDonnel) in East Africa were concerned with the poor control and the resultant lawlessness which developed. Where tribes or micro-nations had been split by the decisions of the 1880s, the reinforcement of the boundaries by the Versailles delegates saw little change in these areas, as tribesmen such as the Masai continued to live their nomadic lives oblivious of the borders crossing their traditional lands. The Luo, Tumbuku, Taureg and Tebu amongst others developed a joint nationalism – one to the state and the other to their micro-nation; on occasion the two conflicting against each other. Other groups placed together in one nation-state has seen one dominate the other as witnessed in Zimbabwe where the Shona suppressed the Matabele and in Rwanda between the Hutu and Tutsi.

Conclusion

The First World War in Africa ended as it began, different territories reacting according to their individual circumstances. Experiences ranged from little direct involvement and the supply of material (Equatorial Guinea and Botswana) to complete immersion in the conflict either through the supply of manpower to

the European theatres (French West Africa), or as a result of immediate military engagements (East Africa and Cameroon). Togoland and South West Africa spent most of the war years occupied by foreign powers. Everyone seemed to have been affected at some point by the war, if not for the duration. Experiences in the various African theatres, whilst similar in many respects, were variable depending on the extent and duration of colonial occupation, the relationship between colonised and coloniser, the availability of resources and acceptance of western culture.

Elie Allegret expresses the reaction of Africa well:

Something like a consciousness of the solidarity of the human race vibrated through them, but at the same time they were astonished, scandalized, frightened. Something also was shattered – the prestige of the white man and their confidence in him. At the same time the consciousness of race, of nationality and of the rights of man was becoming everywhere more or less acute.

The minds of the people were perturbed, intoxicated, unbalanced by the return of thousands of troops, who for the most part came back with feelings other than those of respect for the European ••• by the pan-African propaganda introduced from America and the English Colonies by the Bolshevik tracts with which certain parts of the coast were inundated, without the necessary counterpoise of moral training or of the training of conscience. (qtd. in Prempeh xxvi)

These feelings, across all micro-nations on the African continent played out in the post-war years to varying degrees, most notably in the struggles for independence and recognition. From white South Africa and Egypt obtaining recognition in the 1920s through to the 1950s when the first black presidents were elected and still one hundred years later where minority groups continue their fight for basic rights.

The war provided an opportunity to realise dreams epitomised by Britain's desire to complete the Cape Town to Cairo railway. For this Britain needed land which was granted to Belgium. In the spirit of colonialism, Belgium offered Britain access and control of the strip of land needed for the railway but due to the first cross-continental flights taking place in 1923, Britain never completed the railway and returned the land – perhaps symbolic of the impact of the Great War in Africa. The war provided the opportunity for the final scramble for African territory to take place whilst simultaneously heralding the start of the struggle for nationalism and eventual independence.

Commemoration of the centenary of this conflict, which had such a defining impact on the African continent, has mirrored that of one hundred years ago – the muted reception received by most on their return home resonate in the absence of remembrance, whilst the cultural differences seem to echo as loudly today as they did then, not least around the issue of grave markers and memorials. Perhaps history can learn from rank-and-file interactions and fiction – in virtually all the novels of the First World War in Africa, black, Indian and white, male and female recognise the value and different contributions of the other.

Notes

- 1 This argument is broadly supported by Ikhide R Ikheloa's article "Jollof Rice Wars, Cultural Appropriation, and the Ugly Heart of the Other's Darkness" in *Enkare Review*, c2016 online <http://enkare.org/cultural-appropriation-ikhide-ikheloa>.
- 2 According to Madeline Manoukin, *The Ewe-speaking People of Togoland and the Gold Coast: Western Africa 6*, (Routledge, 2017) this same book was published the same year by the British Foreign Office.

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