

TEARS IN THE SAND: THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE HERERO AND NAMA GENOCIDE IN GERMAN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA NAMIBIA

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ABSTRACT

This study will discuss the German genocide in Namibia in the early 1900s. When Germany sought imperial control of Namibia, General Lothar von Trotha managed a campaign of violence and expulsion against the Herero, leaving an indelible mark on the land and its people. A genocide based on economic incentives, race ideology, and colonial policies, humanized Herero names Resistance groups that emerged in the early 20th century and met with brutal reprisals. The Battle of Waterberg, the burning land policy, and concentration camps marked this traumatic period. at the end This study will examine the international reaction to the genocide highlighting the intricate relationships between colonial solidarity and geopolitical realities that limited criticism of German practices.

I. INTRODUCTION

As the pages of history turn, revealing the often painful truths hidden in their folds, one chapter stands out as a dark testament to mankind's capacity for cruelty - the genocide of the Germans in Namibia. In the vast lands of South Africa, a chilling event took place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, leaving an indelible mark on the history of both countries. The shadow of this forgotten genocide still lingers in Namibia. The events started in the period of European colonialism when imperial powers sought and fought to control the African continent. In this context and in South West Africa, Germany sought to consolidate its imperial ambitions in what later became Namibia. But when the aspirations of colonialism were pursued by brutal means, the quest for territorial supremacy took a deadly turn, ultimately culminating in a protracted carnage in the darkness of history. To understand the magnitude of this tragedy, we must understand the historical context of the atrocity. The 1800s saw the struggle for Africa, where European powers were driven by economic gain. Germany quickly pursued its colonial interests in Namibia's military forces and instituted policies that would forever change the fate of the Aboriginal population. The German power managed an campaign of violence and expulsion against the Herero under the command of General Lothar von Trotha, leaving an indelible mark on the land and people of Namibia with what historians now acknowledge as one of the first genocides of the 20th century.

1- Historical Overview of Africa From Ancient Wisdom to Modern Challenges:

African history is a vast and complex story spanning thousands of years, encompassing a diversity of civilizations, cultures, and peoples. From primitive man to modern nation-states, Africa has played a pivotal role in the world we know today.

In the formation of the story of Africa begins with the physical arrival of modern humans in sub-Saharan Africa about 100,000 years ago. These early humans known as Homo sapiens, the ancestors of modern humans, progressively moved throughout the continental grasslands, woodlands, deserts, and coastal regions. Genetic diversity assessments of current Africans and ancient finds have demonstrated their existence. Some of the most remarkable ancient civilizations and empires in history emerged from Africa as human communities developed there. Ancient Egypt with its iconic pyramids, pharaohs, and hieroglyphics emerged along the Nile in the northeastern part of the continent where Egypt's cultural, political, and architectural development had a profound impact not only on Africa but also on neighboring civilizations in the Middle East as well as beyond. The southern kingdom of Kush blossomed into a powerful civilization that rivaled the Roman Empire. Located in what is now modern Sudan, Kush was known for its wealth, advanced agriculture, and grand architecture such as the Meropyramids, also the empire of Carthage, a trading city in modern-day Tunisia, was a major power in the Mediterranean during Phoenician times, Carthage's maritime prowess and strategic location made it a center of trade and cultural exchange, connecting Africa to the wider world and developing trade routes across the continent. In east Africa, Also the ancient kingdom of Axum (in present-day Ethiopia and Eritrea)

prospered as a major center of international trade and played an important role in the spread of Christianity throughout the region they controlled.

Even with the big achievements of the African civilization the power of its empires africa still faced different challenges and external influences between the 15th and 19th Century Africa witnessed the wave of the slave trade which led to the sent of millions of Africans emigrating to the US and other parts of the world in force This destructive trade wiped out communities, destroyed society and left lasting wounds that are still felt today. In the 19th century, European settlers arrived in Africa. compelled by a wish for riches, geopolitical power, and wealth. the Europeans started to create colonies around all the parts of Africa The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 re-legitimized the division of Africa between European powers, with little regard for existing cultural, and linguistic and political boundaries.

2-Historical Background of Namibia's Colonization by Germany

The German colonization of Namibia is situated within the broader historical context of European imperial rule in Africa in the late 19th century. The process can be seen from a few key developments: At the end of the 19th century, European powers were engaged in a struggle for territorial control in Africa. German interest in Namibia was driven by economic considerations. Namibia was famous for its valuable resources like copper, metals, and diamonds....Germany as an imperialist power saw a very big opportunity to add Namibia to its colonies and use its resources to get stronger, Namibia, then known as German Southwest Africa, was vital in providing a naval base and facilitating trade routes for Germany. The German Empire sought to maintain control of the region, and secure the vital sea lines and routes. German colonial rule in Namibia continued until the end of World War I, after which the UN ordered South Africa to administer the area and Namibia finally gained independence in 1990. But the impact of German's Colonial period is still exist in Namibia through the culture, economy, language

3- Tracing Namibia's Fate from the Berlin Conference 1884-1885

European countries such as Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, and Portugal fiercely competed for overseas territories. the objective behind colonizing Africa was mainly for economic and political reasons so the countries increased their influence in the world. It was essential to define boundaries in Africa, The lack of clear boundaries in Africa led to clashes between European powers over their influence. the main objective of the conference is to settle guidelines among the powerful countries to take control over Africa without going into conflicts between them. Some European states claimed that the treaty was motivated by a desire to end the slave trade and promote humanitarian goals but the real motivation was often rather economic and strategic rather than altruistic. The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 directly influenced German colonization in Namibia. At the conference, the European powers negotiated and formalized their territorial claims in Africa, giving Germany control over specific areas, including what is now Namibia and here are some of the ways that Berlin conference affected German settlers in Namibia:

Formal recognition of German claims: The Berlin Conference provided a forum for the European powers and legitimized their territorial acquisitions in Africa, accepted and carried out German claims in parts of Namibia legalized at this convention, which gave rise to international law.

The treaty established guidelines for defining colonial boundaries, through the treaty Germany gained control of what was then known as German South West Africa (now Namibia) However, the making of these boundaries in the forest often led to problems and conflicts in the postcolonial period.

4-The Tragedy of Herero and Nama: Unveiling the German Genocide in Namibia (1904-1908)

1-Causes of the German Genocide in Namibia:

The main reason for the genocide can be attributed to the German imperial ideology during that time. The German government aimed to establish and maintain control over their African colonies, and this imperialist ideology prioritized the interests of the German nation, causing widespread suffering and destruction to Aboriginal communities, and imposed white settlement there ruthlessly in line with their colonial policies. The causes of the German genocide in Namibia were multifaceted, combining economic incentives, ethnic ideology, colonial policies and inherent power imbalances. These factors created an environment in which German rule began waged a campaign to exterminate the Herero. The German colonial authorities held deeply rooted racist

beliefs and viewed themselves as a superior race. adding to this ideas, the idea of Social Darwinism, developed a sense of superiority of Germans and contributed to the justification of abuse and exploitation of the Namibian people. As German settlers encroached on native lands, tensions escalated between the settlers and the Herero and Nama peoples. The German regime viewed Aborigines as "primitive", and inferior, in a policy designed to dehumanize and marginalize them. This ideology justified the discrimination and suppression of the Herero-Nama culture. The German settlers and colonial administration sought to expand their territory and control the resources in Namibia. This took large tracts of land from the indigenous Herero and Nama communities. Traditional pastures and farms were confiscated, depriving local people of their livelihoods and connection to the land. The German government implemented forced labor for Aborigines, especially for infrastructure jobs and German-owned plantations. The Aboriginal people of Namibia were suffering from exploitation by Germans, low salaries, abuse, and very hard working conditions.

In the early 20th century, resistance movements developed in response to injustice and oppression of the Herero and Nama communities, the Herero movement, led by Samuel Maharero, expressed concerns about land grabbing. The resistance movements started threatening German sovereignty and economic interests and raised fears among German officials. German colonial forces led by General Lothar von Trotha launched a brutal military campaign in response to the growing opposition . This has led to indiscriminate violence and the killing of many Herero and Nama people.

2-Events of the Genocide (1904-1908): Tears in the Sand The Untold Story of the Herero and Nama Genocide in German South-West Africa

In January 1904, the Herero revolted against German occupation. The Herero, led by Paramount Chief Samuel Maharero, demanded their land, independence and resistance to oppressive colonial rule. Shortly thereafter, the Namas also joined the revolt. Herero warriors attacked German military bases, inflicting heavy casualties and causing German authorities to rethink their colonial policy.

Battle of the Waterberg: In response, German colonial forces under General Lothar von Trotha launched a brutal military campaign against the Herero. In August 1904 a fierce battle was fought at Waterberg. Equipped with superior weapons and superior military tactics, the Germans cornered the Herero near the Waterberg Plateau. Thousands of Herero civilians, women and children, sought refuge in the Waterberg Mountains. Von Trotha implemented a scorched earth policy, ordering the Herero to be confined to the Waterberg and denied access to water sources. The captured Hereros retreated to the hot Omaheke Desert, where they struggled desperately to survive, and many died of thirst and exhaustion.

Herero survivors were captured and forcibly sent to concentration camps. Concentration camps were established in inhospitable territories, where Aboriginal detainees endured extreme hardship, starvation and inadequate medical care. The camps became hotbeds of disease, leading to high mortality rates. Conditions in the camps were overcrowded, forced labor, physical and mental abuse, and medical experiments by German doctors.

In October 1904 General von Trotha's issued the infamous extermination order declaring that "the Herero nation must disappear from the Face of the Earth" so far .This directive was a turning point in the violence against the Herero and the Nama. It launched a campaign of extermination that included marching with deadly force, manslaughter and acts of rape and torture.

Estimates of the total death toll vary, but it is believed that 80,000 Herero people were killed Up to 10,000 Namas during the massacre Survivors suffered prolonged trauma, displacement and cultural destruction. Many Herero and Nama survivors were reduced to forced labor on German-owned plantations, where they remained violent and were used by the German colonial administration to justify their actions as necessary for their departure ruled the colony Still predates the later Holocaust as cruelty.

3-International response to the German genocide in Namibia: From Apathy to Empathy: The Growing Response to the German Genocide in Namibia

Many European colonies had similar ideologies based on ideas of racial superiority and cultural hegemony. This shared worldview contributed to a degree of tacit acceptance or at least a reluctance to openly challenge the internal affairs of the colonizing countries. Colonial solidarity may have further dampened the tendency to criticize German actions in Namibia. in the 20th Century, there was no international tools to address the human

rights violations like in our days such as human rights conventions international justice, and criminal courts. Unlike in subsequent decades, there were no established mechanisms or institutions dedicated to monitoring and holding states accountable for human rights violations and such a system that was its absence limited the options for the international community to respond to the atrocities in Namibia. At that time Germany was a powerful and influential country with military strength, economic strength and diplomatic prowess. Its status as a European superpower may have prevented other countries from openly or implicitly condemning its actions in Namibia. Fear of diplomatic repercussions or reprisals can influence the cautionary attitudes of other countries. The early 20th century saw significant global events including World War I and geopolitical conflicts taken over by these events the international community lost sight of the atrocities in Namibia. The lack of a strong and well-coordinated international reaction might have been caused by giving priority to these larger concerns above particular colonial atrocities.

after many years the genocide committed by Germans in Namibia received renewed attention again Official acknowledgment of the genocide by the German government in 2015 triggered a discussion of reparations and an acknowledgment of historical responsibility The limited international response is a historical example of the challenges of human rights violations dealing with it in the face of complex geopolitical considerations.

In May 2021, Germany formally recognized its historical responsibility for the genocide and atrocities committed against the Herero-Nama during the colonial period The German government announced financial aid totaling 1.1 billion euros (about .3 billion) over 30 years. all the funds has gone to the develop health care, education develop the infrastructure and for new projects in Namibia.

The Reactions to the agreement are not all the same. While some viewed it as a start toward admitting and making amends for past wrongs, others expressed worries about the absence of direct recompense for specific descendants of the victims of the and condemned the financial component as insufficient. The communication between the two governments is still continuing for the goal of implementing more projects and getting more compensations projects.

II. CONCLUSION

To conclude Germany was responsible for genocide in Namibia in the early 20th century, Thousands of Herero Nama were targeted and killed by German troops as part of colonial rule and expansion in South West Africa (now Namibia) Often called this time the Herero Nama Massacre, occurring from 1904 to 1908. The genocide consisted of forced labor, concentration camps, and the torture of the Herero and Nama people. The Germans followed an extreme policy aimed at eliminating and controlling the locals. Lately Germany finally and officially announced its responsibility for the genocide committed by its troops in Namibia and started negotiations with the current government of Namibia for reconciliation and compensation of the Namibian people.

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