

‘Streams of blood and streams of money’: New perspectives on the annihilation of the Herero and Nama peoples of Namibia, 1904-1908¹

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Words Cannot be Found, German Colonial Rule in Namibia: An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book. Edited by JEREMY SILVESTER and JAN-BART GEWALD. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), xxxvi + 366 pp. paperback. ISBN 90-04-12981-2.

and

The Angel of Death has Descended Violently Amongst Them’: Concentration Camps and Prisoners-of-war in Namibia, 1904-08. By CASPER ERICHSEN. (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2005). xvi + 170 pp. paperback. ISBN 90-5448-064-5.

and

Genocide in German South-West Africa: The Colonial War of 1904-1908 and Its Aftermath. Edited by JÜRGEN ZIMMERER and JOACHIM ZELLER. (Monmouth: Merlin Press, 2008). xxxvi + 291 pp. paperback. ISBN 978-0-85036-574-0.

The ‘century of genocide’ is a description often applied to the twentieth century because of the unprecedented levels of mass violence it witnessed.² By its turn the convergence of totalitarian government, mass ideology and the application of modern technology for the purpose of wholesale slaughter had reached a point where the deliberate extermination of entire populations not only became more feasible but also more frequent. Under this rubric the annihilation of eighty percent of the Herero population and the murder of over half the Nama people of Namibia (then German South West Africa) between 1904 and 1908³ by German colonial forces rank as the first genocides of the twentieth century. These atrocities, which feature an express intention to eradicate whole population groups, the use of concentration camps as instruments of extermination, and a resort to racial science to justify genocidal practices provide a foretaste of unprecedented levels and forms of mass violence unleashed against civilian populations during the twentieth century. While they are ‘modern’ in this sense, the Namibian killings can at the same

1 I would like to thank Michael Aeby for generously sharing with me his thoughts on J. Zimmerer and J. Zeller eds., *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika: Der Kolonialkrieg (1904-1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen*, (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2004), the German edition of one of the books under review. I would also like to thank Christopher Saunders and Chris Andreas for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

2 See for example R. Smith, ‘Human destructiveness and politics: The twentieth century as an age of genocide’ in I. Walliman and M. Dobkowski., eds., *Genocide and the Modern Age: Etiology and Case Studies of Mass Death*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000); S. Totten, W. Parsons and I. Charny, (eds.), *Century of Genocide: Eyewitness Accounts and Critical Views*, (New York, Garland Publishing, 1997); E. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003)

3 Germany unilaterally declared an end to the war on 31 March 1907 but Zimmerer and Zeller (xiv) are correct to regard the state of war, and a the practice of genocide, to have extended into 1908 as prisoners-of-war were only released from concentration camps in 1908. The Nama leader, Simon Kopper, operating from the then Bechuanaland, continued to offer resistance into 1908 and a number of Nama remained incarcerated until South African forces invaded the territory in 1915.

time be seen as representing a culmination of five centuries of colonial warfare that had led to numerous earlier exterminations in various parts of the world. From this perspective the 'century of genocide' label may seem misleading, as it downplays genocidal aspects and practices in the wilful destruction of indigenous populations by colonial invaders in the preceding era.

Colonial genocides have tended to be overlooked in the field of genocide studies because the discipline has been too inclined to use the Holocaust as a yardstick for genocide and too susceptible to focussing on the more recent mass killings such as the excesses of the Nazi and Stalinist regimes or those that befell Armenians, Cambodians or Rwandan Tutsi. It is only relatively recently that the spotlight has been turned onto the relationship between colonialism and genocide.⁴ The books under review are in part a product of this new tendency because the mass killings in Namibia stand out as amongst the more recent and clearest examples of genocide in a colonial setting. All three consciously combat what Silvester and Gewalt refer to as 'colonial amnesia' (*xiv*), the susceptibility to romanticise the colonial past, denying the excessive violence that accompanied it, and side-stepping acknowledgement of suffering or the need for reparation. In the Namibian case this amnesia is particularly ironic because perpetrators did nothing to hide their murderous intentions, and even proudly broadcast them, because they felt fully justified in their actions. Indeed, Lieutenant-General Lothar von Trotha, commander of the colonial army in Namibia, on 2 October 1904 publicly proclaimed his intentions by issuing his infamous *Vernichtungsbefehl* (extermination order) which read

The Herero are no longer German subjects.... The Herero people will have to leave the country. If the people refuse I will force them with cannons to do so. Within the German boundaries, every Herero, with or without firearms, with or without cattle, will be shot. I won't accommodate women and children anymore. I shall drive them back to their people or I shall give the order to shoot at them.⁵

At the height of his exterminatory campaign against the Herero von Trotha, in a letter dated 27 October 1904 and addressed to governor Theodor Leutwein, made clear his objective of eradicating the Herero entirely with the pronouncement

4 Key works include A. Palmer, *Colonial Genocide*, (Adelaide:Crawford House, 2000); A. Moses, ed., *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004); M. Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State II: The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide*, (London:I. B. Taurus, 2005); A. Moses and D. Stone, eds., *Colonialism and Genocide*, (London, Routledge, 2007); A. Moses, ed., *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, (New York, Berghahn Books, 2008). See also the latest issue of the *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 10 (2), 2008.

5 Condensed from T. Dederling, ' "A certain rigorous treatment of all parts of the nation": The annihilation of the Herero in German South West Africa, 1904', in M. Levene and P. Roberts *The Massacre in History*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 211. Having been defeated by the Germans at the Battle of Hamakari on 11 August 1904, the main body of the Herero community fled into the Omaheke Desert. Von Trotha hemmed them into the waterless areas with a 250 km military cordon from Grootfontein to Gobabis. Water-holes were occupied and poisoned while sorties were mounted to hunt down and kill surviving Herero bands. On the 2 October, following a religious service at the oasis of Osombo Windimbe on the edge of the Omaheke, von Trotha issued his *Vernichtungsbefehl*. After hanging several Herero prisoners to show that he was serious, the extermination order was translated to other captives who were then chased into the desert to take the message to their people.

that 'That nation must vanish from the face of the earth'.⁶ Barely a week later in another oft-quoted letter to Leutwein dated 5 November he tried to vindicate his actions by explaining that;

All African tribes have the same mentality insofar as they yield only to force. It remains my policy to apply this force through unmitigated terrorism and even cruelty. I shall destroy the rebellious tribes by shedding streams of blood and streams of money. Only thus will it be possible to sow the seeds of something new that will endure.⁷

Some of the key ingredients that caused a relatively minor colonial revolt to escalate into one of the most thorough genocides of the twentieth century are to be found in this short statement. Most obtrusive is the willing, even eager, use of massive and indiscriminate force against an already defeated enemy, including women, children and the aged. There is also an explicit racism in von Trotha's pronouncement that starts off by denigrating 'all African tribes' and culminates in a Social Darwinist vision of the complete destruction of Herero society and its replacement with a racially superior colonial order. The point about Social Darwinism is that it looks beyond the military defeat of the racial enemy to their disappearance, a supposedly inevitable consequence of natural law and human destiny. What is additionally evident in this quotation is the hubris of a supreme military commander who felt that he had both the mandate and the resources to execute his policy of total annihilation.

There was of course much more to the destruction of Herero society than von Trotha's bloodlust and utopian racial fantasies. Although von Trotha played a critical role in the impulse toward genocide in its 'hard' sense of intending the total elimination of a social group,⁸ it must not be forgotten that he acted in the interest of the German colonial enterprise in Namibia with the approval of both his military and political superiors. Before the outbreak of war the intention of the colonial administration was to create a white settler colony in which dispossessed and essentially rightless indigenes would form a servile labour force. Once von Trotha implemented his campaign of annihilation large sectors of the German military, state and society, most conspicuously in German South West Africa itself, either applauded his actions or contemplated them with equanimity. Von Trotha was reined in and the extermination order rescinded only when the political fallout in Germany and Europe proved costly. Furthermore, after the wanton killing ceased the genocidal assault against defeated indigenous groups was continued

6 Quoted in H. Drechsler, *'Let Us Die Fighting': The Struggle of the Herero and Nama against German Imperialism, 1884-1915*, (Akademie Verlag, Berlin, 1966), 161. See also Dederig, 'A certain rigorous treatment of all parts of the nation', 212. In the letter von Trotha continued: 'Having failed to destroy them with guns, I will have to achieve my end in that way' (chasing them into the desert).

7 This is a slightly amended version of Horst Drechsler's translation of the passage. See Drechsler, *Let Us Die Fighting*, 154. Mark Cocker translated the phrase as 'Rivers of blood and rivers of gold' see M. Cocker, *Rivers of Blood, Rivers of Gold: Europe's Conquest of Indigenous Peoples* (New York: Grove Press, 1998).

8 There is ongoing scholarly controversy over what constitutes genocide. 'Softer' definitions of genocide do not require the intention to destroy the entire social group.

in the form of the pernicious policy of incarcerating survivors in concentration camps where they died in large numbers from exposure, overwork, disease, physical abuse and deliberate neglect. The three volumes under consideration cast light in very different ways on aspects of one of the most brutal episodes in African colonial history.

The first of the books under review consists of the republication of a singular document describing German oppression of the indigenous peoples of Namibia and the atrocities committed against them during the wars of 1905-08. In August 1918 the British government published a report, generally referred to as a 'Blue Book', detailing the nature of German colonial administration in South West Africa.⁹ The purpose of the *Blue Book* was to influence the terms of the peace settlement after World War I by justifying the invasion of German South West Africa by the South African Defence Force in 1915 and forestalling the return of this colony to German rule by keeping it within the British Empire. This *Report*, hastily compiled by South African officials in the military administration, was meant more specifically to establish South African claims to rule the territory. The *Blue Book* no doubt played a part in the former German colony eventually being granted to South Africa as a C-class mandate by the League of Nations in 1920 after five years of military rule.

The *Report* is an extensive document of over three hundred and fifty pages. Besides a brief preface written by E. M. Gorges, the administrator of South West Africa, and three short appendices, it comprises two sections. The first, and by far the longest, has twenty-five chapters that provide a history of German colonial rule with an emphasis on its harshness and consequent resistance by the Herero and Nama peoples. It also incorporates a fair amount of ethnographic background on both groups. Shorter sketches of the colonial experience of other indigenous peoples are included. This first section written by Major Thomas O'Reilly, the military magistrate of Omaruru, evinces a great deal of sympathy for the indigenous peoples of Namibia and presents a surprisingly scrupulous and detailed record of their suffering despite its obvious agenda of discrediting German rule. The second part of the *Report* written by A. J. Waters, crown prosecutor for the territory, describes the status and treatment of Namibian 'Natives' under criminal law, paying particular attention to the inhuman corporal punishment meted out by both employers and police for the smallest of infractions. The South African legal system is of course favourably compared to its German counterpart. The *Blue Book*, in addition, contains grim photographic evidence of German atrocities by both colonists and the armed forces. Despite making a show of compassion for the indigenous peoples, the *Report* nevertheless reveals a clear racist tone, especially in the ethnographic sections. A striking feature of its racial stereotyping is the characterization of the Nama as particularly ugly and indolent, drawing on centuries-old prejudices against Khoikhoi people (123, 138).

A fairly substantive introduction by the editors sets the *Report* in its basic context. It describes how and why the *Blue Book* was compiled, the reasons for its

9 *Report on the Natives of South-West Africa and Their Treatment by Germany*, Cd. 9146, (London:HMSO,1918)

suppression less than a decade after it was published and reflects on its significance for Namibian history, comparative colonial studies and the subject of genocide as a whole. Throughout the text of the *Report* itself the editors add commentary and clarification by means of footnotes, well over two hundred of them. Although it is informative and will be of particular use to readers unfamiliar with the topic, the introduction nonetheless falls short of the more thorough and deliberative treatment one might have hoped such a rich and provocative document would have received.¹⁰ It is a pity that the scanning of the text resulted in numerous typographical errors that were allowed to go uncorrected.

Given that the *Blue Book* is a work of propaganda and part of a calculated diplomatic offensive, it is a remarkably accurate and well-documented account of German colonialism in South West Africa. There are several reasons for this. In the first place, German rule was so brutal that there was little need to exaggerate or invent atrocities. Secondly, there was not much time for fabrication. Its hurried compilation over four months meant that the *Report* is essentially a cut-and-paste job of existing documentation¹¹, eye-witness reports collected in the form of affidavits and ethnographic background material that supported their propagandistic intentions and expedient argumentation by the compilers. Thirdly, because there was much at stake politically and because its authors and their political superiors expected their work to come under critical scrutiny by the international community, perhaps would even be opposed by Britain's colonial rivals, they were careful to substantiate their contention that the restoration of German rule would be a menace to the local population and detrimental to political stability in the region. It is ironic that the *Blue Book's* self-serving nature helped bolster the veracity of its version.

After it had served its propagandistic purpose, however, the *Report* proved to be a liability to the white supremacist agenda of the South African administration because its contents had all along been regarded as a major injustice by Germans,¹² most acrimoniously amongst those who had remained in the colony. In 1926, at the urging of the first legislative assembly constituted by the South African authorities, the *Blue Book* was withdrawn from circulation in libraries and archives throughout the British Empire. In South Africa and Namibia copies were destroyed. The suppression of the *Report* was an attempt to foster reconciliation between the aggrieved German and growing South African settler communities thereby cementing their cooperation in ruling the territory and exploiting the black majority as a cheap labour force.

A notable feature of the *Blue Book* is that it contains numerous eye-witness reports, many of them by Africans. These oral testimonies and first-hand accounts, especially those by survivors, are of great value because African perspectives on these events are rare. Many of these statements are quite detailed, vivid and give

10 See R. Kössler, 'Sjambok or cane?' Reading the *Blue Book*, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30 (3) (2004), 703-08 for a critique of this introduction, especially the editors accepting too readily some of its testimony as representing an authentic African voice.

11 In anticipation of a case to be made against the return of South West Africa to its former rulers, some German documentation had already been translated into English.

12 The German government in 1919 published a rebuttal, the so-called *White Book*, recounting the atrocities of other colonial powers, especially those committed by the British. See Silvester and Gewald, *Words Cannot be Found*, xix.

unique insight into the suffering and violence inflicted on victims. The quote in the book title comes from one such witness, Jan Kubas, described as a Griqua from Grootfontein. Kubas, who served as an auxiliary in the German forces that pursued the Herero into the Omaheke Desert, quite understandably, claimed that '[W]ords cannot be found' to describe the horrific scenes of mass slaughter and wanton cruelty he had witnessed (117).

This evidence, nevertheless, needs to be treated with caution as Reinhart Kössler warns.¹³ In the first instance, the statements were taken more than a decade, sometimes much longer, after the events described. Questions of memory and hindsight come into play as does the fact that the testimony was collected by officials from the administration of an occupying force. Some of the witnesses, such as transport riders in the employ of the colonial state and Africans who served in an auxiliary capacity in the German forces, were complicit in the violence and may thus have had incentives to colour, or even deliberately distort, their evidence. When placed under critical examination their evidence nonetheless proves to be highly reliable and is corroborated by other source material such as contemporary accounts and official records. Apologist attempts to dismiss this testimony ring hollow. Best known perhaps is Brigitte Lau's disparagement of the *Blue Book* as 'an English piece of war propaganda with no credibility whatsoever' (xxi).

The *Report* is an important document in many respects and the centenary of the outbreak of the exterminatory wars in Namibia presented as propitious a time as any for its republication. Indeed, noting that there are many monuments that honour the German dead but 'not a single (one) in Namibia that has been raised to the memory of the thousands who died on account of the enforcement of Germany's colonial will on the territory' (xxxv), the authors intend this volume to serve 'in some measure' as a 'memorial to those that died' (xxxvi). Given these sentiments it is a great pity that the hefty price tag of US\$92.00¹⁴ for this paperback militates against it finding broad popular appeal, most conspicuously in Namibia itself. Its greater accessibility in this form will, nonetheless, be welcomed by the scholarly community, in particular by those interested in the history of Namibia, the African colonial experience and genocide studies. The *Report* is interesting as a history in its own right, notwithstanding its propagandistic intentions, obvious biases, simplifications, lacunae and errors. Indeed, it has a singular status in the historiography of the topic because for nearly four decades it was the only critical account of German colonial rule in South West Africa.

Historical writing on the colonial wars of early twentieth century Namibia has been episodic at best.¹⁵ It was only in the latter half of the 1960s that the first ac-

13 Kössler, 'Sjambok or cane?', 705-07.

14 See the list price on the Brill website <http://www.brill.nl/default.aspx?partid=210&pid=22686>, accessed 24 July 2008.

15 In this short historiographical review I will restrict myself to commenting on work that has been published in English as I do not read German, the other language in which major enquiries on the topic have appeared. For a more detailed and authoritative treatment of this historiography see J. Zimmerer, 'Colonial genocide: The Herero and Nama War (1904-8) in German South West Africa and its significance', in D. Stone, (ed.), *The Historiography of Genocide*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 323-43.

demographic studies of any substance on the subject were published.¹⁶ The two books that appeared in relatively quick succession dominated the landscape for over three decades. The first was Horst Drechsler's *Let Us Die Fighting* published in 1966 followed two years later by Helmut Bley's *South West Africa Under German Rule*.¹⁷ Both are detailed studies based on extensive archival research, principally of the German colonial archive housed in Potsdam, and are still serviceable histories. Drechsler, who hailed from East Germany, wrote from a Marxist and anti-colonial perspective informed by the German Democratic Republic's critique of capitalism and imperial Germany. This ideological bias and a lack of theoretical rigour has resulted in his work not aging all that well. The study presents a picture of an all-powerful and dastardly German colonialism victimizing essentially passive Africans in accordance with a preconceived plan methodically implemented. Drechsler was, however, the first to point to the excessive violence of German colonialism and to label the mass killing of the Herero as genocide.¹⁸ Bley's study is closely focussed on the German colonial administration, especially the system of government developed by Leutwein. His more complex analysis considers how the agendas of competing colonial interest groups affected policy and the outcome of the conflict. Unlike Drechsler he pays greater attention to the immensely oppressive post-war dispensation imposed on survivors. Bley also explicitly endorses Hannah Arendt's contention that 'the seeds of totalitarianism can be found in the period of colonial rule in Africa' (224, 282). These two books, which complement each other in many ways, effectively defined the level of scholarly knowledge on the matter until the latter half of the 1990s.

In the meantime a number of derivative accounts were published, the most prominent being Jon Bridgman's *The Revolt of the Hereros*, published in 1981. Although it partly draws on primary research it concentrates mainly on the military campaigns.¹⁹ Then in 1989 Brigitte Lau, a Namibian historian, sparked an intense debate about whether these mass killings constituted genocide in an ill-conceived attack on the idea. While her stated intention was to counter Eurocentric interpretations of Namibian history which denied the agency of indigenous peoples, the import of her article was apologist because she greatly understated the level of violence perpetrated by the Germans. The most effective refutation of her intervention and a culmination in the flurry of exchanges came from Tilman Dederling's 1993 article which refocused attention on the premeditated, mass destructiveness of German colonial policy.²⁰ It was only in 1996, with the appearance

16 During the 1950s the originator of the term 'genocide', Raphael Lemkin, worked on a history of genocide. It is clear from his unpublished manuscript that he regarded the annihilation of the Herero as genocide. See A. Curthoys, 'Rafael Lemkin's "Tasmania": An introduction' in Moses and Stone, *Colonialism and Genocide*, 66; D. Schaller, 'Rafael Lemkin's view of colonial rule in Africa: Between condemnation and admiration', *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 7(4.), 2005, 534.

17 Drechsler, *Let Us Die Fighting* first published as *Südwestafrika unter Deutscher Kolonialherrschaft: Der Kampf der Herero und Nama gegen den Deutschen Imperialismus*. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966); H. Bley, *South West Africa under German Rule, 1894-1914*. (London: Heineman, 1971) first published as *Kolonialherrschaft und Sozialstruktur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, 1894-1914*. (Hamburg: Leibnitz Verlag, 1968)

18 Zimmerer, 'Colonial genocide', 330.

19 J. Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981)

20 See B. Lau, 'Uncertain Certainties: The Herero-German War of 1904', *Mibagus*, Vol. 2, 1989 republished in A. Heywood, ed., *Brigitte Lau: History and Historiography*, (Windhoek, Dicoourse/MSORP, 1995); T. Dederling, 'The German-Herero War of 1904: Revisionism of genocide or imaginary historiography', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 19 (1), 1993, 80-88.

of Jan-Bart Gewald's *Toward Redemption*, republished in 1999 as *Herero Heroes*, that the boundaries of scholarly knowledge on the subject shifted significantly beyond those set by Drechsler and Bley.²¹ Besides mining missionary records to add a wealth of new information and offer novel interpretations of major aspects of the episode, Gewald's major contribution was to introduce Herero agency into the analysis.²²

The next notable surge in English scholarly production on the topic has come in the last few years, stimulated partly by the centenary of the Namibian wars. The attempts by both the Herero and Nama peoples to gain legal redress for these crimes have also helped raise public awareness of the genocides.²³ Another contributing factor is that the closer attention being paid to colonial mass killings within the broader field of genocide studies is leading to a re-evaluation of the Namibian experience as an example of genocide. In this recent writing, as attested by the publications under scrutiny, there has been a move away from producing general histories to examining in greater detail neglected, unfamiliar and highly specific aspects of the episode.

Casper Erichsen's study exemplifies the trend. This relatively slim book is a noteworthy piece of work because it helps plug a major gap in the English-language historiography of German colonialism in Namibia.²⁴ Although the concentration camps have an exceedingly iniquitous reputation in this literature, there had until the publication of this volume been no detailed investigation of the prisoner-of-war experience of the Herero and Nama peoples. Most studies make only passing reference to the concentration camps and only those of Drechsler and Gewald paid meaningful attention to them.²⁵ Part of the reason for this is that the relevant archival files in both Namibia and Germany had been destroyed – the former in the face of advancing South African troops in 1915, and the latter in Allied bombing raids during World War II (*xvi*). This account has thus been put together by means of a time-consuming and extensive sifting through of a wide range of archival and other primary sources for bits and pieces of information to build a coherent picture. The result is a pioneering study that is all the more extraordinary in that it is based on a masters thesis.²⁶

Erichsen, a Dane who has lived in Namibia for many years, writes with sensitivity and a great deal of passion, not least because he regards himself as a 'history

21 J. Gewald, *Towards Redemption: A Socio-political History of the Herero of Namibia Between 1890 and 1923*, (Leiden: Research School CNWS, 1996); *Herero Heroes*, (Oxford: James Currey, 1999).

22 Two major studies in German that have unfortunately not as yet been translated into English are G. Krüger, *Kriegsbe-wältigung und Geschichtsbewusstsein: Realität, Deutung und Verarbeitung des Deutschen Kolonialkriegs in Namibia bis 1907*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1999) and J. Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner: Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im Kolonialen Namibia*, (Hamburg: Lit. Verlag, 2001).

23 For further information on the subject see J. Gewald, 'Imperial Germany and the Herero of Southern Africa: Genocide and the quest for recompense' in A. Jones, ed., *Genocide and War Crimes and the West: History and Complicity*, (London, Zed Books, 2004), 59-77; A Cooper, 'Reparations for the Herero Genocide: Defining the Limits of International Litigation', *African Affairs*, Vol. 106, No. 422, (January 2007), 113-26

24 Erichsen and Zeller's chapters on concentration camps had already appeared in Zimmerer and Zeller's *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika* by the time this book was published. See also J. Gaydish, ' "Fair treatment is guaranteed to you": The Swakopmund Prisoner-of-War Camp, 1905-08', unpublished conference paper presented at *Public History, Forgotten History Conference*, University of Namibia, 22-25 August 2000.

25 Drechsler, 207-14; Gewald, 185-204.

26 This thesis won Erichsen Leiden University's African Studies Centre Masters Thesis Award for 2004. See <http://www.ascleiden.nl/pdf/juryrapportthesisaward2004.pdf>, accessed 25 JULY 2008

activist' (xv). This activism he describes as going beyond 'just indulging in the wealth of personal, social, natural and other forms of history found throughout the country' and including activities such as 'lobbying, discussing, convening exhibitions' and the like (xv). It comes as no surprise therefore that he acted as co-director and researcher for the television documentary *One Hundred Years of Silence* on the history and contemporary meaning of the Herero genocide, and was also involved in the making of a second documentary on the subject, the BBC's *Namibia: Genocide and the Second Reich*.²⁷

This book is less an investigation of the prisoners-of-war and concentration camps of the Namibian conflicts of 1904-08 as the title suggests, than a study of the prison compound on Shark Island in Luderitz Bay harbour because more than half the volume is devoted to this camp. It consists of four chapters, of which the first two take up ninety per cent of the space. The text is very usefully supplemented by over fifty photographs, many of which are harrowing. Several have not been published before and add significantly to our knowledge, particularly of conditions in the Shark Island camp. While a few photographs receive highly detailed commentary, most are accorded scant annotation. Accompanying text boxes on complementary topics such as the lives of *bambusen* (young African menservants of German officers), the renting of Shark Island inmates as labourers to private individuals, and the extent to which Kitchener served as role model for von Trotha, add much interest to the book.

The first chapter, which makes up nearly two-fifths of the volume, provides detailed context for the Shark Island case study that follows. In a few deft strokes Erichsen takes the reader through the conflicts that led to Herero and Nama captives being detained in concentration camps from January 1905 onwards until they were closed in January 1908 in celebration of the Kaizer's birthday. He lingers on von Trotha's extermination order because it is important for establishing the genocidal nature of German policy and that the rescinding of the order in December 1904 directly gave rise to the concentration camp strategy. The chapter discusses the thinking behind the new plan, its implementation and, in particular, the collaboration of missionaries in gathering survivors for detention. Erichsen is justified in describing the role of the missionaries in the collection process as a betrayal of trust because they put loyalty to the German cause ahead of their Christian principles and because they lured Herero scattered across an expansive, inhospitable landscape with promises of food, peace and freedom, knowing that they would be incarcerated as prisoners-of-war.

A large proportion of the chapter is devoted to describing living – more accurately dying – conditions in the camps generally. Mortality rates were horrendously high, partly because prisoners were in a desperate state when they arrived at the camps, having suffered through a cruel war, near starvation in the Omaheke Desert and a long trek through rough terrain. Survivors were herded together into completely inadequate accommodation composed of army tents or makeshift huts

27 *100 Years of Silence*, (New York: Filmmakers Library, 2006) produced and directed by Halfdan Muurholm; *Namibia: Genocide and the Second Reich* (London: BBC, 2005) directed by David Olusoga.

of blankets and sacking. Captives had to endure forced labour, rampant disease, deliberate neglect, exceedingly poor nutrition and physical abuse that included frequent floggings and rape. Erichsen pays particular attention to the predicament of women and children who made up over three quarters of the inmates. Mortality in the coastal camps at Swakopmund and Luderitz was exceptionally high because the cold, damp climate took an added toll on people unused to such weather and sparsely sheltered from the elements. In all, it is estimated that over half of all prisoners-of-war died in captivity. In June 1905, a singularly bad month, the mortality rate in the Swakopmund camp was an astounding twenty per cent having reached forty per cent over the preceding four month period from February to May (26, 73, 147). The intriguing title of the book is taken from the Luderitz District Commissioner's annual report for that year in which he tried to deflect blame for the inordinately high death rate in that camp from the German administration to some vague supernatural intervention (160).

The next chapter is appropriately entitled 'The Island of Death', a direct translation of *Todesinsel*, the name commonly applied to Shark Island by German soldiers stationed there. Of all the Namibian concentration camps, the one on Shark Island has had the most notorious reputation even though less was known about it than the other major camps. Erichsen sets the camp within the context of the history and functioning of the adjacent settlement of Luderitz with which it was inextricably intertwined. Besides being a means of punishment, prisoners were sent to Shark Island to supply much needed labour for the burgeoning town and also to remove them from a familiar environment to reduce the chances of rebellion. The chapter consists of a discursive and sometimes richly textured discussion of conditions in the Shark Island camp which elaborates on many of the themes developed in the previous chapter. Special attention is given to Nama prisoners-of-war as they formed a majority of the inmates. Erichsen, moreover, works in a number of vignettes such as an analysis of rare photographic evidence about the prison camp, the sexual exploitation of women by soldiers and colonists, and the distressing story of Samuel Kariko, a Nama teacher sent to the island together with his family as an evangelist by Rhenish missionaries. Though not a prisoner, Kariko lived amongst them for six months, suffering alongside his compatriots. This enabled him to give valuable evidence about the camp to compilers of the *Blue Book* where he observed that 'people died there like flies that had been poisoned'.²⁸

The Shark Island concentration camp had a substantially higher mortality rate than its counterparts because of the particularly brutal treatment of inmates and the more severe conditions under which they were forced to live. Circumstances on Shark Island were decidedly lethal because it is a barren outcrop of rock exposed to icy year-round gusts from the south Atlantic. What is more, the camp was on the southern, and most exposed, end of the island and most of its scantily clad prisoners were housed in completely inadequate shelters of blankets nailed to wooden poles. Prison labour was used mainly for dangerous and back-breaking work on infrastructural projects around the town. Many suffered terribly from being forced

28 Silvester and Gewalt, *Words Cannot be Found*, 177.

to work in the icy sea water constructing the new pier and wave breaker in the harbour. Its reputation and morbid nickname were thus well deserved as over 70 per cent of inmates succumbed under these hellish conditions (133). Although he does not make the allegation in this book, in *100 Years of Silence* Erichsen justifiably refers to Shark Island as the world's first death camp.²⁹ While it did not operate as systematically as the Nazi death camps, Erichsen provides abundant evidence that it was the intention of the colonial administration and the army that a large proportion of prisoners die as a result of overwork and deliberate neglect. One of the motives behind this behaviour was Governor Lindequist's hope that a substantial reduction in prisoner numbers would make deportation to another German colony a viable option.

A short third chapter sets out to establish responsibility for the high death rates in the concentration camps, in particular the one on Shark Island. Erichsen cites more evidence and produces further argumentation for what is already patently clear, namely, that both the colonial and metropolitan governments were well aware of the high mortality rates which were not 'the result of neglect or coincidence' (147) but the result of policy decisions that regarded mass death as an 'acceptable outcome' (151) and were even prepared to countenance the prison population dying out completely (156). It is difficult not to come to the conclusion that the concentration camp policy was genocidal in nature. A brief conclusion revisits the claims of apologists and deniers and reiterates the case for genocide.

The *Blue Book* features quite prominently in this study, less as a source and more for the mutual corroboration of their respective findings. Erichsen on several occasions makes lengthy references to evidence supplied by the *Report*, validating the eye-witness accounts and information supplied. He focuses especially on what might on the surface appear to be questionable statements and then contextualizes, verifies, clarifies and supplements the information found in this testimony.³⁰ Indeed, Erichsen ends off his study by confirming that he effectively comes to the same conclusion as the *Blue Book* that '...the Germans who placed these naked remnants of starving humanity on the barren islets of Lüderitzbucht and on the moisture-oozing shores of Swakopmund must take the fullest blame and submit to the condemnation of all persons with even an elementary feeling of humanity towards the native races'. (160)

Informative and pioneering though it may be, the book has its weaknesses. There are many gaps, silences and issues that might have been fleshed out further. The result is a discussion that can be a little erratic at times. One assumes that this is because of the paucity and the fragmented nature of the source material. Clearly Master's theses also place constraints of time and space on candidates. The dissertation was not sufficiently reworked for publication as the language and argumentation is still very thesis-like. Not even phrases such as 'this thesis' have been changed. One feature of this volume that cannot be passed over without comment is the excessive number of grammatical, typographical and other errors that mar

29 *100 Years of Silence* (New York: Filmmakers Library, 2006)

30 See for example the section on Samuel Kariko pp. 94 ff. and his discussion of the evidence of Edward Fredericks pp. 121-23.

the study. There is hardly a page without a mistake of one sort or another and very often there are several errors per page. Although the vast majority of errors are trivial and although the intrinsic value of this study cannot be questioned, such errors are bound to leave lingering doubts in readers' minds...the unfortunate wages of sloppy writing. That the publishers could allow the manuscript to pass through their hands without editing and proofreading is unconscionable.

The Angel of Death, despite these weakness, is a significant work in several respects. It adds an important chapter to the history of the concentration camp and helps fill a conspicuous gap in the history of Namibia. One hopes that Erichsen's study will pave the way for more detailed enquiry into the Namibian concentration camp experience. It is certainly a testament to what sustained digging in archives can produce. It has ramifications for twentieth century German history as well, particularly the relationship between the colonial mass killings and those perpetrated by the Nazi regime during World War II. Implicit in the study is the question of whether a path, however twisted, from Shark Island to Auschwitz may be discerned. Erichsen also provocatively mentions Eugene Fischer as a tangible link between the racial science that informed colonial practice in Namibia and the 'implementation of Nazi policies of racial hygiene' (144). The knotty issue of links between the two sets of genocides is a consistent theme that runs through the third of the volumes under review.

The book edited by Jürgen Zimmerer and Joachim Zeller, a translation from German of a compilation published in 2004,³¹ is a most welcome addition to the English-language historiography on Namibia's colonial wars. It is a boon to people like myself who have an interest in the subject but do not read German because it showcases formative recent research and writing on these atrocities in that language. Several chapters offer tantalizing abridgements of or partial access to major monographs currently only available in German. While relatively little work in this area has been produced in English since Gewalt's trailblazing study, it is evident from this volume that innovative research and thinking amongst German scholars is contributing to a re-assessment of German colonialism in Namibia.

The volume brings together eighteen contributions – nineteen if one includes a substantive introduction by the translator Edward Neather – organized into four thematic sections covering a broad spectrum of topics ranging from the pre-colonial Namibian context to the politics of remembrance in the twenty-first century. The collection consists of a combination of substantive chapters that cover major aspects of the Namibian wars of 1904-08 interspersed with a series of vignettes that explore highly specific or localized facets of the subject in ways that cast light on wider processes of German colonialism in Namibia. This approach works well in this volume as the cameos serve not only to complement the mainstay contributions but are extremely interesting enquiries in their own

31 Zimmerer and Zeller, *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*.

right. Together they build a coherent and authoritative picture of these conflicts, one that is both accessible to the lay reader and of interest to specialists. The book substantially broadens the scope of enquiry on the conflicts hitherto available in the English literature. What is more, the compilation is richly embellished with no less than seventy-nine illustrations of photographs, posters, postcards, cartoons and other visual material relating to these wars. Detailed annotations greatly amplify the meanings of these depictions and are of particular use to someone like myself who will be using them in the classroom.

The first section is made up of two contextualizing chapters by Gesine Krüger and Jürgen Zimmerer under the heading 'Namibia on the path to colonization'. They are preceded by the translator's introduction which forms part of the scene-setting exercise because, instead of addressing issues of transcription as one might have expected, it furnishes useful background. Using broad brush strokes Neather contextualizes the pre-colonial and colonial German presence in Africa in both European colonial and German history generally. He goes as far back as the fifteenth century to explain how Germans participated in the European colonial project through trade, commerce and supplying technological expertise without acquiring colonies, until Bismarck's about-turn in May 1884 led to her joining the scramble for Africa with gusto and laying claim to German South West Africa. The latter part of this chapter outlines the international and domestic context of the loss of her empire. Krüger then very briefly sketches the nineteenth century historical background of the Herero and Nama peoples emphasising the usefulness of oral tradition for recovering their past to dispel the myth that pre-literate African societies existed in a historyless limbo (3-4). The thrust of her chapter is to demonstrate that by the time of colonization the Herero and Nama were not 'prehistoric tribes' but groups 'who had lived for several generations in an increasingly militarized society, maintained economic and diplomatic exchanges with the Cape Colony and pursued their own strategies of ensuring the continuity of power, including the use of "modern" methods such as writing and weapons' (14). Zimmerer's chapter provides an overview of the nature of German rule in Namibia through a discussion of how the implementation of racial segregation and the coercion of forced labour shaped colonial society. What the non-specialist is likely to find most useful is his outline of the evolution of the colonial state that undergirds the analysis. He progressively takes the reader from the symbolic assertions of control that characterized the weak colonial state in its early years, via Leutwein's dual strategy of indirect rule while building up a central administration in the decade before the wars of annihilation, through to the failed utopian vision of complete control of indigenous peoples after German dominance had unequivocally been established by the wars of annihilation.

The second section of five chapters focuses on aspects of the conflicts of 1904-08. Zimmerer provocatively entitles his second contribution, 'The first German genocide', not only making clear that he considers the Namibian mass killings to be genocide but also implicitly raising questions of links with subsequent German genocides. His chapter continues the process of contextualization by offering a succinct but incisive summary of the war and its aftermath. In the course of his analysis he outlines a closely argued, and what I would regard as an irrefutable, case for genocide, no doubt with deniers and apologists in mind. Zimmerer ends

off by situating the Namibian wars within the global history of genocidal violence, pointing not only to parallels with earlier colonial mass murders as occurred in the United States and Australia, but especially to continuities with the horrors perpetrated by the Nazi regime four decades later. The next two chapters investigate the concentration camp experience of the Herero and Nama peoples. Joachim Zeller's history of the Swakopmund camp makes extensive use of Rhenish mission records, most notably the writings of Heinrich Vedder, to detail the deleterious conditions under which prisoners were forced to live. He draws comparisons in particular with the concentration camps of the Third Reich. Zeller cautiously suggests that the treatment of prisoners was so harsh it could be viewed as 'a continuation of the policy of extermination introduced by Lothar von Trotha' (78). In the following chapter Erichsen offers a terse, focussed summary of his findings around the Shark Island camp as already outlined.

The rest of the section is made up of two short but interesting contributions by Medardus Brehl and Ulrich van der Heyden who elaborate on German domestic themes. Both indicate widespread public awareness of events in Namibia and its enthusiastic support of German colonial practice. Brehl examines how the colonial wars were depicted in German popular literature. In these writings mass violence is generally legitimated as a necessary part of Germany's civilizing mission, as a salutary episode in the moulding of German nationhood or as an unavoidable consequence of a Social Darwinian racial struggle. In a contribution of less than five pages van der Heyden analyses the 1907 'Hottentot election' precipitated by the refusal of left wing parties in the Reichstag to ratify funding for the continuation of the war in Namibia. The heavy defeat of the Social Democratic Party and its allies confirmed popular endorsement of the German colonial project and the military campaign in South West Africa.

The collection as a whole is careful not to underplay the agency of the colonized as so often happens in accounts of colonial conquest. It thus comes as no surprise that the third section groups five chapters under the heading 'Misery, resistance, and a new beginning: The African perspective'. This cluster comprises three case studies of how indigenous communities engaged the colonial presence and the violence it unleashed while two proffer gendered analyses relating to the conflict. The first of these chapters is by Jan-Bard Gewalt who provides a broad sweep of Herero history from 1890, when colonization first impinged on their communal life in a material way, through to 1923 when the funeral of Samuel Maherero functioned as a rallying point for surviving Hereros to regroup and build a new social identity. Essentially summarizing *Herero Heroes*, he presents an overview of Herero history under German and early South African rule that readers unfamiliar with the subject will find particularly informative. It brims with keen insights and complements the earlier chapters by Krüger and Zimmerer very well. A key aspect of Gewalt's analysis is his demonstration that the war was triggered by the provocative actions of German officers, principally Lieutenant Zürn, during Leutwein's absence to quell the Bondelswartz revolt in the far south. It gainsays apologist justification of German retribution that latch onto the conventional interpretation that the revolt arose from a strategic decision by the Herero to take advantage of the temporary reduction of troop strength in Hereroland.

Werner Hillebrecht sets out a proficient exposition of conflict and collaboration by the Nama under German rule, especially the four year long guerrilla war that ranged over the entire southeastern sector of the colony. Given the title and tenor of the book, it is most surprising that he does not address the issue of genocide specifically and barely mentions the concentration camp phase of the destruction of Nama society. His chapter is followed by Dominic Schaller's concise, workmanlike survey of Ovambo interaction with colonial society in South West Africa. Since the Ovambo kingdoms remained independent of German control and were wary of drawing their attention, contact was limited and they remained peripheral to the conflict in Hereroland. The one direct Ovambo intervention was a successful raid in January 1904 by the Eastern Ondonga chief, Nehale, on Fort Namutoni, the northernmost German military outpost.

In a wideranging chapter that breaks important new ground Gesine Krüger examines the experience, mainly of Herero, but also of German, women during the war and its aftermath. She explains how, because the war was perceived as part of a Social Darwinian struggle, women and children were exposed to the full force of German exterminatory violence. An interesting theme she develops is the portrayal of Herero women in German propaganda, amongst other things, as 'black amazons swinging clubs and castrating their foes' (177). Later, as inmates in concentration camps, Herero women elicited some sympathy in the diaries and memoirs of soldiers. Their suffering was usually seen as an unavoidable consequence of a global racial struggle and the dying out of inferior races. The final chapter in the section focuses on Ida Maria Getzen, a mission educated woman of mixed Herero and European parentage, who married a German trader, Kaspar Leinhos, on 22 May 1904, at the height of the war against the Herero. Ida Getzen was an independently minded woman whose life straddled the worlds of both colonizer and colonized. This brief exploration of the ambiguities of her existence and the motivations of both herself and key people within her ambit helps not only to illuminate the complexities of life on the ground but also to break down our tendency to dichotomize colonial society.

The final section entitled 'Remembering and forgetting' embodies six chapters on the politics of commemoration and contemporary meanings of the mass killings in both Namibia and Germany. Gewalt's second offering explains how the funeral of Samuel Maherero held on 26 August 1923 served as a catalyst for the reactivation of family and communal ties and thereby the regeneration of a sense of Herero identity. Samuel Maherero was amongst a small contingent of Herero who had managed to cross the Omaheke into Bechuanaland and lived in exile there until his death on 14 March 1923 before his body was returned to Okahandja for burial. Maherero's funeral was the first time Herero had gathered en masse since the war and 'demonstrated to the Herero and the world that they were once again a self-aware... social and political community... with its own identity' (214). Out of this gathering, moreover, emerged the *otjiserandu*, the annual commemoration of the genocide and re-affirmation of Herero identity.

Reinhart Kössler's chapter traces the evolving format, meanings and messages of the Festival of Remembrance, or Heroes Day as it became known since 1980, amongst the Witbooi community of Nama-speakers. These commemorations,

which can be traced back to at least 1930, were used not only to honour the dynasty of Witbooi *kapteins* that had led the group since the days of the revered Hendrik Witbooi in the late nineteenth century but also to affirm their group identity. Kössler provides a finely-grained account of the symbolic ways in which the commemoration has been used by the Witbooi to articulate their grievances and aspirations, and to come to terms in constructive ways with their experience of genocide, oppression under South African rule and their feelings of marginality since independence. The next two chapters continue with the theme of the symbolic politics of remembrance, but amongst colonizers and their descendants. Joachim Zeller's second chapter deconstructs the intentions and changing meanings attached to monuments erected to honour colonial troops both in Namibia and Germany. Initially intended to assert German imperial claims to the territory and their racial superiority over indigenes, these memorials became rallying points during the inter-war period for revisionists demanding the restoration of Germany's colonies, while in more recent times several have been re-dedicated as anti-colonial monuments. In a five page vignette Larissa Forster analyses the significance that the German cemetery at the Waterberg and the annual remembrance day rituals performed there from 1927 onwards held both for German colonial consciousness as well as opposing African opinion. All three of these chapters explain how the content and meaning of these traditions have transformed, often radically, in response to changing social and political realities.

Henning Melber skilfully maps out Namibian-German relations since independence using extracts from an exclusive but highly abrasive television interview given by Sam Nujoma in November 2002 to Thomas Knemeyer, a German journalist with conservative sympathies and generally critical of the Namibian government. Melber demonstrates how the ghosts of the colonial past still haunt their dealings. Besides tensions over current political and economic issues, ongoing Namibian sensitivities about colonial depredations have ensured a rather volatile relationship. Repeated indiscretions by German statesmen - including Helmut Kohl's greeting of German-speaking Namibians during his 1995 visit as 'dear fellow countrymen' - have from time to time stoked Namibian resentment. Melber points to the manner in which ethnic particularities amongst Namibians, the different meanings they attach to colonial atrocities and current inequalities in power, have shaped the politics around memorialization and claims for recompense. The closing chapter by Andreas Eckert considers the extent to which the nature of German colonialism may be regarded as a product of her supposed *sonderweg* - the theory that Germany's 'special path' to modernization allowed the Nazi Party to come to power by preserving the influence of the aristocratic class that favoured authoritarian solutions to national problems. In this short intervention Eckert is more inclined to pose questions and point out areas for enquiry than to suggest answers although he is quite clear that there was no direct path 'from Windhoek to Auschwitz'.³² He suggests that the Namibian experience needs also to be understood as part of the broader history of European colonialism rather than within the historical trajectory of Germany itself. Clearly an explanation of Nazi violence cannot simply be reduced to colonial influences.

It is appropriate that Eckert's chapter is the last in the collection as it spotlights a matter of central importance that is either raised directly in several chap-

ters, implied in others, or remains latent in the rest. Its inadequacy as any sort of conclusion, however, brings me to the one significant gripe I have about this anthology. The collection sorely lacks an introduction and/or a conclusion by the editors in which they comment on the overall thrust of the collection, reflect on common themes, situate divergent approaches within an overarching framework to provide greater coherence to the diversity of volume. It would have been interesting to read their thoughts on silences and gaps in the volume, how contributions intersect with other relevant work or dissenting views, the likely future directions of research, and the glaring paucity of black Namibian contributions to this historiography nearly two decades after independence.

The theme of continuities between the extermination policies of von Trotha and Hitler, tackled most directly in the chapters by Zimmerer and Eckert, points to an area of sharpening contention in both German historical scholarship and discussion around the Namibian genocides. Having ended much earlier than that of her European rivals, and having largely been eclipsed by the catastrophes of two world wars, the German colonial experience has not received much attention in academic writing. It was Hannah Arendt who in the early 1950s first raised the issue of continuities between colonialism and Nazi atrocities in her classic text *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.³³ There was no meaningful response to Henning Melber's early 1990s exploration of links between German colonialism in Namibia, Nazi policies and South African rule in the territory.³⁴ In the last few years, however, debate around the relationship between Germany's colonial experience, especially in Namibia, and the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime has emerged.

While this is not the place to review that debate,³⁵ what should be noted is that the question of continuities between German colonial atrocities and those perpetrated under the Third Reich is of no mean consequence for how modern German history is interpreted as well as for German national identity and its accommodation with Nazi-era crimes, particularly the Holocaust. Most obviously, if the case for continuities can be substantiated, it puts paid to any suggestion that the Third Reich was an aberration, a twelve year interval of madness that needs to be separated out from the rest of modern German history. This may be difficult for many Germans to accept. Jürgen Zimmerer has pointed to the knee-jerk refusal of both liberal and conservative schools in German historiography to countenance the possibility of continuities between the mass murders of the German colonial period

32 The phrase is borrowed from J. Zimmerer, *Von Windhoek nach Auschwitz?: Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust*, (Munster: Lit. Verlag, 2007).

33 H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1951). Arendt's focus was more broadly on the relationship between Western imperialism and totalitarianism.

34 Zimmerer, 'Colonial genocide', 335. The text referred to is H. Melber, 'Kontinuitäten Totaler Herrschaft: Völkermord und Apartheid in Deutsch-Südwestafrika', *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung*, Vol. 1, 1992, 91-116.

35 The broad outlines of the debate can be followed in *Bulletin of German Historical Institute*, Vol. 37, Fall 2005. See in particular I. Hull, 'Military Culture and the Production of "Final Solutions" in the Colonies: The Example of Wilhelmine Germany' in R. Gellately and B. Kiernan, eds., *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), 141-62; J. Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust: Toward an Archaeology of Genocide' in Moses, *Genocide and Settler Society*, 49-76. For a wide ranging discussion of connections between German colonialism in Namibia and Nazi atrocities see B. Madley, 'From Africa to Auschwitz: How German South West Africa incubated ideas and methods adopted and developed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe', *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 35 (3), 2005, 429-464. See also K. Jonassohn, 'Before the Holocaust deniers', *Society*, Vol. 32 (2), 1996, 31-38.

and those perpetrated by the Nazis; ‘... the liberal camp for fear of challenging the dogma of Holocaust uniqueness, the conservative one for fear of finding even more shocking parallels and continuities’.³⁶ Acceptance of substantive continuities between colonial and Nazi mass violence would not only favour arguments for German historical particularity but also the case for reparations against the German government. While the question of whether the Namibian mass killings of the early twentieth century constitute genocide appear to have been securely settled in the affirmative, the matter of continuities between colonial and Nazi-era violence seems to be a major arena for future historiographical sparring.

36 Zimmerer, ‘Colonial genocide’, 335.