

**Atrocities committed on the Herero people during the suppression
of their uprising in German South West Africa 1904-1907?
An analysis of the latest accusations against Germany and an investigation on
the credibility and justification of the demands for «reparation»**

Speech by Dr. Claus Nordbruch

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Honoured Ladies and Gentlemen,

it gives me pleasure to thank those who have had the courage to arrange this impressive conference. In particular, I would like to thank those who made my appearance possible. It is a great honour for me to be guest among women and men who feel self-consciously committed to the search for historical truth and, in doing so, who are prepared to take its related burden of personal and financial risks and, oftentimes, even physically painful attacks upon their health and life.

Today, I would like to talk about the latest accusations against Germany: the alleged atrocities committed on the Herero people in German South West Africa in 1904. According to the allegations, the *Kaiserliche Schutztruppe* (Imperial Protection Force) had hunted down the Herero after «a battle of encirclement» at Waterberg on 11 August 1904 by forcing them «systematically and mercilessly» into the waterless Omaheke desert preventing them from escaping and, thus, sentencing them to die atrociously from hunger and thirst. Tens of thousand of Herero people were supposed to be killed. To some extent, the advocates of this allegation state, this «genocide» would have been manifested by the «infamous proclamation» by General Lothar von Trotha, then commander-in-chief of the *Schutztruppe* in German South West Africa. Are these accusations based on the historical truth? Let us examine the facts!

At the South African-hosted *World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance* in Durban on 1 September

2001, Joschka Fischer, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, proclaimed: »The 20th century's most terrible crime of all, however, took place in my country: the genocide of six million European Jews, of Roma and Sinti. The memory of this act, which can in no way be relativized, and the responsibility deriving from it will lastingly shape Germany's policy.«¹ Confronted with such a blank cheque it does not really surprise, that demands for «reparations and compensations» against Germany still prove to be pretty lucrative.

Hence, it is not surprising to face constantly new demands which are based on alleged incidents supposed to have had occurred in the distant past, to be precisely, at the turn of the 19th century in Africa. In September 2001 such a claim was made on behalf of the Herero people of South West Africa (Namibia) by controversial chieftain Kuaima Riruako. By means of legal action before an American court, he intended to claim four billion US-\$ in damages from the Federal Republic of Germany and two German firms for slavery, genocide and theft. The chance to be successful, he characteristically estimated to be «possible, because we are following the same path as that of the Jews. The genocide against our people was a precursor of the Holocaust.»² Riruako argues, «that since Germany has paid reparations to Jews for their suffering in the Nazi Holocaust, his tribe should also receive German compensation.»³ This strong statement deserves to be analysed in detail, particularly, in the view of the fact that Riruako has already threatened in public, in case his people were not paid «reparations for crimes committed against his people during the colonial era», they would forcefully «repossess» farms. «Germany owes us reparations, or otherwise the only road left for us as Africans will be the Zimbabwe way.»⁴

In historiography we clearly have to distinguish between two major antagonistic groups: on the one side the ones who accuse someone and advocate propositions or even dogmas of alleged genocides, and on the other side those who don't. The

latter usually try to refute these allegations by research, preferably by manners of empirical investigation and scholastic publications. The same principle goes for the historiography on German South West Africa. To simplify this complex, let us call the advocates of the thesis of genocide on the Herero «exterminationists». Their counterparts will be named «revisionists», since they scientifically try to evaluate or to correct the predominant historiography.

Within the ruling climate of political correctness this status quo can cause trouble. Gunter Spraul, a German high school teacher in history, clearly understood this theme and admitted: «Since the second world war *genocide* [...] evokes particular emotions and associations. The images it evokes is determined by the practices of the National Socialists, so that any comparison must then either confront or compete with it.»⁵ But in this way, ladies and gentlemen, the discussion is cleverly directed into a predetermined corner out of which a free and factual discussion is not possible anymore, because from the very beginning it is stifled.

When in July 2001 an article appeared in the *Windhoek Observer*, which dealt with a recent MA thesis by Klaus Lorenz at the University of Hamburg⁶, the exterminationists were alarmed. Lorenz questioned the allegations of the so-called Herero genocide. Just like the late Windhoek National Archivist Brigitte Lau did in her contribution *Uncertain Certainties* in 1989. According to the exterminationists those kind of critical publications were an evidence of «right-wing» or at least «apologetic» historiography.⁷ The Swiss-based bookstore *Basler Bibliographie*, well-known advocate of «liberation movements» such as the *African National Congress* or the *South West African People's Organisation* (SWAPO), soon recognised those articles were published in rather conservative papers and, hence, defamed them as «revisionist writings», which they interpreted to be «right-wing» and thus non-scientific. Well, but why should contributions published in non-Marxist papers or non-mainstream papers be

regarded less scientifically valuable than articles published «left-wing» or anti-German media?

Accusations & claims

Lots of exterminationist publications are saturated with overused and worn out shut-up words such as «genocide», «brutality», «fascism», «German tyranny», «extermination politics» and of course «Holocaust». No wonder, that even so-called scholastic books you can find sentences like this one, for example: «For von Trotha the uprising was nothing but a horde of wild «niggers», whose rebellion could only be effectively punished through extermination.»⁸

According to the German Christian weekly *Das Sonntagsblatt*, the German Imperial «Afrikacorps» [sic!] committed the first genocide of the 20th century. The *Schutztruppe* had forced the Herero into the waterless desert, where four fifths of the Herero people would have died of thirst.⁹ The *African Unification Front* describes the degree of this alleged atrocity: «The Herero and Nama women and girls were interned in concentration camps and raped by German troops, while the men and boys were tortured and murdered. This treatment of the Africans was later applied to Jews and other enemies of the Nazi regime in Germany, by the same units of troops that had practised their deadly craft on Africa.»¹⁰

Enzo Traverso, who teaches political science in France, alleges: «The Herero people numbering more than 80,000 at the begin of 1904 has been decreased to 8,000 at the end of that year due to systematic actions of persecution, destruction and deportation to the desert, which was classified as «deliberative politics of genocide» by some historians.»¹¹ Peter Carstens of the University of Toronto whole-heartedly agrees, although his numbers significantly differ: »When the rebellion was suppressed in 1907, their numbers in the colony had been reduced from 100,000 to 25,000.«¹² The London-based *Peace Pledge Union* asserts, the

German soldiers were paid well to pursue the Herero into this treacherous wilderness. They were also ordered to poison the few water-holes there. Others set up guard posts along a 150-mile border: any Herero trying to get back was killed.¹³

No allegation seems to be too grotesque, no accusation too absurd. In 1998, well-known American journalist of the *Dallas Morning News*, Todd Bensman, wrote without any shame: «From 1904 to 1915 [!], the Kaiser's troops systematically exterminated as many as 80,000 Herero, a scarcely known slaughter of Teutonic efficiency that produced forced labor camps, sex slaves and the first academic «studies» of supposed Aryan superiority.»¹⁴ The Socialist writer Tom Sanders states: «Oral histories say men slit the throats of cattle to drink the blood. [...] Some Hereros cut open the bellies of the dead to drink the liquid from their stomachs. Men who escaped the desert were lynched in Ku Klux Klan style.»¹⁵ Although this allegation is purely subjective, it nevertheless enjoys international mainstream support! A couple of years ago, the BBC seriously stated, the «Germans drove the Herero into the Omaheke desert, sealing the last water holes off before erecting a fence to keep them out.»¹⁶

The advocates of the extermination thesis state, «the annihilation of the Hereros» was actually «the first genocide of the 20th century». It would now becoming increasingly clear that this «merciless German undertaking in Namibia, sowed the first seeds from which Adolf Hitler plucked ideas for his racial experiments against the Jews in the Nazi holocaust that came 40 years later.»¹⁷ No wonder, that the human rights group Society for Threatened Peoples (*Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker*) could seriously proclaim: «Judged by all historic criteria the Herero's claim is the same claim as that of the Jews.»¹⁸

As in many others cases regarding demands for «reparation», also here the number of the alleged victims seems not to be too unambiguous. Riruako figures quite adventurously: «According to research, today we would have been a

people of 2 million souls, in place of the 400,000 to 500,000 we are today.»¹⁹ Well, this is amazing! According to official statements, Namibia today has a total population of some 1.8 million people of which just about 100,000 are Hereros.²⁰ In January 2004 Riruako even broadcasted «there was an additional number of «about 500,000 people of Herero origin living in Germany.»²¹

There has never been an official counting of the population before the Herero uprising. 100 years ago, Missionary Friedrich Bernsmann estimated the strength of the Herero people just before their outbreak to 35,000. He, furthermore, guessed that of these 23,000 to 25,000 Hereros survived the uprising²² Although these figures are based on estimations only, Bernsmann's statements are fairly true. According to declarations made by the *Rheinische Mission*, the main Christian mission in German South West Africa, in the entire Herero/Damaraland about 4,400 natives, 3,000 of them Herero, had been baptized at the end of 1901.²³ If one agrees with the respective documentation that at the time of the outbreak about 10% of the indigenous population had been christianised, then this calculation results in about 30,000 kinsmen of Herero people.

Furthermore, the former Judge of the Supreme Court of South West Africa, Israel Goldblatt, evaluates in his book *History of South West Africa* that in 1921 – about 15 years after the war – number of Herero population was just above 31,000. Within the next four decades it rose to just above 35,000.²⁴ This natural growth rate clearly indicates that it is biologically impossible for the «Herero survivors» to triple or even quadruple within not even one generation, what they, however, must have achieved, if the numbers given by the exterminationists were true.

Based on demographic facts we can trust, there were at the most 30,000 Herero in 1904. Not all of them did participate in the uprising. At Waterberg about 22,000 Herero assembled, inclusively women and children. These are the realistic numbers that we have to deal with and not the astronomically

exaggerated and politically motivated allegations offered by the advocates of the legend of the genocide.

The suit by the *Herero People's Reparations Corporation*

Nevertheless, chieftain of the Hereros, Kuaima Riruako, unashamedly preaches the suppression of the uprising would have been «a war of genocide» in which over 80,000 Hereros were decimated in a «Nazi-Jews style of killing». Without inhibition he compares this, what he titles, «German cruelty» to «the Holocaust» and proclaims: «We're equal to the Jews who were destroyed. [...] The Germans paid for spilled Jewish blood. We say, «Compensate us, too!» It's time to heal the wound.»²⁵

In September 2001, a claim for such a compensation was officially handed in by the so called *Herero People's Reparation Corporation* which is led by Riruako. At court the «corporation» is represented by the Washington-based attorneys-at-law Musolino and Dessel who claim: «Foreshadowing with chilling precision the irredeemable horror of the European Holocaust only decades later, the defendants and imperial Germany formed a German commercial enterprise which cold-bloodedly employed explicitly-sanctioned extermination, the destruction of tribal culture and social organization, concentration camps, forced labor, medical experimentation and the exploitation of women and children in order to advance their common financial interests.»²⁶

The advocates of the thesis of genocide were amazed. Sidney Haring, a leftist American «legal expert», for instance, quickly confirmed these allegations to be true. «The Herero claim for reparations is directly grounded in the characterization of Germany's history as particularly violent and as a former racist imperialist and colonial power, with a history of acknowledging this violence by paying reparations. Indeed, there is evidence that the virulent racism

that promoted the holocaust not only the characterized German colonization of Africa, but was also partially formed there.»²⁷

Ladies and gentlemen! Most of these hasty or even libelling judgments

- firstly rest on the usually uncritical colonial literature of Imperial Germany
- secondly are rooted in British propaganda publications of the period of World War I, like the infamous *Blue Book*, for instance
- and thirdly are based on allegations made by mainly Marxist historians of the German Democratic Republic who fabricated the rumour of genocide, especially the «legend of the Omaheke»

Nowadays, these accusations dominate mainstream historiography, which uncritically conforms to *Zeitgeist*, as well as the politically correct journalism. It does so, mainly, because non-Marxist historians conveniently adapted their East German colleagues' publications without checking the facts thoroughly. In this way, it was possible for Marxist views to flow into school and text books world-wide. If you prefer, call them «progressive views» who, characteristically, often turn out to be nothing than genuinely anti-German.

But there are intellectuals who did not stop educating themselves. This goes, for example, for Olga Levinson, then-President of the South African Association of Arts (SWA). At the begin of the sixties, this Jewish intellectual woman believed the Germans had put the «extermination politics into practice, whereby every Herero man, every Herero woman and every child was to be pitilessly killed.»²⁸ Well, 40 years ago the population has obviously not yet been brainwashed to the extent as they are nowadays. The non-factual and anti-German assertions were greeted by a storm of protest in the letters pages of the South African and South

West African papers. Contrary to other intellectuals, Mrs Levinson had enough integrity to revise her views on account of confronting the historical truth. At the end of the discussions, she admitted she had considered the «extermination order» as a «naked fact of history», and that she never thought an official source such as the *Blue Book* was «unreliable». Mrs Levinson finally became convinced and declared: «With my book I will once and for all eliminate the old accusations that unfortunately are still believed by most South Africans and overseas.»²⁹

The battles of Waterberg

So what are the historical facts? In August 1904 about 22,000 kinsmen of the Herero people – children and women inclusive – came together at Waterberg. They were by no means defeated, neither did they intend to surrender. Under historic view, it is not true to pretend on 11 August just one decisive battle would have taken place. In fact, there were a couple of battles and skirmishes separated from each other up to 50 kilometres in distance. The biggest of all was that one at the waterholes of Hamakari which almost ended up in a disaster for the Germans. During all battles, the Hereros never gave up the initiative. Undefeated and without being ultimately threatened, their leader, chieftain Samuel Maharero, however, took a fatal decision that following night. The Hereros scattered in all directions, most of them south-easterly towards the Omaheke. The Imperial troops were incapable to hinder them from doing so, particularly it was impossible for them to follow. Both, horses and men, were totally exhausted. German patrols that tried to follow the Hereos had to return after a few days only. So, the Hereros were able to move off in segments and bunches of people fast, but quite undisturbed by the Germans.

Only weeks later the German military forces were able to follow. This was not a hunt, but rather a strenuous following on the tracks of the Hereros. There was no «forcing them aside the Sandfeld» like the exterminationists state. When

General von Trotha finally reached Osombo Windimbe, the place where he declared his proclamation to some late-comers and stragglers on 2 October, the Herero were dispersed all over the entire area for a long time. Samuel Maharero and his followers were safe in British Betchuanaland since the last week of September, for example. Others had made it southwards and went back to their homelands even up to Walvis Bay. Others again had fled northwards to Ovamboland. Most of them had disappeared into the bush. It is complete nonsense to assume, the Hereros on that stage were still in the Omaheke. There was not the slightest possibility that they might «flow back» from the desert «into the German lines».

There is, however, no doubt about the fact that the Herero had suffered a dreadful fate. While surmounting the sandveld and the long thirst periods they lost the far biggest part of their cattle and many people too. However, the Herero's retreat in south-easterly direction was neither forced nor accidentally chosen, but well planned. Long before the uprising broke out, Maharero has had ensured British sympathy by promising to spare British and South African subjects from any attacks or inconvenience. As a countermove he was permitted to retreat to the British protectorate Betchuanaland.³⁰ In fact, the migration of Herero thither had already begun a couple of months before the outbreak,³¹ even decades before the battles at Waterberg took place.³² The safe route through the Omaheke, called Ngami-Trail, was well-known to the Hereros for many years already. They knew the paths, secret hiding-places and waterholes there. The real tragedy was that in 1904 it had rained considerably less in the Omaheke than it did in the rest of the country.

The «*Vernichtungsbefehl*»

Against all odds, the exterminationists claim the Germans had insisted to force the Hereros and their cattle into the desert, surrounded all escape routes, and

eventually forcing their death by means of a lack of water. Then, they assume, General von Trotha had even given the infamous «extermination order» (*Vernichtungsbefehl*) at 2 October 1904 to reach the final solution.³³ Let us be sober!

Little known is the fact that there is no actual document of that proclamation. The text is not to be found in any official or semi-official publications. The original is said to be lost! The versions which are known differ significantly from one other. The first version of the proclamation was only published one year later, in 1905, without quoting a source, by the publisher of the *Windhuker Nachrichten*, Conrad Rust. At the end of that year it was also published in the Social Democratic paper *Vorwärts*. Just to avoid cries of bias: I do not doubt **that** General v. Trotha made indeed a proclamation regarding the procedure to be adopted against armed Hereros, but the entire circumstances surrounding it are remarkably weird. A copy of the respective text conserved in the National Archives in Windhoek states the following (my translation), by the way, it differs from the text conserved in the archives in Potsdam:

«I, the great general of the German soldiers, send this letter to the Herero people. The Herero are not German subjects anymore. They have murdered and stolen, from wounded soldiers they cut off ears and noses and other body parts, and now out of cowardice do not wish to fight anymore. I say to the people: Every one who delivers a captain will receive 1,000 Marks, the person who brings in Samuel will receive 5,000 Marks. The Herero nation must leave the country. If it does not do so, I shall compel them by force. Within the German border any Herero tribesman armed or unarmed, with or without cattle, will be shot. No women and children will be allowed in the territory: they will be driven back to their people or fired on.

These are my words to the Herero people.

The Great General of the Mighty Kaiser, Lt.-Gen. Lothar von Trotha.

2nd October, 1904.»

In my opinion, ladies and gentlemen, the intention of this rather arrogant and haughty proclamation is primarily to be explained in psychological terms. The pathetic word choice alone justifies that. The aim of the German military was to threaten the roaming bands of Hereros, or as American historian, Karla Poewe sums it up: «The intent was to keep small guerrilla bands away from German troops.»³⁴ Also the histrionics of the German military at the time indicates the intended deterrence: The military court sentenced two Hereros to death and they were duly hanged before 30 prisoners. After the execution the proclamation was read to them in their language Otjiherero. The prisoners were then released thereby guaranteeing that the content of the proclamation would spread into the farthest outlying Herero hideouts.

Von Trotha justified his conduct of war in the *Deutsche Zeitung* likewise: «The African tribes conduct was amongst themselves until one is defeated. This had to happen here as well. It is obvious that the war in Africa does not adhere to the Geneva Convention. It was painful for me to drive back the women from the waterholes in the Kalahari. But my troops were faced with a catastrophe. Had I made the smaller water holes available to the women, then I would have been faced with an Africa Beresina.»³⁵ General von Trotha here alludes to Napoleon's retreat from Moscow in 1812 and his *Grande Armée's* fatal river crossing. It appears that the General wished to end the war as quickly and efficiently as possible thereby avoiding any future uprising of the enemy, and to ensure a future peaceful development of the country.

There is also a further psychological reason that led to the proclamation, which cannot be ignored. Unlike the European combatants, the Herero did not wear uniforms, but wore their traditional civil clothes («*Räuberzivil*»). They were

everywhere, in thick bushes and on farms, day and night – it was impossible to make out whether it was a civilian or partisan. There were lots of German patrols that dreadfully lost their lives to such bands of partisans. Torture and mutilation was common. The Herero never took prisoners. Hence, the General's proclamation is also to be understood as a protective measure for his own troops.³⁶

The factual meaning of *Vernichtung*

What does the term *Vernichtung* used by the Germans during the military campaign in German South-West Africa in 1904 really mean? As American historian Karla Poewe rightfully explains: »The use of the word ›vernichten‹ which unknowledgeable people translate as *extermination*, in fact, meant, in the usage of the times, breaking of military, national, or economic resistance.«³⁷ Indeed, German military always understood and still does understand *Vernichtung* in the sense of «elimination», in other words, the neutralising, the breaking of the enemy's resistance and ability to keep up fighting. Nothing else flows from Trotha's strategy: «My initial and adopted plan for the operations was to surround the Herero mass at the Waterberg, and to eliminate the mass through an attack, then establish individual stations so as to find and disarm the fleeing masses, with bounty on the heads of the captains thereby bringing them under my control, then finally punish them with death.»³⁸ The Herero, therefore, were not to be «exterminated», but on the contrary, after being disarmed, they were to be taken prisoner and to be pacified. For this reason reception camps for thousands of people had been prepared.³⁹ We, therefore, can reasonably conclude that General Lothar von Trotha's *Proclamation to the Herero People* of 2 October 1904, was not an «order for genocide», but an psychologically and logistically motivated announcement formulated in pathetic words.

Moreover, little known is the fact that the proclamation was followed by a genuine troop order that sheds additional light on the propaganda value of the barbaric-sounding proclamation. This subsequent order was, naturally, not made public:

«This edict is to be passed to the troops during line-ups with the addition that any troop that catches a captain will receive the reward, and that the shooting at women and children is to be understood as shooting over their heads so as to force them to flee. I am quite certain that this edict will result in no more male prisoners being taken, but also that there be no cruelty towards women and children. They will run, if two shots are fired above them. The troop-company will remain conscious of the good name of the German soldiers.

The Commander

Signed: v. Trotha, General Lieutenant»⁴⁰

This subsequent order clearly indicates that General v. Trotha explicitly forbade the killing of women and children. This was befitting his Prussian officer ethos, too. An order to kill women and children was against the German officer's honour code, not to mention the traditional general rules of conduct applicable to German soldiers fighting a war. Do I consider this in a much too blue-eyed manner? Let us have a look on the

Treatment of the Herero by the Germans

In a letter to the editor of the Windhoek daily *Allgemeine Zeitung* dated 28 July 1961, Mr. R. Sarnow, a former soldier who served in the *Schutztruppe* during the Herero uprising, confessed: «...that every Herero man, woman or child who surrendered, was sent to the mission station and provided for. [...] We German soldiers were no undisciplined *soldateska* who senselessly murdered, but we

were an absolutely disciplined troop, who did not harm any unarmed Herero.» Marxist historians, of course, know better. Well-known Communist historian Horst Drechsler, for example, claims: «In reality the different treatment of men on the one hand and women and children on the other was not made. All Herero, irrespective of men, women and children, were killed whenever they fell into the hands of German soldiers.»⁴¹ Such assertions, sold as historical facts, are continuously found in the media. The German leftist paper *junge Welt*, for instance, wrote: «Mass shootings of prisoners and decimation of wounded Herero warriors was the order of the day. Even women and children were killed during such battles, sometimes even burned alive.»⁴² Those of you who know history, and mainstream historiography in particular, are reminded here of the propaganda horror stories of World War One (children with chopped-off hands) or reminded of the Iraq-Kuwait war (babies torn out of their incubators). The truth-content of these stories is akin to that of the gossip the Germans were butchering the Herero.

In practice, it was evident that only armed Herero men encountered German guns. None of the fragmented parts of the Herero fighting units were «mowed down», but were taken prisoner, if the Germans could get hold of them. The basic humane attitude of the German soldiers towards their hungry, thirsty and exhausted prisoners is depicted by private Paul Harrland, for instance, who in 1905 accompanied such a transport from Otjimbingwe to Okahandja: «The German soldier's good nature comes through as he shares everything with these poor chaps [...] hunger and more hunger! We pitied the poor children, who couldn't be blamed for anything. [...] In particular there was an emaciated young woman who gained all our sympathy. With child-like love she led her blind mother on a leather strap.»⁴³

Nobody else than Colonel Deimling, who after World War One became a leftist pacifist, confirmed that in spite of the bestial rawness, that the Herero displayed towards wounded German soldiers, thousands of Herero were made prisoners

and treated with humanity: «Innocent, defenceless prisoners and women were treated humanely and with the utmost patience; often I saw how our people shared with the prisoners what little water and food they had.»⁴⁴

Indeed, in authentic primary sources we again and again come across accounts that German soldiers, especially towards children, were humane in the truest sense of the word. Captain Bayer, for instance, has reported another classic example that arose during a hot pursuit of the Herero and that can be taken to be typical of such a behaviour: «A Herero child about 4 years of age sat at a waterhole and looked at us with wide-open, surprised eyes. We had to stop there for a moment. Our troopers stood around the baby and wondered how it could be saved from certain death. Finally someone decided: «We need to find this baby a mother.» Quickly a few riders ran into the bushes and finally found an old Herero woman, a shrivelled old woman, whom they placed the child on her lap. Then they got a goat and someone began to milk it. The almost empty udder yielded a quarter cup of milk, which they gave to the child. They tied a rope around the goat's neck and handed the end to the old woman. It was a wonderful picture: the old smiling Herero woman, the child and the milk goat; in front of them our soldiers who enjoyed this peaceful scene.»⁴⁵ Lieutenant Erich von Salzmänn reported another characteristic example. Near to the water-hole Owikokorero the Germans detected two indigenous women. The one »had a baby about one week of age and looked incredibly pitiful. She soon noticed that we had compassion for her, since she was quite successful in her attempts of begging. We gave her corned-beef and she filled up her stomach very quickly.«⁴⁶

The humane attitude of the German soldiers was well-known amongst the Hereros who gave up fighting or were taken prisoners. There are even some remarkable and authentic Herero sources proofing this fact. The honourable evangelist Andreas Kukuri, for instance, who was among those who made it through the Omaheke desert in September 1904, confessed, when he and his

segment were captured they were sent to missionary Eich who said «Let's make true peace!» and then «we returned to our regions and territories.»⁴⁷

Quite similar are the announcements made by prominent Herero wise men in interviews made by the *Michael Scott Project* during the early eighties.⁴⁸

Perhaps most impressive of all, is the testimony of Amanda, the well-bred literate daughter of Captain Zacharias from Otjimbingwe. She admitted to have handed in herself to the Germans, because she *knew* the Germans would do Herero women no harm.⁴⁹ These provable historical facts, ladies and gentlemen, doubtlessly indicate the blameless attitude of German soldiers, who *en gros* never enchanted to brutal maltreatments or even worse towards native people in German South West Africa.

Hans Germani, world famous journalist of the German daily *Die Welt*, spoke to Chief Clemens Kapuuo, the leader of the Herero in the seventies. Germani asked the prominent Herero what his attitude towards Germans was, who were blamed to have had committed genocide on his people: «You know, this is actually nonsense. Both of us are martial people, the very best here in South West Africa. At that time we fought each other, you have been the stronger one. Sure, lots of us died on the run through the desert – but what is that supposed to mean? We should avoid digging in old graves, because that will never create a future. Take a look on my Herero. At their annual celebrations they wear old German uniforms and decorate themselves with military ranks [that are directly rooted from German terminology, for example] «Leutnanti», «Oberleutnanti», «Hoppmann», «Majora». In a fundamental manner we have a deep respect for the Germans.»⁵⁰ Kapuuo, however, expressly excluded the Federal Germans («*Bonner Deutsche*»).

Ladies and gentlemen, let me finish my expositions with a last striking argument. During the uprising the British military attaché Colonel Trench accompanied the German high command during its military actions.⁵¹ He

became acquainted with basically all German officers and all places of military action. He was the neutral eyewitness *par excellence*. Who – if not this British officer! – would have made detailed reports about violations of human rights? However, in none of the essential archives (neither in Windhoek nor in London nor in Pretoria) are there to be found any documents, that might give the smallest hint that this qualified officer had made any negative reports to his superiors in London. This fact is of vital importance, since it is to be taken for granted that – *if* there were any incidents, which were to be connected with even the slightest suspicion to be regarded as maltreatment or even genocide – Trench would certainly have reported such illegal acts and crimes to his superior office. He would certainly never had concealed them. The fact that there is no such report is logical, because there was nothing to report in that direction, since the Germans have not committed any atrocities or even genocide on the Herero people in 1904.

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Footnotes

This speech is based on the orator's books *Der Hereroaufstand 1904* (Stegen 2002, ISBN 3-934531-11-3) and *Völkermord an den Herero in Deutsch-Südwestafrika?* (Tübingen 2004, ISBN 3-87847-210-2).

¹ <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/infoservice/presse/index>

² *Die Welt*, 8 September 2001.

³ Massacre returns to haunt Germans, in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 July 1990.

⁴ Land pressure mounting in Namibia, in www.bbc.co.uk, 28 August 2002.

⁵ Gunter Spraul, Der »Völkermord« an den Herero, in *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, Vol. 39/1988, p. 726.

⁶ Researcher into the Waterberg tragedy of 1904 presents a new radical version, in *The Windhoek Observer*, 21 July 2001.

⁷ Jeremy Silvester, Werner Hillebrecht & Casper Erichsen, The Herero Holocaust?, in: *The Namibian Weekender*, 10 August 2001. (<http://www.namibweb.com/hererohol.htm>)

⁸ Wolfgang Mayer (et al.): *Schwarz-Weiß-Rot in Afrika*, Puchheim 1985, p. 183.

⁹ Thomas Bastar, Länder, die im dunkeln bleiben, in *Das Sonntagsblatt*, 4 April 1997.

¹⁰ www.africanfront.com

¹¹ Enzo Traverso, Die Moderne und die Barbarei, *Sozialistische Zeitung*, 7 December 2000.

¹² Encyclopaedia Americana, Vol. 14, New York 1971, p. 137.

¹³ http://www.ppu.org.uk/genocide/g_namibia1.html

¹⁴ Todd Bensman, Forgotten Victims: African Tribe Wants Apology, in *Dallas Morning News*, cited from http://www.pewfellowships.org/stories/namibia/forgotten_victims.html

¹⁵ Tom Sanders, Imperialism and Genocide in Namibia, in: *Socialist Action*, Vol. April 1999.

¹⁶ Tax wars, in: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/11chapter10.shtml>

¹⁷ The tribe Germany wants to forget, in: *New African*, Vol. March 2000.

¹⁸ German Government must apologise for genocide of the Herero (Namibia), Press release 31 August 2001.

¹⁹ Herero-Häuptling fordert von Deutschland Entschädigung, in *Die Welt*, 3 September 2001.

²⁰ <http://www.namibian.org/travel/namibia/population/>

²¹ Namibia recalls Herero uprising, in *Argus* (Cape Town) 10 January 2004.

- ²² See attachment No. 3 of the conference of Herero missionaries in Otjibingue in September 1906, (Archives of the *Rheinische Mission*, Barmen) quoted in N. Mossolow, *Waterberg*, Windhoek, 2nd ed., pp. 42.
- ²³ See *Berichte der Rheinischen Missions-Gesellschaft 1902*, Barmen o. J., p. 228. This relativeness seems to be true. The then-Government secretary of the Imperial Colonial Office (*Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamts*) Wilhelm Solf referred to statistics of both Christian missions that indicate that in 1914, i.e. 10 years after the war, some 32.200 natives had been christianized. (See. Wilhelm Solf, *Die Missionen in den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, Berlin 1918, pp. 43.)
- ²⁴ I. Goldblatt, *History of South West Africa*, Cape Town/Johannesburg 1971, p. 265.
- ²⁵ Quoted from Todd Bensman, Forgotten Victims: African Tribe Wants Apology, *Dallas Morning News*, http://www.pewfellowships.org/stories/namibia/forgotten_victims.html
- ²⁶ Christof Maletsky, Hereros up the ante in reparations drives, *The Namibian*, 5 September 2001.
- ²⁷ Sidney Harring, The Legal Claim for German Reparations to the Herero Nation. [Excerpted from: Sidney Harring, German Reparations to the Herero Nation: an Assertion of Herero Nationhood in the Path of Namibian Development?, 104 West Virginia Law Review 393-497, 393-398, 401-410 (Winter 2002)].
- ²⁸ Olga Levinson, Aus der Geschichte Südwestafrikas, in *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 21 July 1961, p. 4.
- ²⁹ Olga Levinson, Der Wahrheit die Ehre, in *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 August 1961, p. 4.
- ³⁰ Vgl. Gerhardus POOL, *Die Herero-Opstand 1904-1907*, Kaapstad/Pretoria 1979, S. 63.
- ³¹ Über die vielfältigen Abwanderungen der Herero ins Betschuanaland, aber auch ins Ovamboland und Kavangoland, siehe den überaus informativen Aufsatz von Maria FISCH, »Zum ›Genozid‹ an den Herero«, in: *Befunde und Berichte zur Deutschen Kolonialgeschichte*, Heft 1/2001, S. 27-38.
- ³² Peter H. KAJAVIVI berichtet von entsprechenden Verbindungen zwischen Herero und Tswana im Nordwesten Betschuanalands bereits zur Zeit von Chief MAHARERO einerseits und Häuptling LETSHOLATHEBE I. (ca. 1847-1874) andererseits. Vgl. Peter H. KATJAVIVI, *The Rise of Nationalism in Namibia and its International Dimensions*, Dissertation an der University of Oxford 1986, S. 106.
- ³³ Nate Weston, Vernichtungsbefehl: German Colonization and Tribal Resistance in South West Africa, 1884-1914, cited from <http://www.seattlecentral.org/gedt/docs/vernichtungsbefehl.html>
- ³⁴ Karla Poewe, *The Namibian Herero. A history of their psychosocial disintegration and survival*, Lewiston/Queenston 1985, p. 65.
- ³⁵ Cited from Walter Rahn, Sanitätsdienst der Schutztruppe für Südwestafrika während der Aufstände 1904-1907 und der Kalahari-Expedition 1908, in *Beiträge zur deutschen Kolonialgeschichte* 1997, p. 83.
- ³⁶ See Gert Sudholt, *Die deutsche Eingeborenenpolitik in Südwestafrika*, Hildesheim 1975, p. 189.
- ³⁷ Karla Poewe, *The Namibian Herero*, op. cit., p. 60.
- ³⁸ Transcription of Trotha's diary as quoted in Gerhard Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, Windhoek 1991, p. 268.
- ³⁹ See Paul Rohrbach, *Aus Südwest-Afrikas schweren Tagen*, Berlin 1909, p. 167. (In his book *Deutsche Kolonialwirtschaft* on page 342 Rohrbach writes, that the camp «offered space for the shelter of 8.000 people».)
- ⁴⁰ Zentrales Staatsarchiv Potsdam, Stock Reichskolonialamt (RKA), no. 2089, p. 7. Cited from Gunter Spraul: *Der «Völkermord» an den Herero*, in *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, Vol. 39/1988, pp. 728.
- ⁴¹ Horst Drechsler, *Aufstände in Südwestafrika*, Berlin 1984, p. 81.
- ⁴² Gerd Bedszent, Terror und Enteignung, in *junge Welt*, 13 March 1998.
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- ⁴⁴ Berthold von Deimling, *Aus der alten in die neue Zeit*, Berlin 1930, p. 69.
- ⁴⁵ Maximilian Bayer, *Mit dem Hauptquartier in Südwestafrika*, Leipzig 1909, 2nd ed., p. 164.
- ⁴⁶ Erich von Salzmänn, *Im Kampfe gegen die Herero*, Berlin, 1905, 2nd ed., p. 186.
- ⁴⁷ See Andreas Kukuri, *Herero-Texte* (translated into German and edited by Ernst Dammann), Berlin 1983, pp. 51.
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- ⁴⁹ See Claus Nordbruch, *Der Hereroaufstand 1904*, Stegen 2002, p. 114.
- ⁵⁰ Hans Germani, *Rettet Südwest*, Munich/Berlin 1982, pp. 74. (My translation).
- ⁵¹ See, i.e., Maximilian Bayer, *Mit dem Hauptquartier in Südwestafrika*, op. cit., p. 269.