

Africa: a publication making more transnational, global, and comparative connections while employing oral histories. Maybe such an analysis could also reach beyond human actors.

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The Herero Genocide: War, Emotion, and Extreme Violence in Colonial Namibia

By Matthias Häussler. Translated from the German by Elizabeth Janik. New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2021. Pp. 306. Hardback \$179.00. ISBN: 978-1800730236.

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So much research has been done on the German colonial wars against the Herero and Nama in German South-West Africa (present-day Namibia) that one might think everything has been said on the topic. But in 2018, Matthias Häussler's reinterpretation of the German genocide against the Herero proved this notion wrong and earned him much praise and recognition amongst the scholarly community. Using an innovative approach and with the help of new sources, the author was able to provide fresh insights into this supposedly explored issue. Now, his study, which was based on his dissertation, is newly available in English translation. This seems overdue, as Häussler's remarkable arguments are likely to be received even more widely in Namibia and the English-speaking world than they have been in Germany. The study focuses on the 1904 war against the Herero, while subsequent events and the war with German South-West Africa's other ethnic groups are deliberately left out.

In his introduction, Häussler clarifies an important point of his research: its aim is not to answer the question of whether the colonial war in German South-West Africa actually resulted in genocide but instead to examine how and why the war escalated into a war of physical extermination. The author describes Germany's policy and tactics as a "story of misfires and setbacks" (3), which, in his eyes, has received far too little attention in previous research. The genocide could only be explained by taking into account military failures against an opponent that was perceived as inferior. For his investigation, Häussler draws on three concepts: complexity, racism, and emotion. In the author's view, previous studies have been unable as yet to provide a comprehensive picture of the complex situation in German South-West Africa. He wants to look at the whole spectrum of actors and show that there was no single cause for the genocide. The settlers, for example, contributed significantly to the escalation of violence. In addition, he opposes the view that the genocide was a seamless top-down process and points to the brute force that came from ordinary soldiers, termed violence "from below." Häussler sees the colonial rulers' omnipresent racism as a further condition for the escalation of violence. The most innovative aspect of his approach, however, is how he explains important actors' behavior by referencing their emotional states, drawing on models used in psychological research. In Häussler's view, fear, mistrust, anger, and shame played a central and so-far neglected role in the genesis of this particular crisis. His sociological background is clearly noticeable.

The book is divided into five sections. Its first chapter covers the "privatized violence" (12) inflicted on the native population by German settlers, which ultimately moved the Herero to armed resistance. In the second part, Häussler looks at the war from a strategic point of view. He describes the objectives with which the governor of German South-West Africa,

Theodor Leutwein, went to war and how the metropole finally took control out of his hands. As his “pacification attempts” relied too heavily on a negotiated settlement, he was recalled and replaced by Lothar von Trotha, who promised a total defeat of the Herero. According to Häussler, Berlin’s wish was to wage a political war of extermination against the ethnic group and completely crush their societal, economic, and political structures. The appointment of Trotha alone, however, did not necessarily mean physical annihilation. In the third chapter, Häussler describes the conducted military operations, before going on to discuss the brutalization of the troops and increasing violence “from below.” He concludes by addressing the violence after the genocide and the establishment of concentration camps for the surviving Herero.

Häussler’s study is a brilliant research achievement in its English translation, too. This is due, on the one hand, to the large corpus of sources that the author draws on for his descriptions. In addition to documents from German archives that have already been studied, he uses sources from African archives and newspapers of the German settlers, which have rarely if ever been consulted before. Häussler has also landed a coup by including the unpublished diary of Lothar von Trotha, which sheds new light on the general’s personal motives. But the study’s exceptionalism does not simply stem from Häussler’s inclusion of new sources; he also reaches interesting new conclusions. The author succeeds in convincingly proving that the campaign against the Herero was not planned to be a genocidal war and that this threshold was crossed only after Germany’s military failures. Trotha’s strategy, to defeat the Herero by waging a European-style large-scale envelopment, proved to be completely misguided. The fact that supposedly inferior “negroes” were able to defy the German power and that the Herero, after their flight to the Omaheke desert, could no longer be defeated, ultimately led to genocide. Häussler convincingly traces Trotha’s emotional state from shame to anger and finally to hatred, the last of which gave the “campaign of disappointments” (160–167) its genocidal turn. The author impressively demonstrates that emotions can be the driving force behind cruelty and is able to portray the brutalization of ordinary soldiers, who ultimately also became “motor[s] of extermination” (229), more clearly than previous studies have done. Fear, bitterness, and frustration in the face of military failures led to violence.

Only the frequently repeated quotes and repetitions in the section on the “small wars” (142–145, 203–207) prove to be somewhat perturbing. Here the English translation might have offered an opportunity to eliminate these deficiencies that were already present in the German version. Apart from this, Häussler’s work is an innovative, at times brilliant study that deserves a wide readership – hopefully, and thanks to the translation, now also in English-speaking countries.

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Auf die Tour! Jüdinnen und Juden in Singspielhalle, Kabarett und Varieté – Zwischen Habsburgermonarchie und Amerika

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The peregrinations of popular performers were some of the red threads that knit together the cities of the Habsburg Empire, the rest of Europe, and the United States—at least after