

The Effects of Colonialism and of Germany's Colonial Past on the
International Relations and Current Foreign Policy of Germany

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Science, Portland State University and author of *In Defense of
German Colonialism* at the invitation of the AfD Parliamentary
Group

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Bundestag of Germany
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Marie Elisabeth Lüders House Hearing Room

Honored Committee Members,

I would like to thank you for the invitation to address the committee today
on this important topic, and I appreciate your flexibility in allowing me to
testify remotely.

Germany has a distinguished colonial past. Despite being a latecomer to
the European colonial project, it was Germany that convened the Berlin
Conference of 1884-85 where the highest ideals of the colonial mission
were agreed upon by European powers, in particular the sacred trust of
uplifting the lives and well-being of colonial peoples as the primary
justification for colonial rule.

Germany not only established that principle, but then put it into effect in a
way unsurpassed by any other colonial power in the short duration of its
colonial history from roughly 1885 to 1919.

German Colonies

In German East Africa, which accounts for more than half of the German colonial experience in terms of population and years, an economic miracle was achieved in which a backward Arab slaving depot became the economic center of the region.^a The greatest contribution was the suppression of the vicious Ngoni warlord movement known as the Maji Maji which sought to reverse the freedoms that German rule had brought to millions of people and was widely hated by them, a fact concealed by the later official fabrication of Maji Maji history by the British historian John Iliffe as the proto-nationalist founding myth of Tanzania.^b

In German Cameroon, which was about 30% of the German colonial experience, a similar miracle unfolded in just a few short years, beginning with the desperate pleas of the coastal Duala tribe for German annexation to save them from their internecine feuds.

The remaining German colonies are mainly footnotes. In German Togo, a single railway line transformed the small colony into an export powerhouse. In the German South Pacific, scattered islands were given communications and boat services that allowed escape from vicious tribal warfare and cannibalism. At German Qingdao, so many Chinese flooded into the colony that the population quintupled in just a few short years.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of German colonialism, however, was in German Southwest Africa. Here, the arrival of a German state saved various small tribes like the Damara from the imperial rule of the Ambo tribes, and saved the Herero and Nama from exterminating one another in their constant wars. The Herero would have disappeared as a people without German colonialism because of the cure for cattle *rinderpest* brought by the Germans. But Herero cattle rustling caused tensions within the Herero leadership. The leader of one faction, Samuel Maherero, began to lose his leading role as his deputies lined their pockets with land sales to German settlers. Others raided the cattle herds of fellow Herero. Maherero had a simple solution: "Kill All Germans!" as he ordered.

The German response to this was justified, appropriate, and proportional. The enumerated population of Herero fell by somewhere between 6,000 and 20,000 people (the same relative decline as the later rebellious Nama) before and after the conflict, mainly because of out-migration and reduced census capacity.^c When Maherero died in 1923, the Herero gave him a full German-style funeral to indicate their enduring loyalty to the German state.

After German Colonialism

The greatest tragedy for the German colonial past and its effects on the international relations and foreign policy of Germany today was the vindictive annexation of German colonies by the Allied powers at the Treaty of Versailles. By severing this liberal project under a conservative-nationalist coalition from German domestic politics, the Allies contributed to the bitter illiberalism of inter-war politics in Germany, culminating in the rise to power of the fanatically anti-colonial Hitler and his illiberal Nazi movement.

By historical accident, Germany's colonial archives were stranded in East Germany after World War II, which generated a vast trove of anti-colonial Leninist historiography. That historiography was then swallowed completely in the post-communist era by today's Woke Leftists who dominate the issue in Germany. Their history is a fabrication at best, a deliberate assault on truth and on the German nation at worst.

German academics today see their role as bringing the German people to trial for the blood debt of colonialism. They have fabricated claims like "Togo was a slave state", "the counter-insurgency against the Herero was a genocide that caused the Holocaust", "the loyal *askari* soldiers who fought for German rule in World War I were only in it for the money (even though most of them were never paid)", "the Chinese flooded into Qingdao because they wanted to decolonize it", and so on. Nonsense all of it.

German International Relations and Foreign Policy

So what are the effects on German international relations and foreign policy? A clear objective benefit of German colonialism, as was the case for other European colonial powers, is enduring and strong bonds of friendship with former colonial peoples. If you ignore the Woke warriors who try to poison these relationships with victimization claims, you will find many happy Germans with experience in the colonies, and many happy former colonial peoples with close ties to Germany. This enlarging of Germany's global connections provides a basis to work with these former areas on topics of shared mutual concern today.

Another positive effect of the objective history is that Germany has a special place in the defense of Israel. Of all countries in the world, Germany can say that it was the first victim of the race hatred that defined anti-colonialism and which today defines attacks on Israel. This began with Samuel Mahero's genocidal appeal to "Kill all Germans!". It continued when the Mufti of Jerusalem visited Hitler for anti-colonial lessons on how to purify a nation by driving out the Jews. The vicious race hatreds that define anti-colonialism today continue in the Germany's universities and "post-colonial" projects with their denigration of the German nation. When academics and anti-Semitic groups attack Israel as "settler colonialism" and chant the genocidal slogan "From the River to the Sea", Germany should be the first to stand up and say: No! We were the first victims of illiberal race hatred. We will not allow the race hatreds of anti-colonialism to run amok ever again, whether against the Jews, against the German people, or against any other people.

But it is the effects of the second factor, the distorted Woke history and street activism, that is the main way that German colonial "past" affects today's international relations and foreign policy. Rather than engage confidently and honestly with Africa, Germany finds itself trapped in guilt culture that creates reparations rackets and ineffective development assistance. Rather than being able to bring a strong voice to the control of illegal immigration from Africa, Germany cowers under the blows of Woke anti-colonialism, thus exacerbating the tensions arising from ungoverned

immigration and ruining the formerly friendly relationships between Germany and the African people.

German politicians, rather than giving tough love to dictators and embezzlers in Africa, show up on the continent wearing sackcloth and ashes, engaging in guilt-ridden passion plays, thus making themselves party to the misrule that defines the continent. By allowing leftist historians to equate the Nazi march on Europe with Germany's brilliant colonial record, German politicians have deprived the country of a voice on important questions of state-building in the developing world.

Germany may one day be in the UN Security Council as a permanent member. Let's hope that when that day comes, it has expelled unscientific Woke colonial history from its self-identity and reasserted itself as a confident, progressive, and classically liberal power of Europe with a proud colonial record.

^a The late David Le Breton, CBE, long-time secretary of the Overseas Service Pensioners' Association and Benevolent Society, once wrote to me: "When I was on tour in Tanganyika's Eastern Province as Private Secretary to H.E. The Governor, Sir Richard Turnbull, he was invited to greet and speak to the assembled local group of senior people living there by the river Rufiji. Would have been 1959. My photograph of the event shows the Governor examining a medal or other token displayed by one of the old men, it having been awarded to him by the previous German authorities at least 40 years earlier. Sadly I do not know exactly what it displayed. But I was impressed that the person had so valued the item that he had brought it along to show to the British Governor. So the local people under German colonial rule had been just as tolerant of or even supportive to their new rulers as we like to believe the British colonial subjects were to theirs, despite there having been some very violent clashes in the earlier years." Email correspondence, 5 August 2022.

^b Patrick M. Redmond, "Maji Maji in Ungoni: A Reappraisal of Existing Historiography," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* (1975); Eginald Mihanjo and Oswald Masebo, "Maji Maji War, Ngoni Warlords, and Militarism in Southern Tanzania: A Revisionist View of Nationalist History," *Journal of African Military History* (2017);

Thaddeus Sunseri, "Statist Narratives and Maji Maji Ellipses," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* (2000).

^c Hinrich Schneider-Waterberg, *Der Wahrheit eine Gasse: Zur Geschichte des Hererokrieges in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1904 - 1907* (2nd edition, 2020); Hans Meiser, *Völkermorde vom Altertum bis zur Gegenwart* (2009); Claus Nordbruch, *Völkermord an den Herero in Deutsch-Südwestafrika? : Widerlegung einer Lüge* (2004); Hans Hilpisch, *Wo sind die Herero geblieben?* (2021).