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The National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC) announces today its support for the efforts of the Herero People in Namibia to receive reparations from the German government and others for their genocidal actions against the Tribe at the turn of the 20th Century. Those horrific actions included: slavery, concentration camps, forced labor, planned starvation, medical experimentation, and the attempted extermination of the entire Tribe for its resistance to German imperialism.

By 1876, 85,000 Herero were living in Southwest Africa in an age of plenty.

In April 1885, German's Bismarck sent Dr. Heinrich Ernst Goering, the father of the Nazi Reichsfeld Marshall, to administer that region. The German government, aided by its commercial companies, announced:

“The decision to colonize... means nothing less than that the Native tribes must withdraw from the lands on which they have pastured their cattle and so let the white man pasture his cattle on the selfsame lands... (T)he loss of their free national barbarism and the development of a class of workers in the service of and dependent on the whites is primarily a law of existence in the highest degree.”

The newer German arrivals saw the black Africans at best as nothing but a source of cheap labor. White settlers normally referred to black Africans as ‘baboons’ and treated them accordingly.” “(T)he average German holds that the native has a right to exist only in so far as he is useful to the white man..” When Matthias Erzberger, speaking in the Reichstag, pointed out that black men had immortal souls just as the Germans did, he was hooted down.

The German Colonial Federation demanded that: (a) “every coloured person must regard a white man as a superior being;” and (b) “in court, the evidence of one white man can only be outweighed by the statements of seven coloured persons.”

On January 19, 1904, the German military commander of Swakopmund recommended to the German Foreign Office that “the Hereros be disarmed, ruthlessly punished, and made to do forced labor on the railroads.” General Lothar von Trotha, the new German commander noted for his merciless severity in dealing with natives declared ...: “I know the tribes of Africa... They are all alike. They only respond to force. It was and is my policy to use force with terrorism and even brutality. I shall annihilate the African tribes with streams of blood and streams of gold.”

On October 2, 1904, Von Trotha issued his infamous “*Shrecklichkeit*,” or extermination order, which decreed:

“Any Herero found within the German borders with or without a gun, with or without cattle, will be shot. I shall no longer receive any women and children. I will drive them back to their people or I will shoot them. This is my decision for the Herero people. The Great General of the Mighty Kaiser.”

“The Germans... killed thousands and thousands of women and children along the roadsides. They bayoneted them and hit them to death with the butt ends of their guns.... They were lying exhausted and harmless along the roads, and as the soldiers passed they simply slaughtered them in cold blood. Mothers holding babies at their breasts, little boys and little girls; old people too old to fight and old grandmothers....

By 1905, the Germans, including German corporations which operate internationally today, were brutally employing concentration camps, forced labor, human medical experimentation and abuse of women against the remnants of the Herero. Between 1905 and 1908 the majority of the Herero survivors were incarcerated in concentration camps.... The majority of the camp inhabitants were women. They were branded with the letters GH (*gefangene Herero*).

“Herero prisoners were subjected to extreme forms of exploitation, abuse and mistreatment. Missionaries were unable to prevent women and girls from being subjected to sexually degrading (behavior and) rape.” The women were put in spans of eight to each Scotch-cart and were made to pull like draught animals. Many were half-starved and weak, and died of sheer exhaustion. Those who did not work well were brutally flogged.

German geneticist Eugene Fischer commenced his racial medical experiments in those camps. He used the Herero as guinea pigs. Fischer tortured Herero men and women. A book he wrote about his findings, *The Principle of Human Heredity and Race Hygiene*, was a favorite of Adolf Hitler. Fischer later became chancellor of the University of Berlin, where he taught medicine to Nazi physicians, including Josef Mengele.

One of the most well-respected federal judges in the US described the Herero history at the hands of the Germans as “the absolute depths of human existence, from the evils of imperialism to institutional slavery and genocide.” To this day, the Herero in Namibia face the poverty of long-stolen wealth while the Germans and their allies enjoy its benefits.

After a century of denial, as *Politico* reported last year, on May 28, 2021, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas formally acknowledged that in the early 20th century Germany committed genocide during its colonial occupation of what is now Namibia, killing at least 75,000 people.

“In the light of Germany’s historical and moral responsibility, we will ask Namibia and the descendants of the victims for forgiveness,” Maas said “adding, “that includes our naming the events of the German colonial era in today’s Namibia, and particularly the atrocities between 1904 and 1908, unsparingly and without euphemisms.”

“We will now officially call these events what they were from today’s perspective: a genocide,” Maas said.

The chilling parallels between the crimes against humanity perpetrated against the Herero a century ago and the atrocities inflicted on black societies in so many places around the world remind us of the importance of every movement working to bring justice, finally, to those communities. Therefore, the National African American Reparations Commission wholeheartedly supports the demand of Herero People in Namibia for reparatory justice from the Government of Germany.