

Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis van voor af misbruik word vir politieke en sosiale doeleindes.

Kaiser Wilhelm II's genocide: The Herero's versus the General and the settlers

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In search of the events within German South West Africa (GSWA) as the only German colony where settlement was actually attempted, this book shows that the slaughters which took place in colonial times were not due to the decisions taken by a rogue general but that he was merely fulfilling the aims and desires of Germany's pro-imperial agenda. In this book, Sarkin advocates that the Herero genocide is closely linked to Germany's late entry into the so called "scramble for Africa", which led a ruthless pursuit by colonial powers to acquire numerous colonies all over the world within a short period of time using any means available. Sarkin argues that the Herero Genocide was a campaign of racial extinction and a collective sentence by the German government against the Herero people.

Jeremy Sarkin is chairperson of the United Nation's working group on enforced or involuntary disappearances, and is at presently a distinguished visiting professor of Law at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York. He is also an Attorney of the High Court of South Africa and of the State of New York. With vast research experience this book marks Sarkin's second study on GSWA's genocide by the Germans. In *Colonial Genocide and Reparations Claims in the 21st Century: The Socio-Legal Context of Claims under International Law by the Herero against Germany for Genocide in Namibia, 1904-1908* Sarkin illustrated the theoretical and legal practicality of the Herero's claim as well as the political and legal significance of genocide reparations. According

to Sarkin the history of the Herero genocide remains a key issue for many genocide histories around the world, partly because of the fact that German policy does not acknowledge paying reparations for the Herero genocide in contrast with its long-standing Holocaust reparations policy. The Herero case bears not only on transitional justice issues throughout Africa, but also on legal issues elsewhere in the world where reparations for colonial injustices have been called for.

However this book criticizes the apology rendered by the descendants of the Von Trotha family to the monarchy of the Herero. Sarkin's analysis is extremely critical of Germany's genocide of the Herero in GSWA. He gives accounts of how the genocide unfolded from the colonial point of view to explaining the inhuman deeds of the German army. Though the book is prone to deliver the military perspectives with features of social history, Sarkin devotes his attention to the views of race, racial identity and racial supremacy sparked by the pseudo-scientific racism and social Darwinism nevertheless fuelled by colonialism of the period. With illustrations and tabulated statistics of land ownership he draws the reader's attention towards the cruelty of the colonial system overseen by a German general. The book is professionally indexed, footnoted and with an appropriate conclusion fragmented in points of his argument.

This book presents new proof of genocide concerning conflicts in GSWA (Namibia). Sarkin researched and accomplishes the extent to which Emperor Wilhelm II knowledgeably supported and endorsed an order of extermination of between 60 000 and 100 000 Herero and some 10 000 plus Nama, persecuted by General Lothar von Trotha who was the commander of the colonial troops by then. By these statements Sarkin tries to support his claim that Von Trotha's orders was not due to his heartlessness, but rather a conscious and deliberate decision mandated by German army headquarters with the knowledge of the highest levels of military command and government. This is new indication that does not exist on research done by Gewald, Hull and Zimmerer, whose arguments are mainly about military culture.

Germany's genocide of the Herero is relatively relevant and contentious GSWA history portraying activities of non-humanitarianism. Sarkin leaves no stone unturned with regard to the genocide and a bias can be identified towards the plight of the Herero's that makes it close to impossible for him to end with an objective conclusion on the genocide. He is more concerned about financial reparation of the genocide than psychological, which raises

eyebrows. Perhaps his law background has pivotally influenced this research. Main sources are indicated in the bibliography to be of a secondary nature and it is obvious that Sarkin depended on the translations of German Imperial documents and other primary sources. Even so, the view of the German government, public and colonial government is still missing in his work.

Though Sarkin clearly explains that in evil deeds there are three perspectives, those of the perpetrators, of the victims and of onlookers, he merely directs his attention to the perpetrator's wrong doings. His reports on the Kaiser's involvement in the Herero massacre, his selection of views about Wilhelm II seem to relate to his statement that "Kaiser met with Von Trotha and could personally have ordered him to carry out the genocide on the Herero". However, there is no evidence that he did. The book appears to portray Von Trotha as a cruel heartless commander emphasising his racial hate of the Herero where he even denied women and children drinking water. Nevertheless the book has scholarly wealth with good illustrations and acknowledgement of reviewed sources, the book emphasizes several unsettled issues, expectantly it's a long expected inspiration for further historical research. Sarkin creates a decent hypothesis, though he is more litigating than scholastic or historical, however the book perceives the slaughtering from couple of new viewpoints.