

German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Postwar Germany



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More than half a century before the mass executions of the Holocaust, Germany devastated the peoples of southwestern Africa. While colonialism might seem marginal to German history, controversial new scholarship compares the acts of this period with Nazi practices on the Eastern and Western fronts.

Examples of the most important research conducted on the "continuity thesis" over the past five years, the chapters in this anthology debate the connections between German colonialist activities and the behavior of Germany during World War II. Some argue that the country's domination of southwestern Africa gave rise to perceptions of racial difference and superiority at home, contributing to a nascent nationalism that blossomed into National Socialism and the Holocaust. Others remain skeptical, and both sides are well-represented. Contributors merge Germany's colonial past with debates over the country's identity and history and compare its colonial crimes with other European ventures. Issues discussed range from the denial or marginalization of German genocide to the place of colonialism and the Holocaust within Germany and Israel's postwar relations. Authors also compare the legacy of genocide in both Europe and Africa.

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