

German Colonialism, Late Imperialism and Racial Theories

Pre-Histories of the Holocaust?

Prof. Dr. Stefan Ihrig

Office hours by appointment (preferably Wednesdays after the seminar or Thursdays)

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Wednesdays, 14.00-17.00

Room 225, Hatter Student Building

This course examines the “long road to Auschwitz,” as it is sometimes called, or the pre-histories of the Holocaust. It does so from within the context of German history, with a special focus on the colonial and imperial experience. It begins with German nationalism and the creation of the (“Second”) Reich as well as its development and politics. The seminar will examine the development and prevalence of racial theories, especially from the late 19th century onwards and how they were applied to different peoples and parts of the world (including Anti-Semitism and the Aryan theory). It will focus especially on colonial experiences, cultures of violence before and in World War I as well as the rise of new far right politics and the Nazis themselves. In the final sections it will discuss how the colonial experience and the ideas of *Lebensraum* help us explain the Holocaust.

While the seminar will continue along the timeline up to 1933, it will constantly test theories and ideas about “path-dependency” and how and why some historians tend to identify straight lines where others reject those. The seminar will also give students a feeling for how the Holocaust is used today to make sense of other atrocities in history (here in the case of those committed in the Congo and Namibia as well as the Armenian Genocide).

Structure

The seminar will feature in each session mainly three components: 1. a short/semi-short introductory lecture, mainly presenting an overview; 2. discussion of our assigned reading materials; 3. work with sources (where possible/feasible) or with other media.

The seminar also features a series of focus topics featured in two sessions each (German colonialism; the Herero and Nama Genocide; the Armenian Genocide). These will offer us the opportunity to venture deep(er) into a topic and also go far beyond the factual level and the discussion of newest research. Where possible we will also learn a bit more about the work of the historian (also for those students who are not historians), will work critically with texts, and have a chance to debate the broader repercussions.

Reading assignments

Since this is a three-hour seminar, extensive reading is required. However, texts will be assigned and split across the group (A, B, C) in order to manage the reading load and to stimulate debate. Reading the core texts for each week is an essential component of the seminar (requirements), as is active participation which will, at a minimum, involve regularly presenting to the group one of the assigned texts in very short form as well as thoughts and criticisms regarding these texts.

Texts will be generally available on the course's moodle platform as pdfs.

Writing assignments and grading/credit options

Each student will have to hand in one short **essay** (4-6 pages) replying to the question: ***Do the pre-histories we discussed in the course add something substantially new to your understanding of the Holocaust? How so? If not, why not?***

Additionally, depending on the chosen format (by the student), there are **three grading options available**, depending on the credit points needed by the student: 1. a seminar paper (about 25-30 pages; using primary materials; topic and outline subject to discussion and approval in the course of the seminar; deadline for submission of seminar papers: 21 June 2017); 2. a short final paper ("Referat"; about 10 pages; using secondary sources; deadline for submission one month after the end of the semester); or 3. a grade given for semesters' on-going assignments (such as the short essay and active participation in the seminar).

It is the students' responsibility to choose his/her assignments out of the three and update the course convener. All papers to be handed in as printouts. Papers which are not handed in during the course need to put into my mailbox in the History Department, Eshkol Tower, floor 13.

Introductory reading

** Dirk Moses, "Colonialism," in Peter Hayes & John K. Roth (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 68-80.

Core books

(given their scope and availability as paperbacks students might want to consider buying one or more of the following)

* Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006)

* Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston/New York: Mariner 1999)

* David Olusoga & Casper W. Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust – Germany's Forgotten Genocide* (London: Faber & Faber, 2010)

Artistic background reading (optional), novels

Franz Werfel, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (first: New York: Viking Press, 1934; recently 2011)

Mari Serebrov, *Mama Namibia* (Wordweaver Publishing, 2014)

Background reading (optional)

Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism – A Short History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Weekly topics and reading assignments*

* preliminary, subject to change; however those marked with a “*” are a safe bet for anybody who wants to get ahead with the reading. Students who enjoy the long-read and like to get a head start can read the books listed above as “core books.” These are written in a lively style and will convey an overall sense of the subject matter in a readable fashion.

27th February 2019: Introduction: Pre-histories? Or: Why the Germans?

Introduction, requirements, lecture, discussion

* Götz Aly, *Why the Germans? Why the Jews?* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014), chapters “The question of questions” (1-12) & “The anxiety of German nationalism” (42-64)

* Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide – Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), chapter “Race and Nation – An Intellectual History” (16-52)

6th March 2019: German nationalism and history in the 19th century – Overview

Lecture: Overview – German history in the 19th century

A. Christian Jansen, “The formation of German nationalism, 1740-1850,” in Helmut Walser Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 234-259.

B. Helmut Walser Smith, “Authoritarian state, dynamic society, failed imperialist power, 1878-1914,” in Helmut Walser Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 307-335.

13th March 2019: Colonial Ventures I – German Colonial designs, conquest, and experience

A. Geoff Eley, "Empire by Land or Sea? Germany's Imperial Imaginary, 1840–1945," in Bradley Naranch & Geoff Eley (eds.), *German Colonialism in a Global Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 19-45.

B. Christian S. Davis, "Colonialism and the Anti-Semitic movement in imperial Germany," in Bradley Naranch & Geoff Eley (eds.), *German Colonialism in a Global Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 228-245.

C. Andrew Zimmerman, "Race and world politics – Germany in the age of imperialism, 1878-1914," in Helmut Walser Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 359-377.

20th March 2019: Discourses of Race and modern Anti-Semitism

Lecture: "Race, anthropology, and modern Anti-Semitism"

A. William Brustein, "European antisemitism before the Holocaust and the roots of Nazism," in Jonathan C. Friedman (ed.), *The Routledge History of the Holocaust* (London/New York: Routledge, 2011), 18-29.

or:

Richard S. Levy, "Political Antisemitism in Germany and Austria, 1848-1914," in Albert S. Lindemann & Richard S. Levy (eds.), *Antisemitism – A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 121-135.

B. Christopher M. Hutton, *Race and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), chapter "The myth of the Aryan race" (80-100).

C. Christopher M. Hutton, *Race and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), chapter "Hans Günther and racial anthropology" (35-63).

Further/background reading: Kirk C. Allison, "Eugenics, race hygiene, and the Holocaust: Antecedents and consolidations," in Jonathan C. Friedman (ed.), *The Routledge History of the Holocaust* (London/New York: Routledge, 2011), 45-58; Andrew D. Evans, *Anthropology at War – World War I and the Science of Race in Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), chapter "The Meaning of race" (57-96).

27th March 2019: Colonial Ventures II – The colonial experience

lecture: Colonial violence – Germany's and Europe's rule and experiences of violence

* Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston/New York: Mariner 1999), chapters 8, 10, 11.

* Sarah De Mul, "The Holocaust as a paradigm for the Congo atrocities – Adam Hochschild's *King Leopold's Ghost*," *Criticism* 4 (special issue: *Transcultural Negotiations of Holocaust Memory*; 2011), 587-606.

Further reading: Dominik J. Schaller, "Genocide and mass violence in the 'Heart of Darkness': Africa in the colonial period," in Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 345-364.

Source: Paul S. Reinsch, "Real conditions in the Congo Free State," *The North American Review*, 178 (1904), 216-221.

10th April 2019: The Genocide of the Herero and Nama I

lecture: Genocide in German South-West Africa – Overview

A. Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), chapters 1-3

B. David Olusoga & Casper W. Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust – Germany's Forgotten Genocide* (London: Faber & Faber, 2010), chapters 8, 9, 12, 13

* various press and academic reviews of *The Kaiser's Holocaust*

Further reading: Jürgen Zimmerer, "The model colony? Racial segregation, forced labour and total control in German South-West Africa," in Jürgen Zimmerer & Jürgen Zeller (eds.), *Genocide in German*

South-West Africa – The Colonial War (1904-1908) in Namibia and its Aftermath (Monmouth: Merlin, 2008).

1st May 2019: The Genocide of the Herero and Nama II

* Birthe Kundrus, "From the Herero to the Holocaust?, The current debate," in: *Afrika Spectrum* 2 (2005), 299-308.

A. Joachim Zeller, "The cold is killing me – A history of the concentration camp in Swakopmund (1904-1908)," in Jürgen Zimmerer & Jürgen Zeller (eds.), *Genocide in German South-West Africa – The Colonial War (1904-1908) in Namibia and its Aftermath* (Monmouth: Merlin, 2008).

B. Jürgen Zimmerer, "The colonial war 1904-1908 – War, concentration camps and genocide in South-West Africa: The first German genocide," in Jürgen Zimmerer & Jürgen Zeller (eds.), *Genocide in German South-West Africa – The Colonial War (1904-1908) in Namibia and its Aftermath* (Monmouth: Merlin, 2008).

C. Ulrich van der Heyden, "The 'Hottentot election' of 1907," in Jürgen Zimmerer & Jürgen Zeller (eds.), *Genocide in German South-West Africa – The Colonial War (1904-1908) in Namibia and its Aftermath* (Monmouth: Merlin, 2008).

15th May 2019: World War I, the Armenian Genocide and Germany I

lecture: The Armenian Genocide – Overview

* Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), chapters 10, 11.

A. Donald Bloxham, "The First World War and the development of the Armenian Genocide," in Ronald G. Suny et al. (eds.), *A Question of Genocide – Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 260-275.

B. Ronald G. Suny, "The Holocaust before the Holocaust – Reflections on the Armenian Genocide," in Hans-Lukas & Dominik J. Kieser Schaller (eds.), *The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah* (Zurich: Chronos, 2002), 83-100.

C. Ugur Ümit Üngör, "'Turkey for the Turks' – Demographic engineering in Eastern Anatolia, 1914-1945," in Ronald G. Suny et al. (eds.), *A Question of Genocide – Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 287-305

media dealing with the genocide (various clips) and novel excerpt

further reading: Thomas Weber, *Hitler's First War: Adolf Hitler, the Men of the List Regiment, and the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Benjamin Ziemann, "Germany 1914-1918 – Total war as a catalyst of change," in Helmut Walser Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 378-399

22nd May 2019: The Armenian Genocide and Germany II

lecture(s): *The German dimension of the Armenian Genocide I&II*

* Stefan Ihrig, "Justifying Genocide in Weimar Germany – The Armenian Genocide, German nationalists, and assassinated Young Turks in Berlin, 1919-1923," in: Jan Rieger & Nikolaus Wachsmann (eds.): *Rewriting German History – New Perspectives on Modern Germany* (London 2015), 215-232.

* Stefan Ihrig, *Justifying Genocide – Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), prologue & epilogue

source material from the *Political Archives of the German Foreign Office* (in English)

29th May 2019: From conquest to the ghettos, to the concentration camps

Lecture: *Nazi imperialism, Lebensraum, and conquest*

* Christopher R. Browning, *The Path to Genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), chapter "Nazi resettlement policy and the search for a solution to the Jewish Question, 1939-1941" (3-27)

A. David Furber, "Near as far in the colonies: The Nazi occupation of Poland," *The International History Review* 3 (2004), 541-579.

B. Wendy Lower, "A new ordering of space and race: Nazi colonial dreams in Zhytomyr, Ukraine, 1941-1944," *German Studies Review* 2 (2002), 227-254.

C. Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire – German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), chapter "The empire begins at home" (172-232)

D. Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire – German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), chapter "The Nazi place in the sun" (233-295)

5th June 2019: Colonial pre-histories? Continuities, discontinuities, and the many big questions about humanity, politics, and modernity

* Birthe Kundrus, "Colonialism, imperialism, National Socialism – How imperial was the Third Reich?" in Bradley Naranch/Geoff Eley (Hg.), *German Colonialism in a Global Age*, Durham/London 2014, 330-346.

A. Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, "The Pre-History of the Holocaust? The Sonderweg and Historikerstreit debates and the abject colonial past," *Central European History* 3 (2008), 477-503.

B. Mark Mazower, "Violence and the state in the twentieth century," *The American Historical Review* 4 (2002), 1158-1178.

C. Mark Levene, "Why is the twentieth century the century of genocide?," *Journal of World History* 2 (2000), 305-336.

D. William W. Hagen, "The three horsemen of the Holocaust – Anti-Semitism, East European empire, Aryan folk community," in Helmut Walser Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 548-572.

12th June 2019: conclusions & final discussion