



UNAM PRESS
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

NEW BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

NEGOTIATING THE PAST: NAMIBIA AND GERMANY

Reinhart Kössler

Publication 2015 ♦ ISBN 978-99916-42-09-3

100 years since the end of German colonial rule in Namibia in 1915, the relationship between the former colonial power and the Namibian communities who were affected by its brutal colonial policies, remains problematic. Namibia has enjoyed good relations with Germany since Independence in 1990, and Germany has provided the highest amount of foreign aid to the country. Some of this has been directed to communities affected during the German colonial period. Yet interpretations of the past are still contested.

NEGOTIATING THE PAST: NAMIBIA AND GERMANY explores the relationship between Namibia and Germany in the post-colonial era by examining the ongoing debates, conflicts and confrontations over the past. The book frames the national historical narrative with particular reference to the Namibian War of 1903-1908 and the genocide perpetrated by the German colonial army.

Reinhart Kössler, a German scholar with wide-ranging personal experience in Namibia, scrutinises the consequences of German colonial rule, its impact on the descendants of victims of the genocide, Germany's historical responsibility, and the ways in which post-colonial reconciliation might be achieved.

Part I of the book describes the country's violent colonial experience and its consequently diverse and unequal society, with a dominant historical narrative captured in Windhoek's architecture. It explores diverging memories of the past through both Namibian and German perspectives within the field of memory politics where assertion, commemoration, denial, amnesia and recognition are the central themes.

Part II explores the resilience and resistance of central and southern Namibian groups, who assert their respective historical roles and current aims in independent Namibia through commemoration of their traditions in annual festivals.

Part III confronts the contentious issues of apology, restitution and reparation, looking at post-colonial processes of explicit and implicit negotiation, and conversations between relevant actors both in Namibia and Germany.

For lasting reconciliation and mutual respect, Kössler advocates active engagement with, and recognition of a 'dire past', despite breaks in communication and refusals to understand, and even in the face of the challenging and far-reaching implications of truth-seeking.

REINHART KÖSSLER is currently Director of the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute, Freiburg i.B. in Germany, and Professor in the Politics Department of the University of Freiburg. Besides a regional focus on southern Africa, his research includes social and development theory, political sociology and memory politics. He has published extensively on Namibia, including *In Search of Survival and Dignity: Two Traditional Communities in Southern Namibia under South African Rule* (2005).

CONTENTS: NEGOTIATING THE PAST: NAMIBIA AND GERMANY

Part I The Burden of History (the historical material of social memory)

- 1 Namibia: 100 years of colonialism – a fragmented past in an extremely unequal society
- 2 Germany: From late coloniser to first post-colonial society to colonial amnesia)
- 3 Colonial genocide in Namibia and the Holocaust
- 4 Namibia's Germany: Impressions and Perceptions
- 5 The Namibian Connection of Denialism
- 6 The Windhoek Rider: Contested Terrain, Multiple Meanings

Part II Commemoration and Performance

- 7 Resilience and Subaltern Traditions
- 8 Constructing and Claiming Spaces: Commemorations in Southern and Central Namibia
 - Herero Day, Okahandja
 - Zeraeua Day, Omaruru
 - Heroes Day, Gibeon
 - *Vaalgras wys*
- 9 Beyond a Fragmented Image of History

Part III Apology, Restitution & Reparation: The Challenge of Post-Colonial Reconciliation

- 10 A Mute Conversation: The Rise of the Reparations Issue
- 11 Half an Apology – Changing Actor Constellations
- 12 The Skull Saga: Restitution Enacted – Recognition Failed?

Conclusion

PUBLISHED BY UNAM PRESS

For more information, contact unampress@unam.na Tel: +264-61 206 4714

Distribution in Namibia: Namibian Book Market, P O Box 5914, Windhoek, Namibia

Tel: +264-61 236938 Fax: +264-61 226 187 Cell: +264-81 299 5283

www.demasius-publications.com

ingrid@demasius-publications.com

International distribution: AFRICAN BOOKS COLLECTIVE: www.africanbookscollective.com