

press release



exhibition-dossier

25 November 2016 to 12 March 2017

THE SHOAH MEMORIAL HOSTS AN UNPRECEDENTED EXHIBITION

THE 20TH CENTURY'S FIRST GENOCIDE

The Herero and Nama in German South-West Africa, 1904-1908



Herero women, working as forced laborers, carrying goods. Forced laborers built the colony's main infrastructure. © Coll. J-B Gewald



Colonial troops in German South-West Africa surrounding Herero chiefs who have been taken prisoner. Namibia, ca. 1904/1905.
© Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin/I.Desnica.

Génocide : In 1943, American lawyer Raphael Lemkin coined this word **genocide**, which means the intentional, systematic and planned physical destruction of all or part of an ethnic, national, religious or racial group.

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Between 1904 and 1908, around 80% of the Herero people and 50% of the Nama people living within the borders of present-day Namibia were exterminated. The Federal Republic of Germany is in the process of recognizing this crime as genocide; it is considered the first in the 20th century. In this exhibition of archives, objects and photographs, the Shoah Memorial focuses on the event for the first time in France. Although still widely unknown to the general public, it has been a research topic since the mid-1990s.

In 1904, the combination of harsh German colonial rule and abuse and mistreatment by settlers sparked a Herero uprising in German South-West Africa, today Namibia. The Second Reich's forces brutally put down the rebellion. On October 2, 1904, General Lothar von Trotha issued an extermination order enjoining the Kaiser's troops to indiscriminately slaughter men, women and children. Then, the Nama took up arms against the Germans and suffered the same fate as the Herero. Nama and Herero prisoners died of overwork, disease, mistreatment and starvation in concentration camps that the Germans opened in Windhoek, Swakopmund, Shark Island and other places in 1905. The victims' skulls were shipped to Germany for scientific research about racial characteristics.

Specialized curator:

Leonor Faber-Jonker, Leiden University, the Netherlands

General curator and coordinator:

Sophie Nagiscarde, Shoah Memorial Cultural Activities Director

The Shoah Memorial

17, rue Geoffroy-l'Asnier, Paris 4

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www.memorialdelashoah.org

Open every day except Saturdays from 10 am to 6 pm and on Thursdays until 10 pm

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Free admission